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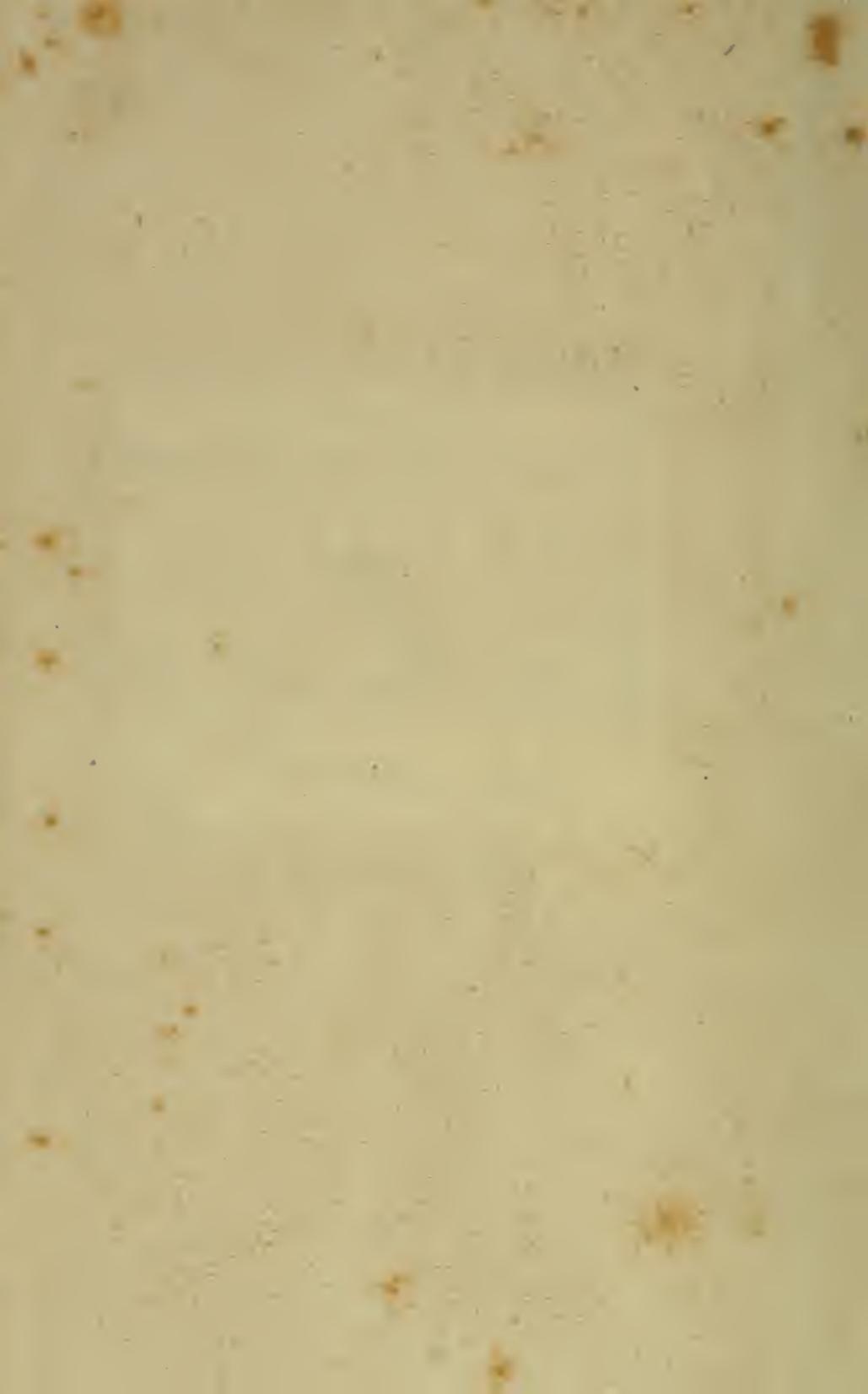
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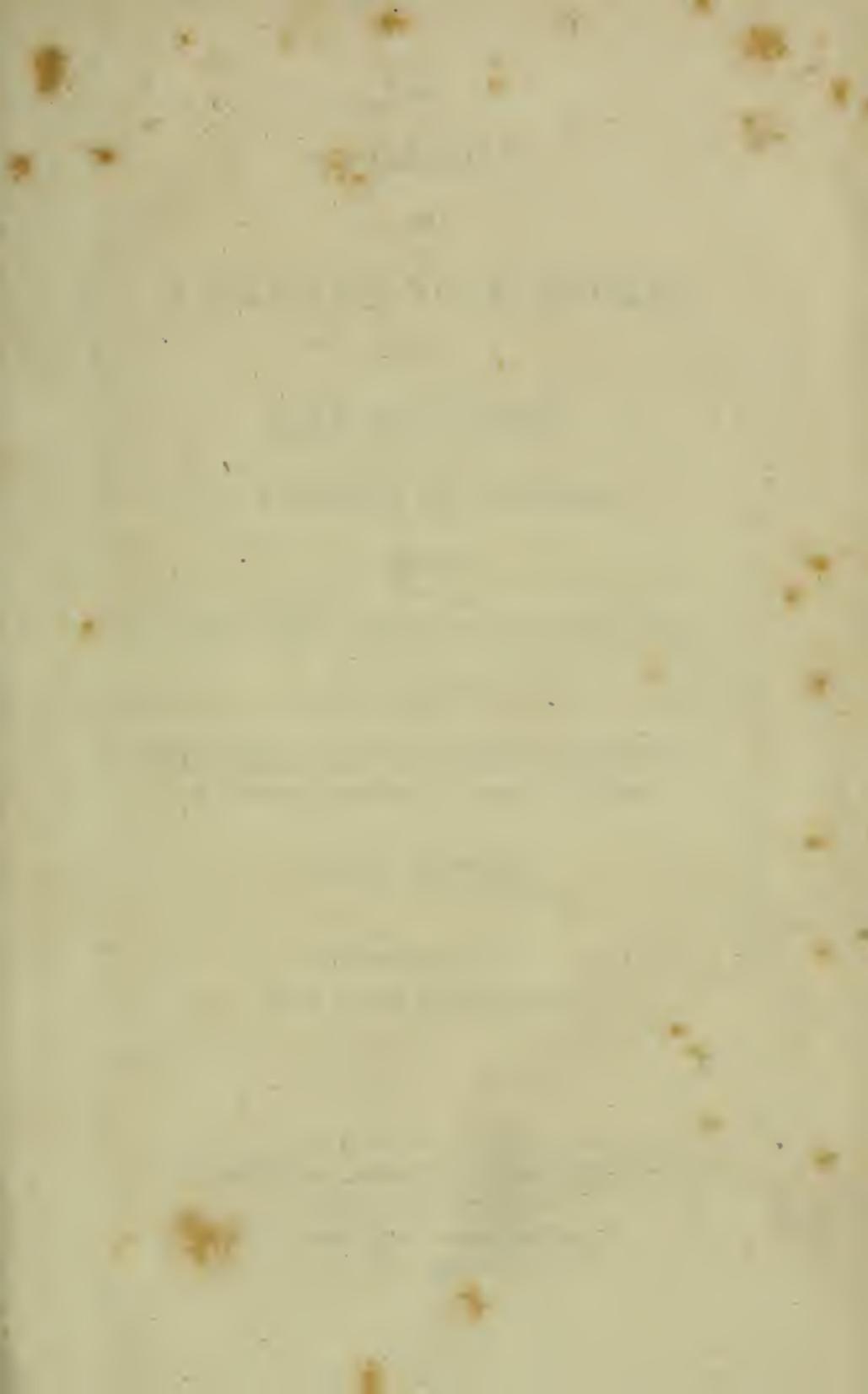
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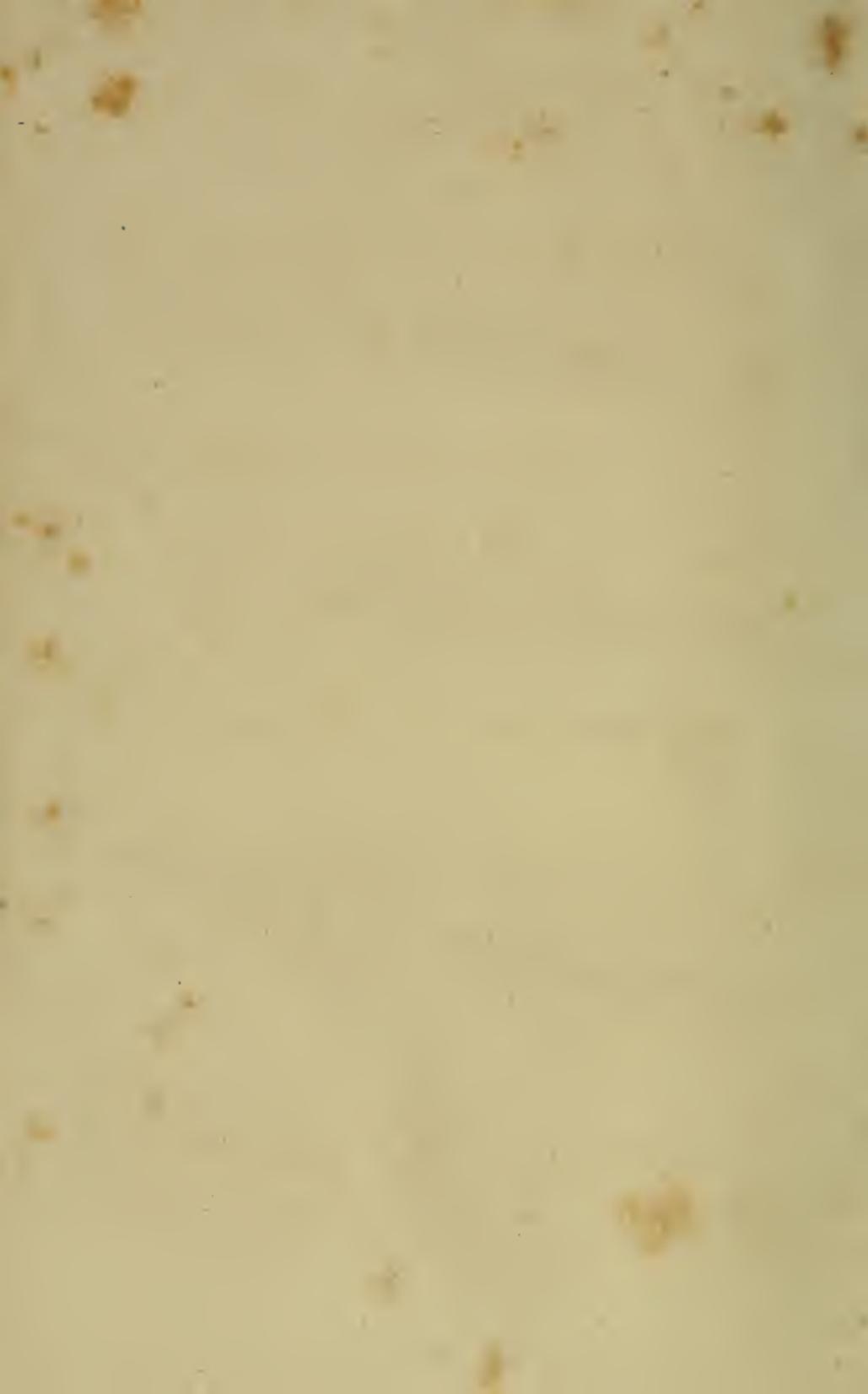
Hobart, John Henry, 1775-  
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An apology for apostolic  
order and its advocates









AN  
APOLOGY  
FOR  
APOSTOLIC ORDER  
AND ITS  
ADVOCATES.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

ADDRESSED

TO THE REV. JOHN M. MASON, D. D.

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BY

THE REV. JOHN HENRY HOBART,  
AN ASSISTANT MINISTER OF TRINITY CHURCH.

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Judge righteous judgment.  
*John viii. 24.*

SECOND EDITION.  
WITH NOTES AND AN INDEX.

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NEW-YORK:  
STANFORD & SWORDS, 139 BROADWAY.  
PHILADELPHIA:  
GEO. S. APPLETON, 148 CHESNUT ST.  
MDCCCXLIV.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1844,  
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

No words are here needed to justify the republication of a book, so valuable in itself, so urgently demanded by the exigences of the time, as the "Apology" for the one Catholic Church, from the able pen of the late Bishop of New-York, which first appeared in 1807. The republication has been delayed in the hope that some skilful hand might be found to divest it somewhat of its personalities without diminishing its force; a task, which, upon examination, has proved impracticable. The circumstance, however, is hardly to be regretted, as the "strictures and denunciations" which called forth this triumphant defence of the truth, have recently been given to the public, in all the offensiveness of their original forms. No alteration, therefore, has been made in this *second* edition of the "Apology;" and no other addition than a few notes and an index by the Editor.

*New-York, Nov. 8th. 1843.*

L. S. I.



## PREFACE.

THE writer of the following letters and his opinions having been pointedly and violently assailed in the Christian's Magazine, he is reluctantly compelled to obtrude himself upon the public attention. He thinks he has a particular claim upon all those who have taken up unfavourable views of those opinions which that Magazine assails, for a candid perusal of his defence. In that work he has been solemnly arraigned "at the bar of public criticism." The readers of that publication cannot, therefore, he conceives, consistently with their regard to justice, their love of truth, or the claims of duty, refuse to hear him in his defence. It is the first dictate of *justice*, to give an accused person a patient and candid hearing before judgment is passed on him. The impartial pursuit of *truth* cannot be compatible with an examination of only one side of a disputed question. And they who will place themselves for a moment in the situation of the individual whom that Magazine denounces as holding opinions of "deep-toned horror," will at once feel it a sacred *duty* to admit him to repel the accusation. They are required so to do by that law of supreme obligation, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

The writer of these letters disclaims from the heart all feelings of hostility to the many pious and respectable individuals, some of whose religious principles may differ from his own. Difference of opinion on important religious topics ought not to break the ties

of harmony between children' of the same common Parent, and subjects of the grace of the same Redeemer. On political questions men divide, who on other occasions meet on terms of friendly intercourse. And surely no Christian ought to esteem his brother his enemy because he "tells him the truth."

He is doubtful whether he ought to claim any indulgence for the imperfections of this performance, from the peculiar circumstances under which it was written. It was his wish to lay it by for frequent and careful revision. But the violence of the assault upon him seemed to require an immediate defence. He was, therefore, compelled to go rapidly on, amidst constant interruptions, amidst the calls of his usual professional duties, and often under the pressure of bodily languor. He candidly states these circumstances, because deference to the public requires that no immature or incorrect production should, if possible, be exposed to its view. But he is writing idly. The performance wields the weapon of controversy. He concludes, therefore, that it can claim no quarter. He leaves it to its fate. His chief solicitude ought to be, that its imperfections should not injure the cause which it advocates.

*New-York, June, 1807.*

## LETTER I.

SIR,

THE Christian's Magazine, which the newspapers lately announced to the public, and the responsibility of which, as proprietor and editor, you take upon yourself, I have perused, and the determination is instantly formed to address you on the subject.

The tendency of the system of *denunciation* which you have adopted leaves me no alternative. This denunciation is so injurious to my character, and aims at the same time so deadly a blow at the principles of the Episcopal Church, that a moment's delay in repelling it would be traitorous to my sacred office. My soul must be palsied by cowardice, or by apathy more criminal and disgraceful than cowardice, if I could witness my writings denounced, my reputation and usefulness fundamentally assailed, and the principles of my Church held up to scorn and execration, without lifting the honest and ardent voice of remonstrance.

As editor of the Christian's Magazine, you are responsible for its contents. The editor of a miscellany may sometimes think himself compelled, by motives of delicacy or impartiality, to admit observations of which he is not the writer, and which in sentiment or in language he may deem liable to censure. To even the smallest indulgence on this plea you have renounced all claim. You assert, that "you will feel yourself not only at liberty, but under obligation to make such alterations in the pieces which may be offered for insertion, as you shall judge expedient." But this matter is well understood. For the triumphs with which taste, delicacy, and truth will doubtless crown the first number of the Christian's Magazine, you have no competitor—alone you stand *rex, magnus Apollo*. You intend to claim the honour

of having made the first breach in the towering fortress of Episcopacy. Your illustrious compeers have only to advance and raze it to the ground! All the original productions in the number of the magazine before me, with the exception of the essay on the visible Church, point with resistless evidence to you as their author. And even if I had not been long taught to expect from your appalling arm chastisement for my temerity in advocating the principles of my Church, the style and spirit of *the review of the Essays on Episcopacy* would leave me at no loss to whom to tender my most profound acknowledgments for the very honourable notice which that review has condescended to bestow on me.

I behold and address you only as *Editor* and *Reviewer*. "For your personal character I entertain unfeigned respect." We have often met, and I trust we shall often meet again, on terms of friendly intercourse. "My criticisms are intended to apply to you solely as an author." "Nor can I be justly charged with violating" my "respect" for you, "though I examine" your animadversions "with as little ceremony as" you "have brought them forward." I heartily subscribe to the noble maxim of the "imperial stoic." And in "aiming at truth, by which no man was ever injured," regardless of the dictates of a temporising policy, or of the fear or favour of man, I am swayed by the injunction of one infinitely greater than this "imperial" philosopher. "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me" and my truth, "is not worthy of me."

Paradoxical as it may appear, I confess I am *gratified* at the appearance of the *Christian's Magazine*. Present calamity may be measured by the mind. Its magnitude is accurately surveyed. Its dreaded terrors diminish by the habit of contemplation; and the mind, summoning resolution, proudly surmounts them. But *threatened* calamity is often clothed with a thousand "nameless" horrors by the magnifying and exaggerating power of a panic-struck imagination. With the apprehension of a portentous calamity

I have long been tortured. My "Companion for the Altar," as innocent in its design as it is in its consequences to all the sincere inquirers after truth, had scarcely found its way among those to whom some of its principles were obnoxious, before vengeance was threatened. Prudence, however, which in charity must certainly be imputed to that *mild and tender forbearance* which knows not how to pour from its soft-flowing tongue one harsh, one unkind, one criminating expression, for near a year repressed this ire. But before the expiration of a year a "speck of war" appeared in the horizon. The prospectus of the Christian's Magazine, in the spring or summer of 1805, threatened to disturb the "relations of amity," and to engage Episcopalians and their fellow Christians in "the unprofitable contest of trying who could do one another the most harm." The opponents of Episcopacy, however, resolved to exhaust *forbearance!* The Christian's Magazine was delayed, and delayed, and delayed. Were I uncharitable, I would suspect that an aversion to enter the "bloody arena," on which Episcopacy had so often laid prostrate its antagonists, had full as much influence on this delay as the spirit of forbearance to which I feel the most cordial disposition to ascribe it. A hero, however, no less renowned than the Rev. Dr. Linn, not taught wisdom by the salutary lessons which he had received some years ago from the "Right Rev. Prelate of New-York," in a theological contest, felt all the vigour and ardour of his youthful days renewed. Indignant at this delay, and spurning the restraints of his compeers, he rushed forward to spread dismay among Episcopalians, and single-handed cover them with defeat. In his numbers styled "Miscellanies," published in the Albany Centinel, he attacked the principles of Episcopalians. He was instantly met—met, and vanquished by *striplings*, inferior to this venerable giant of literature and theology in every thing but the goodness of their cause, and judgment to defend it. Did these striplings or their friends presume ever to triumph,

that, clothed with the armour which scripture and antiquity furnished them, they had withstood the shock of the champion of Presbytery, and laid low both him and his cause? They were instantly humbled by the declarations,—The *author of Miscellanies* has been rash and indiscreet—he knows not the strength of his own cause—he has never read extensively on the subject—he did not “take the question by the proper handle”—But the *Christian’s Magazine*! this will retrieve the laurels which have been lost—this will flash such transcendent light, that the cause of Episcopacy will not be able for a moment to bear up against its overpowering effulgence. Yes, sir, my soul has often startled at the threat, that you would rise in your might, and pouring the awful majesty of indignant truth on the rash and adventurous advocates of Episcopacy, would “chase them before you as the chaff before the wind.” The thunder has at length shot from your arm. But—I yet survive! and, astonishing as it may seem, I can summon resolution to maintain my principles, and to expose your denunciations to the world. I thank you, sir—you have kindly released me from all fear of “the *Christian’s Magazine*.”

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## LETTER II.

SIR,

WHEN I understood that a “Society of Gentlemen” had formed the resolution to expose the “fallacious reasonings” of the assertors of Episcopacy, and to defend Presbytery as the institution of Christ and his Apostles, I could not avoid cherishing the hope that a mild and dispassionate course would be pursued. I could not avoid cherishing the hope (for it was flattering to my cause and to my feelings) that, disdaining a system of denunciation, which is calculated, by awakening prejudice and passion, to prostrate reason

at the very threshold of inquiry, and thus to prejudge the cause, yourself and your coadjutors would bring the Episcopal pretensions to their only proper test, SCRIPTURE and ANTIQUITY. I did hope that you would not only acknowledge "the right of an Episcopalian to publish his peculiar sentiments," but would feel the force of the corresponding obligation, to respect, and to treat with decency and candour, the exercise of this right. From the character and professions of some of the gentlemen who were to conduct the Christian's Magazine, I did flatter myself, that, as my principles, unfounded as they might appear, were yet couched in decent language, they would be tested in the spirit of decency and candour. I did hope, that principles maintained by an host of the most eminent men that ever defended Christianity by talents, or adorned it by piety, would not, with rash and impetuous hand, be "urged over the precipice" into the gulph of infamy, till their fallacy had been "detected" by the impartial eye of dispassionate reason. My imagination sometimes deluded me with the hope, that a discussion would arise firm and manly, yet temperate and honourable; a discussion which would rescue polemic theology from the charge of that virulence which has hitherto often subjected it to merited reproach. My feelings sometimes hailed the prospect of a discussion which, releasing Christians from the disgraceful chains of prejudice and passion, and guiding them only by the mild lights of reason, scripture, and antiquity, would lead them to form just views of the ministry and ordinances of the Church, the sacred fold of salvation, very properly styled by you, "the nursery of the Church in Heaven."

But sober reflection soon dissipated these pleasing hopes. I was satisfied that the cause of the opponents of Episcopacy was weak. It had ever shrunk before the touch of dispassionate and impartial inquiry. Its advocates had seldom disdained to shield it from the wand of truth, by the weapons of low ridicule, of harsh invective, of virulent and

unfounded denunciation. I reflected too that while but *few* men *reason*, all men *feel*; that where one man follows the guidance of *reason*, thousands bow under the sceptre of *passion*; that where mild and modest *argument* lights one man to truth, bold and imposing *declamation* rivets on thousands the chains of error. The opponents of Episcopacy I knew would carry with them the resistless *spirit of the times*. Palsied by morbid indifference, this spirit I feared would not rouse itself to patient inquiry on religious topics. Throwing down the enclosures of truth, I feared it would frown on all pretensions which, however scriptural, and however reconcilable on candid construction with all the reasonable claims of charity, appeared to be *exclusive*. Impressed with these reflections, I confess I did fear that the opponents of Episcopacy would avail themselves of the weakness of human nature, and of the spirit of the times, so propitious to their cause. I did fear that prejudice and passion, seated on the throne of judgment, would be roused to condemn the cause of Episcopacy, previously even to an investigation of its merits. Investigation might fail—denunciation would be sure of success—for who would listen for a moment to these presumptuous, arrogant, and impious lords over the understanding, the consciences, the eternal destiny of men? Who could be induced even to contemplate “extravagant and arrogant pretensions”—pretensions which “unchurched, with a dash of the pen, all the non-Episcopal denominations under heaven;” which laid them under the ban of an “excommunication,” “as criminal as it is dreadful!” Where the bosom so steeled to the feelings of humanity as not, in the burst of righteous indignation, to “urge over the precipice” the monsters who advanced “positions of such deep-toned horror,” as might “well make the hair stand up like quills upon the fretful porcupine, and freeze the warm blood at its fountain?”\*

This appeal to prejudice and passion, those tyrants of our

\* This is the language in which you denounce me.

nature—this appeal, as unjust as it is ungenerous and cruel—this appeal, precluding all candid and dispassionate inquiry, even an *honest* political declaimer, in the mad fervour of party zeal, would not use without a blush. The man of letters, the Christian, the divine should frown it from him with righteous disdain. You, sir, have condescended to enlist it in your cause. Examine the review of the *Essays on Episcopacy*. Every sentence rests for triumph on the success of its appeal to the prejudices and passions of the reader. Urge not, in extenuation, that effervescence of indignation which, at the first view of obnoxious opinions, may overpower the cool judgment, the mild charities of even the honest and amiable heart. More than two years have elapsed since these obnoxious opinions must have first met your eye. During this period the plan of the *Christian's Magazine* has been arranging, materials collecting, and the matter preparing that was to enrich its pages. There has been full time for chastening the indignant and passionate review of *the Essays on Episcopacy*, by the gentle dictates of judgment and charity. The intemperate spirit which it breathes is left without even the excuse of precipitancy and rashness.

Your endeavour to enlist the prejudices and passions of Christians to condemn, without an impartial hearing, the cause of Episcopacy, may obtain a triumph; but it is a triumph which I shall not contest with you. It is a triumph, the full honours of which I shall not seek to wrest from your brow. Yes, sir, you may succeed in inducing non-Episcopalians to reject a candid examination of opinions on which you have fixed the seal of blasphemy, impiety and horror. You may even rouse those Episcopalians who are “ignorant of the foundation and reasons of that church order to which they adhere,” and who, “when any thing is done which, though strictly proper, does not coincide with their convenience or their habits, are both startled and displeased;” you may rouse those Episcopalians who “have thrown the

reins on the neck of their charity," "who are carried away by the current of a spurious liberality;"\* you may rouse them to join with you in sinking under the charges of rashness, imprudence, and illiberal zeal, those guardians of the Church who presume to discharge their solemn vows of ordination;—to "drive away from the fold those erroneous and strange doctrines" concerning the constitution and ministry of the Church, which, within these late ages, have rent her into numberless schisms. Be it so. They who summon courage to attack the monster error in the den where he has long reposed, must not expect him to yield without a struggle, nor until he has exhausted upon them the venom and fire of his rage. But the sceptre of truth, wielded by patient and persevering courage, will at length paralyze his efforts, and lay him prostrate. If non-Episcopalians have any regard to the sacred claims of truth and justice, they will indignantly spurn every attempt to enlist their prejudices and passions against opinions which it is their solemn duty seriously and dispassionately to examine. As men of candour and justice, who consider their judgment and conscience as their guides; as honest inquirers after truth; as Christians who are to answer at the dread tribunal of God, whether they have earnestly and honestly sought to subdue prejudice and passion, I trust they will feel it their sacred duty to disregard your denunciations, to read and judge for themselves."† Episcopalians, I trust, will all soon be ashamed of that timid and false liberality which, by concealing the distinctive principles of their Church, is levelling the barriers with which

\* I mark as quotations your own language.

† Every principle of candour and justice loudly calls on them to peruse the Collection of Essays on the subject of Episcopacy. To form a judgment on this important subject from the partial representations of the Christian's Magazine would be treason against truth and conscience. The advocates of Episcopacy demand only candid inquiry, impartial investigation. Let it be remembered, the Collection of Essays on the subject of Episcopacy contains not only the arguments in favour of it, but those of the Rev. Dr Linn against it.

the sacred wisdom of ages hath fenced her round; and laying open that celestial "vine which the right hand of the Lord hath planted," to the destructive assaults of heresy and schism, "to be rooted up by the boar out of the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the forest."

My own determination is unalterably formed—in that firm language which conscious truth inspires, but in "that meekness of celestial wisdom" which the gospel enjoins, to defend the Apostolic Church, at whose altar I minister, against "every weapon that is formed against her"—to maintain that sacred institution of Episcopacy, which, committed to the Church by her divine Head, no unhallowed hand for fifteen centuries dared to touch; which has been the sacred channel through which the ministerial commission has flowed from him who is "the Head and Saviour of the body," to whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth." I shall respect, I have always respected, the conscientious opinions of others. I shall resist the arm of violence, whether lifted up against their religious rights or my own. I shall not denounce, I have never denounced, the honest inquirers after truth, by whatever name distinguished. No difference of opinion, no ire of controversy shall lead me to cut asunder the sacred ties of friendship; shall ever prevent me from regarding, with sincere affection, every one who bears the holy impress of Jesus as the subject of his mercy and grace. But while mindful of my own infirmity and liability to error, I presume not to wield the thunders of that tribunal where I must myself, through my Saviour's intercession, plead for mercy, I shall discharge the sacred duty of maintaining and enforcing that order of the Church which, it is my conscientious conviction, bears the seal of divine authority. As "a messenger, a watchman, and steward of the Lord," bearing on my soul the solemn obligation "to teach and to premonish, to feed and to provide for the Lord's family," I shall not "cease my labour, my care and diligence,"\* in warning the

\* Ordination service.

*In what century did Jerome live?*

members of Christ's fold of the guilt and danger of schism, of separating from that "priesthood who derive their authority by regular transmission from Christ, the divine Head of the Church, and the source of all power in it."\* This exercise of a common right, even in the most unexceptionable mode, in addresses to persons of the Episcopal communion (and this is the mode in which I originally exercised it,) this discharge of a sacred duty may subject me to odium and denunciation. The destiny still more to be deprecated may await me, of being "wounded" (where I ought to find encouragement and support) "in the house of my friends." I shall still have the consolation of having faithfully borne my testimony to the principles of the Apostolic and primitive Church; to principles which "the noble army of martyrs" confessed in their writings, in their lives, in the agonies of those cruel deaths to which their persecutors hunted them; to principles which in every age have ranked among their advocates some of the brightest ornaments of science, and intrepid champions of divine truth. I shall still have the consolation of having defended the cause of Episcopacy, with inferior strength indeed, but with equal zeal, in the same ranks with the "incomparable HOOKER," the eminent and revered Bishops HALL, ANDREWS, SANDERSON, TAYLOR, BEVERIDGE, POTTER, WAKE, WILSON, HORNE, HORSELEY; the learned and pious divines CHILLINGWORTH, HAMMOND, LESLIE, JONES; and "a legion more," illustrious for talents, for learning and piety. I shall still have the consolation of having "studied to approve myself" unto my divine Master as "a workman rightly dividing the word of truth." These are consolations with which "no stranger intermeddled," which even the rude hand of violence cannot disturb. The system of *denunciation* which you pursue is calculated to awaken a persecution more poignant to the feeling mind than even the flame and sword that torture the body. I have no hesitation to say that I deprecate it; and I must pray, there-

\* Preface to the *Companion for the Altar*.

fore, that neither my faith be shaken, my resolution weakened, nor my charity extinguished. I must pray that, amidst the denunciation of foes and the desertion of friends, my soul may be raised in holy hope above this misjudging world; may soar on vigorous wing to that celestial scene where the mists of error shall be dissipated by the radiant beams of truth, and its faithful and honest advocates find a refuge from the scorn of the world in the eternal plaudits of their Redeemer and Judge.

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### LETTER III.

SIR,

THE Christian's Magazine comes forth in a proud and imposing attitude, demanding instant submission to its authoritative decrees; and, in the spirit which inflames every sentence, denouncing immolation on the altar of its wrath, against all who shall refuse to bend the knee to its dogmas. Little disposed to yield my understanding or my conscience to the keeping of any man, whatever may be his talents, his learning, or his worth, you must excuse me if I refuse to pay divine honours to this idol of party, or to submit without resistance to its unjust denunciations. Marked indeed it is with all that bitterness of controversy, and justifying to the full extent that high spirit of polemic warfare, to chastise which, I have supposed, was to constitute one of its proudest triumphs. The sin which marked my conscience with a stain black as midnight darkness, and for which I have been pursued with indignant invective, is, that I scattered the firebrands of discord through the peaceful seats of Zion. The sin for which the charge of "illiberal bigot" has flashed on my devoted head from a thousand tongues, is, that I arrogantly denounced all denominations but my own. To crush this baneful fiend of controversy, the parent of "endless

strife and every evil work;" to cover with confusion the arrogant upstarts who hurled the bolts of denunciation through the Lord's heritage, the Christian's Magazine was to rear its arm, formidable with the concentered genius, talents, and learning of a constellation of divines. When, lo! we are assailed not by a firm, yet temperate, a decided, yet decent defence of divine truth and exposure of error, but by a system of intemperate denunciation. Come, sir, I put this matter "upon the trial before the bar of public criticism." I must insist on your accompanying me through the pages of your magazine. A tour through the majestic forest which owes its vigorous foliage, its towering strength to your nervous cultivation, must surely raise in your bosom the emotions of exultation, whatever may be the effect of the survey on my feelings or those of the public.

I assert, sir, that your magazine presents not *a firm, yet temperate, a decided, yet decent defence of divine truth and exposure of error, but an unrelenting system of intemperate DENUNCIATION.* Let us open your introduction. The different sects and parties of Christians present themselves before you. "Some," you say, "excluding the light of understanding, place their religion in fervour of feeling." Here your battery first opens on the sect of enthusiasts. We are accustomed to consider the *Methodists* as distinguished for placing their religion in fervour of feeling. "Some clamour incessantly for doctrine, as if the heart had nothing to do in the service of God, or as if practical holiness were a necessary fruit of speculative orthodoxy." Here I must acquit you of all design of denouncing Episcopalians; for you know they are charged with undervaluing *doctrinal preaching*. But if they escape here, it is evidently your intention in the next sentence to make them smart under the lash; for you observe—"Some, like the self-justifiers of old, 'tithe mint and anise and cummin'—little concerned about 'either receiving the Lord Jesus, or walking in him,' provided they be exact in their routine of ceremonies." From the Episcopalians you

turn your wrathful frown to a sect in this city, I believe, of Baptists, who contend that they are *consistent Calvinists*. They maintain that as, according to the Calvinistic system, Christ is the Redeemer of the elect only, as he shed his blood for them alone, and will in due time convert them by his irresistible grace, they who are not thus converted, and are therefore not of the number of the elect, have no concern in the offers of salvation. And as, according to the Calvinistic system, the elect are justified by the *unconditional* imputation of Christ's righteousness, it is absurd, they contend, to maintain that the elect are subject to any law of works ; since this would be making their salvation conditional, would be derogating from the all-sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ, and from the glory of God's free and sovereign grace. These persons, who maintain that they are consistent Calvinists, you accuse of "poisoning the Gospel at the fountain head"—of "annihilating the authority of God with the same blow which fells the hope of the sinner." High Churchmen, nearly crushed by your first blow, are now laid prostrate. For you accuse them of laying "as much stress upon their external order, as if the key which opens the door of their communion opened, at the same moment, the doors of Paradise ; although," you continue to remark, "upon that supposition, it is evident that the 'gate' and 'way' which 'lead unto life' are no longer straight and narrow." Tremendous denunciation ! for if the "gate" and "way" of high Churchmen be not that "straight gate and narrow way" which "lead unto life," they must be the "wide gate and broad way" which "lead to destruction !" *Low Churchmen* next sink beneath your ire. Because *they* "account the external order of the house of God a matter of no importance," you charge them with "countenancing, at least indirectly, violation of their Lord's commandment, invasion of his prerogative, and assault upon his truth." "And as although all this were not enough," as if the triumphs gained over these prostrate sects could not satisfy you, you scorn not to erect an-

other trophy on the neck of the humble Methodist and harmless Quaker. As they endeavour "to set aside the distinctive character, and the authentic call of the gospel ministry," you accuse them of a deadly blow at Christianity itself, of "laying the axe at the root of entire Christianity." And the instruments which they so honourably employ in this detestable service, and by which they draw many after "their pernicious ways," are "the avarice of one class, the conceit of another, the credulity of a third, and the ignorance of all!" "A jealousy for the glory of *divine teaching*," their "avowed" motive for "proscribing from the ministry all learning, taste, and talents," is only a "*mask*;" and "it will be well," you observe, "if the mask shall be found to have concealed the tendency of their principles from their own view;" that is, it will be well if they should not be found designing hypocrites, who are wilfully "laying the axe at the root of entire Christianity!" Now, if all this be not an *unrelenting system of violent and unqualified denunciation*, I suppose I must acknowledge myself guilty of having wilfully converted "the gentle dews of instruction and consolation to friends," into "thunderbolts hurled at the heads of opponents."

There is scarcely a page of your magazine which does not palpably violate those judicious rules for the conducting of religious discussion which you profess to take as your guide. Even the essay "on religious controversy," the *design* of which I certainly commend, and which more than justifies me in all my publications, breathes a spirit as relentless against all who even doubt the policy <sup>and</sup> utility of religious controversy, as ever disgraced the most violent polemic. Hitherto theological combatants have persecuted each other. You summon them to shake hands, and to turn wrathfully upon those who, as mediators, would persuade them to lay down the weapons of theological warfare. One would have thought that this essay at least should have exhibited a specimen of that cool, that decorous manner, that charitable allowance for human prejudice and passion (which enthrall,

alas! the best of men) by which controversy might be made to subserve the holy interests of truth. No; the "pretence that religion is a concern too solemn and sacred for the passions of controversy," you pronounce not only an "error" (which every considerate person will acknowledge,) but an "error *without excuse*," like the profane "pretence with which some justify their restraining prayer before God."\* Nay, "no medium can be assigned between receiving and rejecting the truth. If rejected, we seal our perdition"†—*Involuntary error* is no palliation—perdition is the certain doom! And yet the Christian's Magazine was to chastise my arrogant and uncharitable pretensions!

In your essay on "liberality in religion," the *liberal Christian* is "pursued, hunted, and urged over the precipice"‡ with an overbearing and intemperate violence, which must tend to divert from him that sentence of just censure which sober reason would otherwise pronounce on him. This spurious liberality, injurious as it certainly is to the cause of truth, proceeds not always from a culpable indifference, but frequently from an excessive mildness of disposition, and from an abuse of that charity which "hopeth all things." It might surely, therefore, claim some little commiseration, especially from the ministers of him who "is not strict to mark what," through unavoidable infirmity, "may be done amiss." But no, sir, your inexorable voice seals, without hope of mercy, its doom. "They who enlist under the banner of the prevailing liberality"—they who even "profess their *charity*" not for certain "detestable" heretical "*opinions*," but only for *those who hold them!*"—they who do not, therefore, with papal intolerance, sweep into irremediable perdition every heretic, "are leagued in a conspiracy against the glorious gospel" of the "great God our

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 21, 22.

† Christian's Magazine, p. 20.

‡ I have often occasion to use your language.

Saviour !”\* Gracious Jehovah ! is it then for a worm of the dust, who derives all his hopes from thy unmerited mercy, to wrest from thee thy thunder, and wield it against his fellow worms ! Thou, gracious Father of our spirits ! is it then for us to pronounce that there are in our fallen nature no infirmities,—in this evil world no unavoidable sources of prejudice, which can possibly render even *fundamental* error *venial* in thy sight, and wash it away in that blood which was shed for “the sins of the world ?” Or is it not enough that he who errs through *involuntary* and *unavoidable weakness*, will be condemned at thy sovereign tribunal ; but must his doom be anticipated by the lips of those who should pity and pray for him ?

Deplorable indeed, in its fairest colours, is the present state of the Christian Church. But your pencil seems to delight to deepen its shades. Not a ray of light shoots through the tremendous gloom. “Gross ignorance of the gospel thickens apace in a clime that is illuminated by its broadest sunshine. The barriers which ought to divide the Church from the world are swept away, and every trait of discrimination effaced.” “In a land of Bibles, which cannot be opened without the lightning of God’s reprobation of their folly flashing in their faces, miserable sinners, unjustified, unwashed, unsanctified, are praising each other’s Christianity !” And to dash from the picture every ray of consolation, “the delusion is often fostered by the *very men* whose office should impel them to counteract and destroy it !”†

That a spirit of denunciation so severe on bodies and communities should not relax its harsh features when individuals encounter its criticism, was certainly to be expected. That I should be made to “drink of the dregs of the cup” of your displeasure has long been threatened. And I shall soon have occasion to show, that the vials of your wrath have been emptied upon me. Even Mr. M’Leod, your friend

\* Christian’s Magazine, p. 36.

† Christian’s Magazine, p. 36, 37.

and coadjutor, sometimes trembles before your chair of censorship. But Mr. M'Leod had written a good Presbyterian catechism. Mr. M'Leod is a good Calvinist. He is not, therefore, to be too harshly handled. The aged censor accordingly relaxes the rigid frown, and, patting him on the cheek, as if he were a school-boy exhibiting the first hard-drawn efforts of invention, brightens up his sorrowful countenance by the kind assurance, that the many imperfections of his style "will wear away by the liberal use of his pen!"\*

No less a personage than the Rev. Dr. Nott, the President of Union College, is summoned to pass your rigorous ordeal. Liable as the charge of the Rev. President may be in many respects to the censure of a just and correct taste, you "detect, pursue, hunt, and urge over the precipice" its errors, with an overbearing and impetuous spirit, which is as injurious to his public character as it is revolting to taste, truth and feeling. Qualified by no real commendation, and softened by no delicacy, the denunciations issue from your high tribunal, that Dr. Nott's imagination is "unequal, erratic, and uncontrolled by the laws of correct criticism." In the style of his charge "we look in vain for that precision, that strength, that chastened and firm and commanding dignity which befitted the occasion." You wrest figures from their proper place and connection, where alone a correct judgment is to be formed on their justness and propriety, and exhibit

\* In your note at page 107, you aim a side blow at the learned Drs. Mitchill and Miller, the Editors of the "Medical Repository." These gentlemen had presumed, without consulting you, to speak in terms of some commendation of "Dufief's Nature Displayed," &c. This book, like "Mr. Marshall's Life," you very concisely consign to the "cook-maid and the vender of snuff," by branding it as "vapouring folly;" and then remark, "that people who are unacquainted with the science of language should be duped, is nothing strange; but that the deception should be upheld by names which ought to be sacred to the patronage of *sound* literature, is both surprising and humiliating!" Nay, sir, the President of the United States, and the learned President of Princeton College, and other literary characters who recommended Dufief's work, are branded as giving their sanction to "vapouring folly."

them in immediate contrast to ridicule and scorn. In the parting charge of a President of a college to his students, limited as it necessarily must be, and deriving no small portion of its interest from its being supposed to flow in some measure spontaneously from the heart, no one can reasonably expect the arrangement and developement of a laboured and systematic discourse. But because in this single charge the extensive sphere of instruction is not exhausted, and every subject enforced which can be interesting to the studies, the pursuits, and the happiness of youth, the charge is denounced as "throwing out" merely "useful hints," "without which it would be absolutely worthless!" Nay, Dr. Nott has "led his pupils along the confines of the infected region," which nourished "old Celsus," and still fattens "Thomas Paine." Tell me not that he has done this "undesignedly;" this aggravates "crime," by the guilt of inexcusable ignorance. What! a respectable Divine, whose business it is to attack and conquer the strong holds of infidelity—a President of a college, awfully responsible for the moral principles of those whose minds he cultures, and yet "undesignedly leads them along the confines of that infected region" which taints with the pollution of death! Nay, sir, you assert that "every thing which Dr. Nott has said might be said by a sober deist!" "It is only blank *atheism* which Dr. N. rebukes!" A minister devoted by the most solemn vows to the cross of Christ, and yet in effect denying him—what can he be but a perjured hypocrite! If your denunciations be well founded, would not Dr. Nott's pupils be justified in wresting from his chair the monster who, under the smiles of affectionate solicitude, is secretly infusing into their souls the poison that will pollute and blast them for ever? And what authorizes these tremendous denunciations—denunciations against a minister of the gospel, who, if general report can be relied on (for you, sir, are silent on this point,) is not more beloved for his amiable temper, than respected and admired for the *evangelical* ardour of his public ministrations? What, I say, has occasioned

these tremendous denunciations? Dr. Nott “placed the character of Jesus Christ before his pupils as the *perfect model*, in the imitation of which would consist their happiness and glory”—and did not think it necessary to obtrude upon his pupils on a *literary* occasion, a *sermon*—such a sermon as would be able to stand the ordeal of the Pastor of the first Associate Reformed Church in the city of New-York! But I forbear; Dr. Nott, if he deem it necessary, can vindicate himself; my design in these remarks has simply been to establish my general position, that your magazine presents not a *firm, yet temperate, a decided, yet decent defence of divine truth and exposure of error, but an unrelenting system of intemperate denunciation.*

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#### LETTER IV.

SIR,

FROM the review which I took in my last letter of your magazine, I think I am authorized to say, that I look in vain through its pages for that delicacy of feeling, that refinement of taste, that modest recollection of human infirmity, that tender regard for the character and feelings of others, which are strictly compatible with the sternest devotion to the cause of truth, and which make us feel the justice while they soothe the severity of criticism. The radiance of mercy which invites sinful mortals to the throne of the Eternal, and which even their crimson sins could not extinguish, is banished from the stern seat of judgment in which you are enthroned. Bolt succeeding bolt is hurled on the hapless culprit, and down he sinks the victim of execration and scorn.

Writers whose intentions, whatever may be their errors, are evidently honest, have a claim upon the public for decency and civility of treatment. *Authoritative* judgment upon their writings belongs to the public alone. And when

any individual, self-elevated to the throne of criticism, imperiously deals around him the arbitrary sentence of condemnation, mollified neither by politeness of manner, nor by delicacy and refinement of style, the public I conceive are insulted in this violent and unjust exercise of their prerogative.

Perhaps you claim from your office as reviewer a right to pursue this system of denunciation. But does your elevation to the chair of criticism throw at your feet every writer who presumes to address the public, and authorize you to denounce his errors and imperfections, as if they were sins that should consign him to eternal infamy? It is the tendency of literature to polish the taste; to soften the asperities of our nature; and to substitute the language of cultivated and polished gentlemen for the boorish, but, no doubt, frequently *nervous* language of the vulgar. But the style of your critical remarks is calculated to change the hall of the Lyceum into the arena of the Amphitheatre, and the dignity and decorum which should characterise the discussion of truth into the virulence and animosity which disgrace even personal combats.

Are we to admit as an excuse for this bold and imperious denunciation, your zeal for God and his holy truth? And is it thus, sir, our blessed Master has taught us to "contend earnestly for the faith?" In "detecting," in "pursuing," in "hunting error," has he commanded us to "urge it over the precipice," regardless of the dictates of that charity which "hopeth all things, believeth all things, is not puffed up, and vaunteth not itself?" Is our ardent zeal to rush on its desolating career, contemning that celestial "wisdom" which is "gentle, easy to be intreated, and full of mercy?"

Can a system of intemperate denunciation find an apology in the strength and ardour of genius? There is, indeed, a *glow of soul* which lights on truth with almost intuitive keenness; which seizes it with impetuous ardour; and bears it forward to victory, unappalled by obstacles, quickened to

higher intrepidity by dangers and defeats. This glow of soul, this *vis ferrida mentis*, towering above the pusillanimous efforts of weak and inferior minds, commands my homage. It is the illustrious mark of exalted genius—it is the lofty attendant of the noble spirit—it is the spring of whatever is great in thought, of whatever is magnanimous in action. When it is controlled by correct judgment; when it is chastened by polished taste; when the divine spirit of Christian charity mitigates its boldness and impetuosity, it shines like the lustre of the *sun-beam*; carrying the light of conviction to the bosom of error, through the deep folds in which she has enwrapped herself; and shedding, on the mild form of truth, celestial and resistless charms. But when this ardour of soul contemns the guidance of judgment, disdains the polish of taste, and frowns on the suggestions of Christian charity, how appalling and devastating its course! Raging like the “northern blast,” the charms of intellectual nature are withered; delicacy, sentiment, taste and feeling, bound in icy chains; and all the mild and tender charities of the heart swept as with the “besom” of death.

Sir, I cannot avoid suggesting to you—(pardon my presumption)—whether, with all your profound attainments, you have yet acquired that essential constituent in a *great and useful character*, a knowledge of human nature. Had the human heart been laid open before you, you would have found that *pride* is its governing principle; and that a sentiment of just and honest pride revolts against oppression, whether the despot lay his yoke on the body or the mind. He whose understanding is perverted by error must be treated with mildness, with decency, with respect; or you fix him irreclaimably in his errors—you rouse him to vigorous resistance. *Persecute* error, and you surround it with an host of friends, who will throw their shields before it, and dare your assaults. Had you known, or regarded this palpable fact in the history of human nature, you would not have attempted, by lofty denunciation and virulent declamation, to

compel the judgments and consciences of men to bow implicitly to your dogmas. The iron sceptre which you have wielded against the sacred sanctuary of the mind, would have crumbled from your hand, or fastened its wrath only on the incorrigibly wicked. You would have sought from your divine Master the "rod" of celestial wisdom. By its mild and powerful sway, you would have sought to reclaim from the paths of error the unhappy wanderer, and gently to lead him, pouring forth blessings on his compassionate Shepherd, beside the peaceful "waters" of truth and salvation.

It would be arrogance in me to expect that you should feel the justice of the preceding strictures. I can assure you they are not congenial with my taste or feelings. Had the *Christian's Magazine* come forward to discuss dispassionately and respectfully the important topics of literature and taste; to institute a fair, candid, and respectful comparison between the "conflicting claims" of theological opinions; to throw the light of truth on the dark retreats of error, by perspicuous and forcible, yet temperate and decorous argument, I should have respected its claims; I should have hailed it as a fair candidate for public support. What I might have deemed its errors, if temperately maintained; what I might have deemed its false criticisms on my writings, if decently urged, I should have delighted, I should have been emulous to meet with equal temper and decency. In a contest where only the love of truth sways the bosom, and politeness, taste, and candour wield the weapons of warfare, I should be proud in being ranked as a combatant, nor should I deem it dishonourable to bow to a victor. But, judging from the first number of the *Christian's Magazine*, what is its design? Evidently to pronounce decrees concerning every topic of taste, literature and religion with oracular confidence; and to "pursue" and "hunt" dissent from its dogmas as an offence deep as that of questioning holy writ. Renouncing fair, candid, temperate inquiry, it disdains not to torture opinions into the most detestable consequences, and

then to hold up those who maintain them to execration and scorn;—closing its pages against the language of defence and remonstrance. What, sir, is evidently the design of its editor—a design in the success of which some of his friends are already triumphing? Not merely to browbeat and intimidate the advocates of Episcopacy, but to denounce all who question the infallibility of his standard of taste and criticism; all who shall presume to shake off, as equally unreasonable and unscriptural, the *peculiarities* of Calvinism; when it is apparent that these are the designs of the magazine and its editor, I take the liberty of inquiring what claims have they to forbearance or indulgence? When the sacred rights of judgment, of conscience, of free inquiry are violated, can tame submission consist either with independence or virtue? When in the republic of literature, a dictator usurps the throne, are we to cast down the spear and shield, and kiss the rod? When in the sacred concerns of religion, a divine injunction binds it on the conscience to “call no man master on earth,” can it weaken the solemn duty of resistance that the bull of infallibility issues, not from the Pope of Rome, but from the Pastor of an Associate-Reformed Church? If, therefore, you should attempt to ride over the necks of your own people; if you should aim at compelling the very complaisant Clergy who bear with you the common name of Presbyterian, implicitly to obey all your caprices and decrees,\* it is no concern of mine. But when you claim despotic authority over me, there is a spirit within me which instantly says, No. And though the powers of my mind may not rise equal to the proud independence of my heart, that heart resolutely determines to shake off the yoke of a dictator—One is its Lord and master, even Christ, and it will not “bow the knee to Baal.” You leave me no alternative. I must either turn and resolutely stem the flood

\* It seems they have transferred the magazine to you as editor and proprietor, and from the sentence you pronounce on their communications there is no appeal.

of denunciation, or sink beneath its surges. When the gentle breeze fans the plain, the humble lily of the valley may rest secure in its lowliness and simplicity. But when winds and tempests bear along the raging torrent, even the venerable oak of the forest, whose roots sinking deep for ages have seized the foundations of the earth, finds its safety only in bearing up unyielding to the blast. Happy may I esteem myself if I can summon strength and resolution to conflict with the storm whose black clouds have long rolled, and at length emptied upon me the floods of wrath.

If any persons are not satisfied, from the view already taken of your magazine, that it calculates for success on confident assertion, bold declamation, and virulent denunciation, let them candidly consider your "review of the Collection of Essays on Episcopacy." There, qualified only by one single expression of "unfeigned respect" for "personal character," the advocates of Episcopacy, among whom I am honoured with a conspicuous place, are held up to public view in colours that must effectually destroy all their claims to respect and even to toleration. They are represented as advancing "extravagant," "offensive" and "arrogant" "pretensions;"\* as "hurling thunderbolts at the heads of opponents;"† as involving non-Episcopalians *indiscriminately* in the charges of being "schismatics, usurpers, rebels;"‡ as charging, in effect, "all clergymen not Episcopally ordained with being impostors, their commissions forgeries, and their sacraments blasphemy;"§ as repeating "aspersions" which "violate all the rules of prudence and charity;"|| as asserting that all "non-Episcopalians" are "children of wrath," whose religion is "marred and rendered stark naught" by "separation from the Episcopal priesthood,"¶ and softening this "sweeping sentence of proscription" by a "relief not worth accepting"\*\*\* as imposing the awful "alternative, EPISCOPACY OF PERDITION!!"†† as pronouncing

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 87 and 104. † p. 90. ‡ p. 90.  
 § p. 92. || p. 92. ¶ p. 94. \*\*\* p. 94. †† p. 95.

“upon millions of the dead and living” an excommunication as criminal as it is dreadful;\* as deliberately holding “positions of such deep-toned horror as may well make the hair stand up ‘like quills upon the fretful porcupine,’ and ‘freeze the warm blood at its fountain;”† as having “done much towards misleading men’s minds as to the foundation of eternal hope;”‡ as guilty of the horrible blasphemy of “placing the external order of the Church upon a level with the merits of the Lord Jesus,” and of holding opinions which make all “non-Episcopalians, of necessity, infidels;”§ as “virtually delivering unto Satan hundreds of churches”|| pure in doctrine, discipline, worship, resplendent in piety and godliness, while comparatively the church which they advocate and its ministers are deficient in “evangelical preaching,” regardless of “pure communion,” negligent in feeding “the sheep of Christ and his lambs with the bread of God,” attracting the “thoughtless gay,” but holding out little to “allure those who become seriously concerned about their eternal salvation”—“Verily” if this is not a denunciation of the Episcopal Church and her advocates, calculated to consign them to indignation and scorn—if this is not a *violent denunciation* of Episcopalians, “it is so like one, that we need a shrewd interpreter at our elbow to prevent our mistaking it. ‘I never,’ said Jack of Lord Peter’s brown bread, ‘saw a piece of mutton in my life so nearly resembling a twelve-penny loaf!’”¶ And this denunciation is hurled against us,

\* p. 96 and 97.

† Christian’s Magazine, p. 96.

‡ p. 98.

§ p. 99, 100.

|| p. 102.

¶ I am indebted for this apt retort to you, and you to Swift’s Tale of a Tub. You quote as authority this celebrated satire. I shall certainly be excusable in quoting it after you. What think you of the following, taken from that part of the “Tale of a Tub” where Martin and Jack are represented as stripping their *coats* (their respective churches) of the superfluous ornaments with which Lord Peter had decorated them. “*Zeal* is never so highly obliged as when you set it a *tearing*; and *Jack*, who doated on this quality in himself, allowed it its full swing. Thus it happened, that stripping down a parcel of *gold lace* a little too hastily, he rent the *main body* of his *coat* from top to bottom; and, whereas his

though we disclaim repeatedly and solemnly all the deductions upon which it is founded, and hold them in utter detestation. Let the reader reflect on this conduct, and then turn to the introduction of your magazine—"No abuse nor *virulence* shall pollute its pages."\* Let him turn to the conclusion of the essay "on Religious Controversy"—"No consequence of an opinion should be attributed to those by whom it is disowned."† And then let him turn to "his account current with human imperfection."‡

What, sir, let me seriously ask you, would you think of this system of denunciation were it aimed against yourself? What would you think of a man who, while he would not "dispute your right to publish your peculiar sentiments,"§ should knock you down the first word you uttered? In what light would you regard a religious instructor who, while he enforced the duty of "contending earnestly for the faith," should argue and write as if it were utterly impossible that the faith could exist but in the dogmas of his own bosom? What would you think of a writer whose publications should breathe in every page the language, "I am the man, and wisdom shall die with me!" What would you think of a religious zealot who, with one hand, should smite that idol of modern worship, "liberality of opinion," and,

talent was not of the happiest in *taking up a stitch*, he knew no better way than to darn it again with *pack-thread* and a *skewer*. But the matter was yet infinitely worse (I record it with tears) when he proceeded to the *embroidery*: For being *clumsy by nature*, and of temper *impatient*; withal, beholding millions of stitches that required the nicest hand, and sedatest constitution to extricate, in a great rage he tore off the whole piece, cloth and all, and flung it into the kennel, and furiously thus continued his career:—"Ah! good brother *Martin*," said he, "do as I do, for the love of God; strip, tear, pull, rend, flay off all, that we may appear as unlike the rogue *Peter* as it is possible; I would not for an hundred pounds carry the least mark about me that might give occasion to the neighbours of suspecting that I was related to such a rascal!"

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 14. † p. 25. ‡ See concluding sentence of Essay on "Religious Controversy," p. 26. § p. 93.

with the other, should seize the throne of "the Vicar of Christ;" who, thundering bull after bull from the Vatican, should require every person, without appealing to his senses or understanding, instantly to receive their decrees, or be stretched on the rack of inquisitorial despotism?\*" Pardon me, sir, your enforcing with firmness and decency your own opinions, your attacking with plainness and warmth obnoxious errors, constitute no just ground of crimination. It is your attempt, by a system of violent denunciation, to excite against me the prejudices and passions of your readers, which imperiously demands the most pointed resistance. Your candid criticisms I do not fear. Your temperate reasonings I do not deprecate. I contest not your right even to "detect," "hunt," and "pursue" my "errors;"—only let reason and candour, not prejudice and passion, be my pursuers. "Urge me not over the precipice" until dispassionate and charitable judgment has decided that my opinions, with all their qualifications, are "extravagant," "arrogant," and of "deep-toned horror." But you do not inquire into the abstract truth or falsehood of my opinions; you torture them to extreme consequences, as *unjust* as they are repugnant to my assertions and feelings. It is your determination to "leave me no shelter from crime but the thickets of contradiction;"—a contradiction not on some topics of taste, literature, or politics, but on the infinitely momentous concerns of eternity: a contradiction, therefore, which, considering my responsibility as a guide of the souls of men, holds me up to more than scorn and contempt. This conduct constitutes the ground of my complaining. Against this I protest. I have a right to resist it, and the dearest principles of self-defence justify the exercise of this right.

\* Your quere may be easily answered—"How many bow-shots is such a writer off from the territory of our sovereign lord the Pope?" He did not wait for the hat of a Cardinal, but with one leap mounted the papal chair—"We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

St. Hobart must have felt much relieved

## LETTER V.

SIR,

I SHALL now more particularly take up your "review of the Essays on Episcopacy." I pledge myself to prove that it is one continued strain of confident assertion, intemperate declamation, and uncandid views of my opinions. I pledge myself to make every weapon which you have aimed against me recoil upon yourself.

Your illustrious predecessor, the author of "Miscellanies," had taken no small pains to fix on me the odium of having made a violent and unprovoked attack upon non-Episcopals. This charge exactly suited your plan of denunciation. It would enable you to rouse, at the very "threshold," the prejudices and passions of your readers. The work you purposed to review would be condemned before one *argument* had been offered to expose its fallacy. It would have been requiring too much of you, therefore, to disdain to dress up in more glaring colours the unfounded aspersion, that I was a wanton and unprovoked aggressor. The author of *Miscellanies* was immediately met by my friend the "Layman." In his third and fourth number\* this gentleman defended these publications from the charge of aggression. He proved that they only contained what the writer deemed the principles of the Episcopal Church, stated in an unexceptionable style—that this statement of their peculiar opinions was a right exercised by all denominations, and never before considered as a just cause of offence—that the consequences of these opinions, unavoidably affecting other denominations, were qualified by every allowance for the erroneous conclusions of the sincere and honest inquirers after truth which the most unbounded charity could demand. The unjust charge of aggression was thus refuted and exposed. The weapon which the author of *Miscellanies* aimed against me dropt

\* Collection of Essays on Episcopacy, p. 30, &c. and 40, &c.

from his arm. In the burst of mortified indignation you have rushed forward, and condescended to take it up. Wielded by you, it comes winged with destruction. You quote obnoxious passages.\* You turn them over and over. You sift them till nothing is left but some hard names. These you represent me as ungraciously dealing against non-Episcopalians. Your triumph seems now almost complete; and a keen stroke of satire lays me prostrate at your feet. But "I cry you mercy"—I have had a little time to breathe—And humbly beg you to permit me, by a simple story, to defend myself. It pains me to be compelled by your denunciations, to occupy so much of these letters with personal remarks.

My opinions on the subject of Episcopacy cannot be ranked among the prejudices of education. I bless God that I was baptized, in infancy, in the Episcopal Church. That part of my life, however, during which my religious principles became a subject of my anxious investigation, was passed at a Presbyterian college. Respect and veneration for my instructors and guides in the paths of science—esteem and affection for many valued friends, to whom I knew certain opinions on the subject of Episcopacy would be obnoxious, excited in my bosom, a painful struggle between the most amiable impulses of feeling and the strong demands of duty. But when after as honest and faithful examination as I was able to make, I became fully satisfied that it was "evident from scripture and ancient authors, that there have been from the Apostles' times three orders of ministers, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in Christ's Church;" and that the Episcopal Church considered no man as "a *lawful* Bishop, Priest, or Deacon who hath not had Episcopal consecration or ordination,"† it surely became my duty to maintain and inculcate what the Church had thus solemnly declared. Perhaps also I had cause to apprehend that Episcopalians in many places

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 90.

† Preface to the Ordination Services.

were losing sight of these important truths ; that many of them made no distinction as to authority between ministers Episcopally ordained, whom the Episcopal Church considers as alone "lawful ministers," and those who had not received Episcopal ordination ; and through the want of correct information I myself had been led, in some cases, to violate the principles of my church. It surely cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise that I should feel a solicitude to arrest, by my efforts, however humble, the progress of an indifference and laxity of opinion which threatened destruction to the distinctive principles of the Episcopal Church. Had I been disposed to invite controversy, I would have advocated and enforced Episcopacy in books inviting general perusal. Had I been disposed to attack non-Episcopalians, I would have made a pointed address to them. But my single object was the instruction of Episcopalians. I was, therefore, desirous to avoid controversy, and particularly all reasonable cause of offence to others. The doctrine of the Church, on the subject of Episcopacy, was published in Manuals of Devotion and Instruction, addressed to Episcopalians, and calculated for them alone. Now, sir, what was this but the "peaceful exercise of a common right?"\* In what more unexceptionable mode could I have attempted to instruct Episcopalians in the principles of their church? In what more unexceptionable mode could I have admonished them of the danger and guilt of separating from that ministry which only their church declared *lawful*? If the terms in which this admonition was couched unavoidably affected other denominations, the fault was in the nature of the subject, not in the monitor. And as you declare that you "shall neither dispute the right of an Episcopalian to publish his own sentiments, nor when they happen to bear hard upon others, shall cry out against their uncharitableness," permit me to inquire, why you brand the exercise of this right with the most harsh and opprobrious

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 90.

epithets? Think you that "uncharitable pretensions" (an epithet which you condemn the author of "Miscellanies" for using) sounds harsher in my ears than "arrogant," "extravagant" pretensions, "positions of deep-toned horror?" Compared with these denunciations, the declamations of the author of "Miscellanies" against "bigotry and superstition," are as the "gentle dew" to the angry "thunderbolt." To concede in the most unqualified terms the "right of an Episcopalian to publish his peculiar sentiments," and yet to denounce him as an aggressor upon other denominations the moment he decently exercises this right, is an outrage upon common sense.

The author of "Miscellanies" was censured by the "Layman" and "Cyprian" as an aggressor, because he bitterly inveighed against an Episcopalian for exercising, in the most unexceptionable mode, the right which you concede to him, "to publish his peculiar sentiments." The author of *Miscellanies* was deemed an unjustifiable aggressor, because, in a style of invective and ridicule, he attacked the principles of the Episcopal Church in the newspapers.

When a writer publishes animadversions on the erroneous principles of any religious denomination, in pointed addresses to them, or in pamphlets inviting general perusal, he may be considered as courting controversy. Yet if his reasoning be candid, and his style temperate and decent, he cannot on your principles be deemed censurable. You maintain, in the strongest language, the duty of earnestly contending for the faith. You maintain, that in this world of error and sin, religious controversy, or a comparison between the "conflicting claims" to that truth which "if we reject, we seal our perdition," becomes an imperious duty. You concede also to all denominations the right to defend their peculiar tenets. Yet the moment any denomination publishes a book in illustration or defence of its peculiar principles, it is to be considered, according to your reasoning, as a wanton aggression on the peaceful domains of others! This doctrine

changes even public confessions of faith, and formulas of religious instruction and devotion, into the darts and spears of contention. Mutual aggression and attack among Christians unavoidably result from the maintenance of their respective principles. If your reasoning be just, the *Episcopal Church* was long since *attacked*, and my publications were strictly *defensive*. The "Constitution and Standards of the Associate-Reformed church in North-America," of which church you are a distinguished minister, was published several years before my books, under your most solemn sanction and superintendence. In this constitution,\* "the distinction of superior and inferior clergy," a distinction which prevails among Episcopalians, and which lies at the foundation of their church, is styled "highly unscriptural and anti-Christian."† Will not your reasoning against me, which you advance with so much confidence, and which you seem to think is for ever to silence me, recoil upon yourself? You assert, "it is the dictate of common sense, that if an author print and publish severe reflections upon any body of men, he not only attacks them, but does it in the most open manner possible."‡ Now, you sir, and the Associate-Reformed Synod, have "printed and published severe reflections" upon Episcopalians. You have styled their ministry "unscriptural and anti-Christian." What apology can you make but the one which you put in my mouth? "You have no right, sir, to be offended with any part of my book. It is true, I have called your 'ministry unscriptural and anti-Christian,' but you should not construe these epithets into an attack upon you; for the least candour will enable you to perceive that this book was pub-

\* Art. Church Government, book i. chap. 2. sec. 2, 5.

† It is very well known that the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, who drew up the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, *denounced* and *abjured* Episcopacy; as did also the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who, in various acts, at different times, solemnly condemned it as unfounded in *scripture*, as a *popish and wicked hierarchy*.

‡ Christian's Magazine, p. 91.

lished for the use of our own connections." No, sir, this apology will not do. For, to apply still your own language, Episcopalians will not be "sent home perfectly satisfied to be denounced as having an 'unscriptural and anti-Christian' ministry, so often as the zealous" Dr. Mason, or the Associate-Reformed Synod, may "judge it conducive to the edification of their own particular friends." Do not misunderstand me. It is not my design to charge you with an *attack* upon Episcopalians in the publication of that book; but I have promised to make the weapons which you have aimed at me recoil upon yourself, and you must excuse me if I neither forget nor violate my promise. I appeal to our candid readers, whether the reasoning which proves that my books for the use of Episcopalians are an attack upon other denominations, does not also prove that the constitution and standards of your own church were an attack upon Episcopalians. This "constitution" (it may be said) is not the work of an individual, but of the Synod. But the number and respectability of the persons who published the book only aggravate the attack, which, according to *your* mode of reasoning, is contained in it. This work, however, was certainly published under *your* superintendence. At any rate, I am under no apprehension that you will disclaim any positions advanced in it.

But I hold in my hand a series of "Letters" which you published on "Frequent Communion." From these letters (page 89) I extract the following: "We reject in a mass the corruptions of popery, and of her ape, *prelacy*.\* We renounce the religious observance of *Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, &c.* and the *festivals* in honour of a troop of saints and saintesses, as *superstitious* and inconsistent with *gospel* worship, how graceful soever to the anti-Christian Calendar." Is it possible to speak of the institutions of the Episcopal Church in terms of greater contempt? Now, this

\* Prelacy is the term by which Presbyterian writers frequently designate Episcopacy.

language you proclaimed to the public in your Letters published in 1798. And my Companions "for the Altar," and for the "Festivals and Fasts," were published in 1804. Should you not blush at your attempt to fix on me the charge of aggression?

I have also perused a missionary sermon, entitled, "The Triumph of the Gospel," preached some years ago before the New-York Missionary Society. In this sermon I find (at page 21) the following passage: "*Ecclesiastical dignitaries, spiritual lords, and all the pageantry of the hierarchy in its various modifications, which have debased the gospel, and metamorphosed the kingdom of Christ to a kingdom of this world, will be finally trampled in the dust, and despised by Christians.*" Now, sir, this sermon was preached before the appearance of my "Companion for the Altar." And what is the purport of the sentence above quoted? Among "ecclesiastical dignitaries" *bishops* are evidently included. A dignitary is "a clergyman advanced above the rank of a parochial *priest*."\* A bishop ranks above a *priest*, and is, therefore, a dignitary. If by the hierarchy was meant only the papacy, why does the sentence run—"the hierarchy in its *various modifications*?" Episcopacy is surely a *modification* of the *hierarchy*. By this name you distinguish it.‡ Bishops and Episcopacy then, "which have *debased the gospel*, will be finally *trampled in the dust, and despised by Christians!*" Let us apply to this passage your reasoning: "It is the dictate of common sense," you say, "that if an author print and publish severe reflections upon any body of men, he not only attacks them, but does it in the most open manner possible!" Now, a venerable divine of this city preached and published a sermon containing severe reflections upon Episcopalians, stating, in terms too evident to be mis-

\* Johnson.

‡ Christian's Magazine, p. 101. When the adversaries of Episcopacy mean to express their contempt for it, they call it the *hierarchy*, the *prclacy*.

taken, that bishops and Episcopacy (“ecclesiastical dignitaries,” “the hierarchy in its various modifications,”) “had debased the gospel,” and “would be finally trampled in the dust, and despised by Christians.” And the Missionary Society of New-York requested and sanctioned the publication of this sermon. Here, then, according to *your* principle, was an “attack in the most open manner possible” upon Episcopalians, by a venerable divine, and by the New-York Missionary Society, consisting of Presbyterian divines and laymen. I pray not to be misunderstood. I mean no reflection nor censure on the New-York Missionary Society. The clergyman who preached the sermon to which I have alluded, for his learning and talents, his exemplary piety, commands my veneration: For his uniformly kind deportment to me, my gratitude is due to him. If he deemed the sentiment which I have quoted just, and the publication of it necessary to the edification of Christians, he possessed the right, it was his duty to preach and publish it. It is farthest from my intention to censure him for doing so, or the Missionary Society for sanctioning the publication. In order to resist, however, the charge of aggression, I am compelled, reluctantly, to prove, that *if your principle be correct*, Episcopalians were attacked before the appearance of my “Companion for the Altar.”

You complain very bitterly of the conduct of an Episcopal clergyman, who, in a sermon preached several years since at a public ordination, denounced, as you conceive, the non-Episcopal clergy. It is with the deepest regret I am compelled to maintain, that, if you and your brethren have just cause of complaint against the sermon of the Episcopal clergyman, we have the same cause of complaint against the sermon which I have just quoted. When a person wishes to vent his indignation against any object, and to sink it into contempt, he says that it should be “trampled in the dust,” it “should be *despised*.” And this is the sentence pronounced on Episcopacy, which is a modification of the hier-

archy, by a non-Episcopal clergyman, in a printed discourse. But (you say) the non-Episcopal clergy were invited to hear the sermon which gave them so much offence, and this circumstance rendered the attack an *outrage!* There is no recollection of any such invitation having been given. But there was notice given in the newspapers of the preaching of the missionary sermon to which I allude; and surely Episcopalians as well as others were at least indirectly invited to attend. Where, then, the difference in the two cases? But I disclaim all wish or intention of fixing on the worthy and venerable preacher of the missionary sermon any design either to "attack" or to "outrage" Episcopalians. He honestly believed the sentiments he uttered. I do not presume to censure him for inculcating what he doubtless esteemed an important truth, and a subject of congratulation to all who looked for the purity and glory of the millennial church. But it really appears to me that the two cases above referred to are exactly parallel. The latter is rather the stronger case. For the missionary sermon reflecting on Episcopalians was not only preached, but *published*. And, therefore, according to you, as these "severe reflections" were "printed and published," they were not only an "attack," but an attack "in the most open manner possible." The deductions which bear hard upon the preacher of the missionary sermon come from yourself.

Ill-fated Episcopalians! your Episcopacy may be branded as "unscriptural and anti-Christian;" your bishops held up to detestation, as "lords in God's heritage."\* Your hierarchy, charged with having "debased the gospel," with being "the ape of popery," may be consigned to infamy and destruction, "to be *trampled in the dust, and despised* by Christians." All this ye must bear patiently and silently. For the moment any one of you lifts up his voice in language however decent, to defend your hierarchy, to show to

\* So styled in the Confession of Faith of a Calvinistic Church

his brethren the *guilt and danger* of separating from it, of *despising* it, and *trampling* it in the dust—a hue and cry is raised against him—to break his spirit—to crush his resolution—to blast his influence—to drown for ever his remonstrances!

Believe me, sir, I shall still escape “the unpopularity of being the aggressor.” And I am principally anxious to escape it, because I do not *deserve* it, and am deeply conscious that the least idea of aggression was farthest from my thoughts or wishes. At the same time, I freely declare, that I can see no impropriety in any individual remarking with freedom, plainness, and force, on what he may deem the erroneous tenets of any body of men. If his strictures be decent and candid, it would, in my judgment, be unjust to affix any odium upon him for the exercise of that right of investigation which, on all subjects, is the hand-maid and the nurse of truth. I certainly deem the books I published fair objects of remark and animadversion. I concede the right of animadversion in its full extent, restrained only by decency and candour. But I solemnly protest against being condemned, even before my opinions are examined, by being denounced as a wanton and unprovoked aggressor.

But the inquiry has sometimes been made, and not by non-Episcopalians only—“Why, in order to the defence of the principles of your own church, should you deem it necessary to animadvert on the principles of others? Concede to you the right and the duty of proving the divine authority of the Episcopal ministry; why should you insist that non-Episcopalians have not a valid ministry?” Now, against such reasoning I can shelter myself under a principle which you kindly furnish me, that “*truth* can admit of no compromise with *error*, nor does *charity* require it.” In maintaining certain principles of the Episcopal Church, there can be, there ought to be, no compromise with the errors that are opposed to these principles. I could not maintain the divine authority of the Episcopal ministry, without de-

nying the validity of a non-Episcopal ministry ; for it is an essential principle in the Episcopal ministry that Bishops, as an order superior to Presbyters, have alone the power of ordination. Of course a ministry not Episcopally ordained cannot be a valid ministry. In several of the prayers in the Offices of Ordination of the Episcopal Church, it is asserted, that God, by "his divine providence and by his Holy Spirit, appointed divers orders of ministers in his Church ;" and "Bishops," "Priests," and "Deacons" are ranked among the orders thus divinely appointed. That she acknowledges only Episcopal ordination as valid, is evident also from her *uniform* and *inviolable practice*. She does not receive any persons into standing as ministers who have not been *Episcopally* ordained. Whence this restriction if ordination by Presbyters is valid? What is ordination? Not the mere *mode of admission* to the privilege of officiating among some *particular* denomination of Christians. It is the *conferring of the ministerial commission* generally. Who confers this commission among Presbyterians? The Presbyters. Does the Church of England, or the Episcopal Church in America, acknowledge this ordination? No; for these churches never receive a Presbyterian minister until he has been Episcopally ordained.\* If they considered that his ordination by Presbyters had conferred on him a valid ministerial

\* Some few instances to the contrary in the Church of England, at the outset of the Reformation, cannot invalidate a *general* and *uniform* practice since that period. During the contentions and troubles of the Reformation, that some few irregularities occurred, is surely not surprising. If the few instances of some Presbyterian divines creeping into livings, by the aid and support of *political* leaders, would prove that the Church of England at the Reformation did not insist on Episcopal ordination, the instances that occurred during the same period of some laymen holding livings, would prove that the Church did not insist on any ordination at all! Long and uniform *practice* has settled it into a principle in the Church of England (and it is a principle which the Episcopal Church in America has never violated) that none are received as ministers but those who "have had Episcopal consecration or ordination." In regard, therefore, to the *present* principles of these churches there can be no dispute

commission, would it not be absurd, would it not be a solemn mockery for the Bishop to treat him as if he had never received a ministerial commission, as if he were a layman who was a candidate for orders, and proceed to ordain him? These principles with respect to ordination, the Episcopal Church has the same right to maintain which other denominations have to maintain various principles offensive to her. If any person will point out to me by what method I can maintain that Bishops alone have the power of ordination, and at the same time concede this power to Presbyters, he shall have my warmest thanks. He will save me from the painful necessity of holding opinions offensive to many persons for whose talents, piety and zeal I cherish the highest veneration.

But further. It is the solemn duty of every minister to explain to his people the sin of *schism*, and to guard them against it. It is considered by the Apostle as a "carnal" sin (1 Cor. iii. 3, &c.) Episcopalians pray in their Liturgy to be *delivered* from it. Their ministers, therefore, are surely bound to explain to them in what the sin consists. Now, the guilt of the sin of schism may in various ways be incurred. But, I presume there can be no doubt that when we separate from the duly authorized ministry, and commune with those who are not lawful ministers, we are guilty of this sin. On Episcopal principles, lawful ministers are Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Bishops alone possess the power of ordination. Of course it necessarily results, that none can be esteemed "lawful ministers" who "have not had Episcopal consecration or ordination."\* Communing with ministers not thus duly authorized is, therefore, on Episcopal principles, to commit the sin of schism. And I would ask the *liberal* Episcopalian, or any other advocate for that modern liberality which startles at the very idea of opposing error, in what way an Episcopal minister is to explain to his people the sin of schism, and to guard them

\* Preface to the Ordination Offices of the Episcopal Church.

against it, without warning them against separating from their "lawful" pastors, and communing with those who have not received "Episcopal consecration or ordination."\* All that in this case can reasonably be required of the Episcopal minister is, that he should convey his warnings in a decent style, and through a channel the least calculated to irritate or offend. Now, sir, will you assert that the style of my admonitions was either intemperate or indecent? And if a manual of instruction and devotion designed for Episcopalians be an improper channel through which to address them on their peculiar principles, will you be so good as to inform me what is a proper channel? You affect to express your surprise that a form of preparation for the holy communion should be made the vehicle of these sentiments. But on the principles of all the Presbyterian churches, the sacraments may not be "dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained."† Was it not then necessary, that a work on the holy communion should declare who are ministers "lawfully ordained" to dispense this sacrament; that it should warn Christians from receiving it from those who were not "lawfully ordained?"

You express also, though in an indirect manner, your surprise, that "the wholesome admonition" concerning those who are lawfully ordained to dispense the Lord's supper should be contained in a meditation for the evening before receiving that holy ordinance. It was my intention to comprise this "admonition" in the meditation for Satur-

\* The Episcopal Minister does no more than every consistent Presbyterian is compelled to do. For if, as the Westminster Divines and the Constitution and Standards of your Church assert, "Presbyterian government is the *true* and *only* one which the Lord Jesus Christ hath prescribed in his word,"\* and the orders of the Episcopal ministry "unscriptural and anti-Christian;" they who hear the word or receive the ordinances from this "unscriptural and anti-Christian" ministry, must be guilty of schism.

† Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. sect. 4. Larger Catechism, 176.

\* Constitution of the Associate-Reformed Church, p. 475.

day morning. I found, however, that this would have extended that meditation to an unusual and very disproportionate length. And as the preceding part of the work was printed off, I was compelled to place this "admonition" in the meditation for Saturday evening. Though, in the order of the meditations, it might have probably filled a more judicious place, yet I cannot admit that its present situation is wholly improper. It cannot be improper for a communicant, even on the very point of approaching the communion, to pause and inquire—Am I about to receive it from "a minister of the word, lawfully ordained" to dispense it? In the prayer annexed to this meditation for Saturday evening, the communicant prays that "in the exercise of *lively penitence and faith* he may humbly and thankfully partake of the ordinances of the church; and thus maintaining communion with it, derive from Jesus, its divine head, pardon, grace, consolation, triumph, everlasting glory."\* He who sincerely offers up this supplication, will not be in an unfit temper to rise in the morning and prepare for receiving the sacred pledges of his Saviour's love.

What relation has the story of Mr. Wright to the present discussion? or how does it affect its merits? The direct assertion, that our defence of Episcopacy had been indecent or intemperate, could be met and immediately refuted.† Indirect assertion would be equally effectual in exciting clamour against us, and would in some measure shelter our accuser from the charge of aspersion. Your representation of what you conceive was very intemperate conduct in this Episcopal clergyman, tends to crush the innocent with the

\* Companion for the Altar, p. 206.

† The appeal may be made to every candid person, whether in the "Companion for the Altar," and in the "Festivals and Fasts," obnoxious as may be the opinions, there is any *intemperance* or *indecent* of style. If in the "Episcopal controversy" a higher tone of remonstrance has been assumed, it is fully justified by the flood of invective, sarcasm, and ridicule poured forth by the opponent of Episcopacy in that controversy?

guilty—to fix on myself and other recent advocates of Episcopacy, an odium which we do not merit; and to rouse against us an indignant clamour, which will not listen to the voice of sober argument and remonstrance. You state that this Mr. Wright “declared to the faces of some of the most venerable ministers in this city, that all clergymen not Episcopally ordained, are imposters; their commissions forgeries; and their sacraments blasphemy.” But is it not possible that the indignant feelings of those who heard Mr. Wright deliver sentiments obnoxious to them may have somewhat exaggerated his language; or that at this distance of time it may be unintentionally misstated? I can only assert that the Episcopal clergy who heard him cannot recollect that he used the very strong expressions which you impute to him. It seems, as you assert, my books are a continuance of this same system of attack; the same “*aspersions*”\* are “repeated” by me, “though in a more decent language”—that is, I am still a calumniator, though rather more decent in my “aspersions” than Mr. Wright! Sir, I protest against this conduct as unjust, uncandid, and, I may add, (from its injurious tendency on my own reputation and feelings) cruel. The sermon of Mr. Wright must have been preached several years before I was in orders—and though some *slight rumours* of it *recently* reached me, yet you are the first person from whom I have received a statement of its contents, or of the circumstances attending its delivery. How, then, could I be guilty of wilfully continuing an “attack,” which I was ignorant had ever been made? How can I be justly answerable for the intemperate conduct and language of a person whom I never knew, and with whom I never had any kind of intercourse?

If, sir, as you insinuate, there has been any system of attack organized against non-Episcopalians, I have not been privy to it. My books have no share in it. I have the satisfaction to know that my Diocesan approves of the senti-

\* Observe, sir, “aspersions” are *calumnies*.

ments contained in those books ; but neither he nor my brethren knew any thing of them until they saw them in print ; nor are they privy to the contents of these letters. And yet I can see no impropriety, when the church is assailed, in her friends uniting to defend her. I repeat the solemn declaration which I have made in the preface to the "Collection of Essays" which you are now reviewing, that "it never occurred to me that the publication of those books would be the cause of offence to others."\* They only contain principles which have been maintained and repeatedly published by eminent divines.

If, sir, you would honour with a perusal the Life of Dr. Johnson, the first President of King's, now Columbia College, you would find perhaps some facts that would probably hold you "in suspense between the gaze of astonishment and the swell of indignation!" Dr. CUTLER, the President of Yale College, Dr. JOHNSON, and several of the most eminent clergy in Connecticut, were induced, at a period when the Episcopal Church was scarcely known in the state, to examine the subject of Episcopacy ; and finally, in opposition to the most powerful influence, embraced the principles for which you denounce me, and went to England for Episcopal ordination. And yet, from the style of your address to me, one would suppose that I was the first who in this country ever had the presumption to urge such "extravagant and arrogant pretensions." These principles always have had their advocates, and will continue to be defended, any

\* My republishing the "Essays on Episcopacy" which appeared in the Albany-Centinel in a separate volume, with notes and comments, was a defensive measure. The Author of Miscellanies had attacked Episcopal principles in the newspapers. As his essays were a continued series of bold and concise assertions, completely to detect and to answer them by any thing like reasoning, required his opponents to enter on an extensive field. And as the printers at length closed their papers to the discussion, many of the assertions of the Author of Miscellanies remained unanswered, which it was necessary, therefore, to notice in a separate publication.

thing you or others can say to the contrary notwithstanding.

But the most extraordinary declaration relative to this "attack," as you are pleased to term it, is the following: "A circumstance which rendered this attack an outrage, was the care of the Episcopal clergy to circulate notice of the ordination, and their solicitude for the attendance of their non-Episcopal brethren!" Now, sir, before you hazarded this most serious charge against the Episcopal clergy—a charge which, fixing on them an "outrage," would prove that they possessed neither the mild forbearance of Christians, the dignity of clergymen, nor the manners of gentlemen, should you not have paused, and ascertained, beyond the possibility of mistake, several important particulars? Are you satisfied on good authority that "the Episcopal clergy expressed a solicitude for the attendance of their non-Episcopal brethren?" I have ascertained from the officiating Bishop and the only two Episcopal clergy now resident in this city who attended the ordination, that they knew nothing of any invitation having been given to the non-Episcopal clergy, or of any solicitude having been expressed for their attendance. But admit the fact: are you able to prove, have you any satisfactory reason to believe, that the Episcopal clergy were previously acquainted with the nature of Mr. Wright's sermon, or with the obnoxious passages to which you refer? You can neither prove, nor have you any satisfactory reason to believe this circumstance—and the truth of this only can authorize you in the serious charge you have brought against the Episcopal clergy, and rescue it from the imputation of being more unjust and indecorous than the conduct which you ascribe to them. I am authorized to assert, that the Episcopal clergy were wholly ignorant what would be the contents of Mr. Wright's sermon, and the style in which he would deem it proper to convey his observations.—"Alas—alas"—"Pudet—pudet"\*—Were I disposed to retort, might I not lament, that persons who make such

\* Your favourite expressions.

pretensions to extraordinary piety, who claim to themselves the exclusive title of “evangelical,” should forget the first dictate of a truly evangelical spirit, and inconsiderately render themselves liable to the charge of committing an outrage against the very individuals on whom they attempt to fix this crime? No, sir; no—I make no such retort. I cast no imputation of wilful misrepresentation or perversion. There has been some misapprehension—some want of recollection—and more inconsiderate zeal in this business—Let it be covered with the mantle of charity.

## LETTER VI.

SIR,

THE charge of *aggression* I have thus proved utterly unfounded.

Your other charges may be thus summed up.

That I maintain, that communion with the Episcopal priesthood is a condition of salvation which is not only *indispensable* on the part of *man* (in which sense I apply the word indispensable,) but which *God* himself will not dispense with; and that “the simple fact of separation from the Episcopal priesthood” renders all *repentance and faith unavailing*, “mars the religion of non-Episcopalians, and renders it stark naught!”—and that thus I make the “only alternative, EPISCOPACY OR PERDITION!!”\*

That I “make particular views of external order the hinging point of salvation”†—that I “place the external order of the Church upon a level with the merits of our Lord Jesus, in the article of acceptance before God;”‡ that “with respect to non-Episcopalians I make Episcopacy of *primary*, and faith in the Redeemer of secondary importance;”‡ and that I maintain that “faith in Christ is impossible where there is no communion with the Bishop.”‡

\* Christian’s Magazine, p. 94, 95.

† p. 98.

‡ p. 99.

Now, sir, before you can be "justified in uttering a syllable which only looks towards conclusions" which hold me up as a monster of arrogance and impiety, unfit to be tolerated among Christians, you ought to be not only "perfectly certain of your premises," but that your conclusions also are fairly and legitimately drawn.

I utterly disclaim the sentiments you impute to me.

I utterly deny the truth of your charges.

I pledge myself to prove that you support them by *partial* and *false* views of my opinions—by uncandidly *torturing* them to an *extreme*—and by *illogical* deductions which a *just* reasoner should blush to make, and a *candid* reasoner should scorn to enlist into his service.

I pledge myself to prove that the same uncandid methods would attach the same odium to your own principles; and that I lay no greater stress on *external order*, on *communion with the church through its ministry and ordinances*, than the standards and confessions of faith of the Presbyterian churches will warrant.

To prove these points, I pledge myself. Is there a candid reader of your review in which these charges against me are contained, who will refuse to accompany me in my vindication?

I utterly disclaim the sentiments you impute to me. I utterly deny the truth of your charges.

Do I maintain that *God will not dispense with communion with the Episcopal priesthood*, when I express my belief that he will dispense with it in the cases of all those who do not "negligently or wilfully continue in a state of separation from it;"\* who do not, through criminal *negligence* or *wilful obstinacy*, contemn the means of arriving at the truth, and resist the light of conviction? Or do I maintain that "separation from the Episcopal priesthood renders faith and repentance unavailing, and mars the religion of non-Episcopalians," when I express my belief that the "humble, the penitent,

\* Companion for the Altar, p. 203.

and obedient," who reject the authorized ministry, not "negligently or wilfully," but through "involuntary error," will still have "mercy" extended to them?\*" Am I guilty then of making the "only alternative, Episcopacy or Perdition?" When my principles thus extend mercy to many who reject that "external order" which I believe has the sanction of divine authority, do I make "external order the hinging point of salvation?" Do I "place this order on a level with the merits of Christ," when the principle which I lay at the foundation of my work is, "that we are saved from the guilt and dominion of sin by the divine merits and grace of a crucified Redeemer?"† Is my making (according to you) "faith in Christ of secondary, and Episcopacy of primary importance," consistent with your own declaration of the "evangelical strain" of many parts of the book? And while I expressly acknowledge that the "humble, the penitent, and obedient," even though they should, through "involuntary error," reject the authorized ministry, and of course the Bishop, will enjoy the "blessings of God's favour"—is your assertion correct, that I "make faith in Christ impossible but through communion with the Bishop?" You may say indeed, that I "flinch from the *consequences* of my own doctrine." By and by, I shall consider this point, and show that you are as incorrect and uncandid in deducing consequences as you are in stating opinions. My simple object now is to show that *I do not hold the obnoxious opinions* which you impute to me. For, to use your own language, I "am sure that the *drift*, and have little doubt that the *design*," of your review "is to force plain people into the conclusion," that I *really* maintain the opinions which, by most unfair deduction from my writings, you fix upon me.

What, according to your representations, is the amount of my reasonings? That *all are consigned to "PERDITION"* who are not within the pale of my own church. No per-

\* Companion for the Altar, p. 203.

† Preface to the Companion for the Altar, p. 5.

sons will believe that I am capable of pronouncing this most impious judgment, when they read the following, contained in the very books on which you animadvert: "The judge of the whole earth will do right. The grace of God quickens and animates *all the degenerate children of Adam*. The mercy of the Saviour is co-extensive with the ruin into which sin hath plunged mankind. And in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him."\* "We presume to judge no man, leaving all judgment to that *Being* who is alone qualified to make allowance for the *ignorance, invincible prejudices, imperfect reasonings, and mistaken judgments* of his frail creatures."† "All men are in the hands of an infinitely *merciful* and righteous God, who will *judge them according to their works*."‡ "Though the institutions of the Almighty are indispensably binding upon men, he is not himself restricted by them. Every benevolent heart, therefore, ardently cherishes the delightful belief that *mercy will at length* be extended to *all who humbly and earnestly seek to know and to do the will* of their heavenly Master."§ Episcopalians maintain, that "in conformity to the order handed down from the beginning, Bishops only have the power of ordination, and as a *general* proposition they maintain that Episcopal ministrations only are valid. At the same time they are disposed to believe, that when any church cannot obtain the lawful succession, God, who 'is not a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed,' will mercifully dispense with it. Nay, that he will graciously accept and bless the ministrations of those who have not a lawful call; when the error is not chargeable to wilful neglect of the means of information, nor to obstinate resistance to the light of conviction. In this way does the author of the

\* Companion for the Altar, p. 202.

† Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, p. 60.

‡ Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, p. 204.

§ Preface to the Collection of Essays on Episcopacy, p. 7.

‘Companion for the Altar’ reconcile truth with charity: in this way does he embrace in the arms of fraternal benevolence all who, according to the talents bestowed on them by their gracious Maker, seek to know and to do his will.”\*

Will you hold sentiments equally *charitable* with those which I have advanced in the foregoing extracts? Will you, “in the sincerity of your soul,” cherish the delightful hope of that “glorious consummation—when the same generous zeal for God and truth, which too often, in this world of folly and confusion, sets those at widest variance whom the similitude of virtuous feelings should the most unite, shall be the cement of an indissoluble friendship; when the innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, and people (why should I not add of all sects and parties?) assembled round the throne, shall, like the first Christians, be of one soul, and one mind; giving praise with one consent to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood?”† No, sir, I will venture to say that you will not meet me on this broad ground of charity, which extends the favour of God to all his sincere servants, whatever may be their unintentional and involuntary errors. I will venture to pledge myself that anxious as you are to represent me as hurling to perdition all who are not within the pale of my own church, your charity will not take this wide range. For, referring to some of the charitable opinions which are above expressed, you intimate, “that in maintaining them, if a little pressed, I might perhaps find I had no ingenuity to spare.”‡ Come, sir, press me on these assertions. The public will soon see who it is that maintains positions “arrogant, extravagant,” and revolting to common sense and reason.

But you will say, I “flinch from the consequences of my

\* Collection of Essays on Episcopacy, p. 208.

† Preface to the Collection of Essays on Episcopacy, p. 8.

‡ Christian’s Magazine, p. 87.

own doctrines"—“my concessions are in diametrical repugnance to my arguments.”\*

I proceed, therefore, to prove that you support your charges by *partial* and *false* views of my opinions; by uncandidly *torturing* them to an extreme; and by illogical deductions unworthy of a just and candid reasoner. I shall show that the same uncandid methods would attach the same odium to many of your own principles on the subject of church communion; and that I lay no greater stress on external order, on communion with the church through its ministry and ordinances, than the standards and confessions of faith of the Presbyterian churches will warrant.

From the criminality of rejecting that ministry which has alone the seal of divine authority, I expressly and repeatedly except all who labour under “involuntary error.” But this “relief,” you say, “is not worth accepting,” because “the instances in which it would be substantiated, would be rare indeed.”† And this position you establish by falsely representing me as confounding together what are totally distinct, “*unavoidable error*,” and “*involuntary error*.” *Unavoidable error* can only be committed where there is no “access to the means of instruction.” But *involuntary error* may be committed even where instruction sheds the full blaze of light. They fall within the exception of *unavoidable error*, who *have not* access to the means of *information*. And they fall within the exception of *involuntary error*, who, possessing the means of investigating truth, do not *neglect* these means, nor *wilfully* resist the light of conviction. These two excusable kinds of error will include all the sincere inquirers after truth; who, I expressly admit, will not be condemned for rejecting the divinely authorized priesthood. Separation from this priesthood I make excusable, whenever “it proceeds from *involuntary and unavoidable ignorance or error*.”‡ Now, sir, what is the construction which common sense and

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 101.

† p. 94.

‡ Companion for the Altar, p. 203.

common candour would put upon my language? Certainly that in my judgment THEY are excusable for *rejecting* the authorized ministry of the church, who either do not possess the means of information, or are prevented from availing themselves of these means—for their *ignorance* is *unavoidable* and *involuntary*. That THEY are excusable who remain in *error* on the subject, through the imperfect means of information in their power—for their *error* is evidently *unavoidable*. That THEY are excusable who, neither *neglecting* the means of information, nor *wilfully* resisting the light of conviction, remain still in error—for their error is *involuntary*, is neither negligent nor wilful; and must be referred to that power of prejudice, to that force of early prepossessions, or to some of those inscrutable causes which, we know, often blind the understandings and pervert the judgments of the greatest and best of men. You were bound in common justice and candour, as well as by the obvious meaning of terms, to place the above construction on my language. In the very passage of my writings which you have quoted,\* I fix the imputation of “great guilt” and “imminent danger” on those only “who *negligently* or *wilfully* continue in a state of separation from the duly authorized ministry of the church”—*negligently*, through inattention to the subject—*wilfully*, through resistance to the honest conviction of their minds.

Whom then do I exempt from what you are pleased to term my “sweeping sentence of proscription?” I exempt from the guilt of rejecting the authorized ministry of the church, the thousands who do not possess the means of investigating the subject; or are prevented by their situation and peculiar circumstances from pursuing the investigation—their *ignorance* is *unavoidable* and *involuntary*. I exempt the thousands of “humble, penitent, and obedient”† Christians, who, possessing only imperfect means of information,

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 86 and 87.

† Companion for the Altar, p. 203.

or after an *honest* and *diligent* examination, continue still in a state of "separation from the authorized ministry"—their error is not occasioned by *negligence*—it is not *wilful*—it is *involuntary*; and, therefore, in the eye of a just and merciful Judge, *excusable*. What charity, I demand, can be more extensive? To your ingenuity in distorting my opinions, and placing a false construction on my language, I am willing to do homage. And did not the subject concern the infinitely momentous truths of religion, I might be disposed to allow you the gratification of displaying, in the arts of distortion and false deduction, talents, which I confess, in my opinion, are unrivalled. But when the object of these arts is to fix on me the execrable and impious imputation of rendering, in regard to non-Episcopalians, "repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, conformity to his image, and zeal for his glory, of no avail;" when it is the object of these arts to represent me as holding opinions which "mar the religion of non-Episcopalians, and render it stark naught," and which make the "only alternative, Episcopacy or Perdition!!"\*—when by these arts of distortion and false deduction you brand me with the odious criminality of maintaining "positions of deep-toned horror"—I am justified, I am compelled, by the most sacred principles of duty, to resist and expose these arts, as in the extreme ungenerous and cruel.

In admitting that *involuntary error* absolves from guilt, I have prepared a broad shield of charity which will cover all the sincere inquirers after truth. *Involuntary error* arises from *mistaken judgment*, and leaves the *heart* sincerely desirous to embrace the *truth*. It is, therefore, compatible with the most sincere attachment to truth, and the most diligent investigation of it. And unless you will maintain the perfectibility of human reason; unless you will disdain the supposition that in any corner of your heart lurks some dominant prejudice or passion which may obscure or mislead your re-

\* These imputations you fix on me. Christian's Magazine, p. 94, 95.

searches, permit me to observe, that distinguished as may be your attainments, and soaring as may be your powers, you too must take refuge under that shield of involuntary error which you so contemptuously reject. When the humiliating conviction of the weakness of the human mind, and the power of prejudice, overwhelms me with doubt and apprehension, the firm persuasion, that my merciful Judge will not impute involuntary error to me as a crime, is my hope and solace. The contrary supposition, revolting to every principle of justice, is instantly repelled by every view which reason or scripture affords us of the goodness, mercy, and justice of that almighty Being who "knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust." "He is not a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed." "And where a man has a willing mind, he is accepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not." "The charity then of Mr. H. and his brethren," is not without "warrant." The mercy which rests on this charity is not "precarious."

You place a false construction on the following passage: "But where the gospel is proclaimed, communion with the church by the participation of its ordinances at the hands of the duly authorized priesthood, is the *indispensable condition of salvation*." You surely are not ignorant that a condition of salvation may be considered as indispensable, either with respect to GOD, who imposes the condition, or with respect to MAN, on whom the condition is imposed. There are certain conditions of salvation which the Almighty himself will not *dispense with*. He will not, for instance, dispense with holiness—For "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." There are other conditions of salvation, in regard to which, though *man* does not possess the right of dispensation, we may be assured, that in certain cases, a merciful and sovereign *God* will exercise this right. Of this description are all the *positive institutions* of religion; among which are the church, its ministry and ordinances. When, therefore, in the

sentence above quoted, I rank "communion with the church through its duly authorized ministry," as an "indispensable condition of salvation," my meaning evidently is, that MAN has no authority to *dispense* with this condition, to fulfil it or not as he pleases; for, in the very next sentence, which is in *connection* with the former, I express the belief, that God *will*, in certain cases, *dispense with* this condition. And I applied the term indispensable to communion with the authorized ministry, in order to oppose the opinion too commonly entertained, that the ministry of the church may be *dispensed with*, or altered, as *man* may please; and that, of course, communion with the ministry originally constituted by Christ and his Apostles, is a matter of no moment. Nor was the term improperly applied in this sense. Suppose an unbeliever should solemnly profess to you his penitence and faith. You become satisfied of his sincerity. But he denies the necessity of communion with the visible church the "nursery of the church in heaven,"\* and of baptism and the Lord's supper. Would you not be justified in the following address to him? "Sir, it is your *indispensable* duty to commune with the *visible* church by baptism and the Lord's supper. The standards of faith of the Presbyterian churches maintain, on the authority of scripture, that 'out of the church there is *ordinarily* no possibility of salvation.'† Into this church baptism is the mode of admission.‡ By this sacrament and by the Lord's supper, which are 'signs and seals of the covenant of grace,'§ your 'ingrafting into Christ,' and all the 'benefits of Christ's death,' are *sealed* to you as a true believer.|| With the necessity of communion with the visible church, and with these sacraments, *man* has no right to *dispense*. Though in the cases of penitent and true believers, who do not *negligently* or *wilfully* contemn these institutions, a merciful *God* will

\* So styled by you. Christian's Magazine, introduction, p. 9.

† Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Churches, chap. xxv. sec. 2.

‡ Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Churches, chap. xxviii. 1.

§ Chap. xxvii. 1.

|| Chap. xxix. 1.

*dispense* with them; yet as far as respects *my* authority, and *your* duty, they are *indispensable* conditions of salvation." I see not where would be the inaccuracy of such language. You justify it in your "Letters on Frequent Communion." It is one principal object of these letters (p. 6, &c.) to prove your position, that "frequent communion is an *indispensable* duty." Were I to deal with this assertion in the same uncandid manner by which you attempt to fix "CRIME OR CONTRADICTION" upon me, you would be placed in a very awkward predicament. I might argue thus—If the duty be *indispensable*, no possible excuses can justify the neglect of it. And if they who neglect it are justifiable in this neglect, it is not *indispensable*: otherwise, the definition might run thus—*an indispensable duty is that which may be dispensed with*. The only alternative then is frequent communion, or crime in violating an *indispensable* duty. How then will you answer for your conduct, in refusing the communion to a person confined for months, and perhaps years, to a sick room, and thus involving him in the awful guilt of violating the *indispensable* duty of frequent communion! No, sir, I presume your acceptation of the word *indispensable* is the same in this case as when I apply it to communion with the authorized priesthood. There are certain cases in which you will acknowledge that Christians are absolved from the duty of frequent communion. And there are also cases in which I maintain that they are absolved, in the sight of God, from the guilt of rejecting the authorized ministry. It would indeed be absurd to say, that "an *indispensable* condition may be dispensed with"—if the terms be applied in one and the same sense. But surely "a condition *indispensable*," as it respects *man's* authority or right, may yet be "*dispensed with*" by that *God* who is supreme in authority and power. What now, sir, becomes of your attempt to make my only alternative "contradiction or crime?" What becomes of your attempt, by perverting my language to a meaning different from that in which my explicit declarations should have

led you to understand it, to fix on me the odious and impious imputation of "making the only alternative, EPISCOPACY OR *Perdition!*"\*

You charge me with "placing the external order of the church upon a level with the merits of our Lord Jesus in the article of acceptance with God." It is the least of the criminality of such a tenet, that it "wounds the bosom of tender piety." In imputing it to me, you overwhelm me with the awful guilt of derogating from the supreme efficacy of that precious blood which alone shields the sinner from the wrath of an offended God. In the *sense* in which *you* understand the term "*indispensable*," I would not apply it to either *faith* or *external order*. Where the gospel is proclaimed, faith in Christ, and communion with that visible body of which he is the head, and which he redeems and sanctifies, are conditions with which *man* has no authority to *dispense*. As, however, I have repeatedly expressed the belief that *God* will *dispense*, in cases of involuntary error, with what I consider regular and valid communion with the church, it is evident that I do not place "external order and faith in Christ" upon a level. But grant that I make them in the same sense indispensable: does it follow that I "place external order on a level with the merits of our Lord Jesus?" May I not consistently maintain that these all-sufficient merits are the only grounds of the acceptance of our faith, and also of our obedience to that external order which God has prescribed? In your zeal to fix on me the blasphemous doctrine, that *obedience to external order* is of as much avail to salvation, as "the merits of our Lord Jesus," you evidently place "*faith*" on a level with these merits. On the supposition that I make "soundness in external order" an indis-

\* By the same disingenuous statement of the sense in which I apply the term "*indispensable*," your friend and co-adjutor, Mr. M'Leod, represents me in his ecclesiastical catechism (p. 113,) as "excluding from the hopes of happiness hereafter all who are not Episcopalians; and even all Episcopalians who do not receive the Lord's supper."

pensable condition of salvation, I am guilty, according to you, of placing external order on a level with the merits of Christ. Therefore, as you make *faith* an *indispensable* condition, nay “the hinging point of salvation,”\* by your own reasoning it follows, that you place *faith* “on a level with the merits of our Lord Jesus in the article of acceptance with God”—that is, *faith*, which (though it be formed in the soul by divine grace) is an act of the understanding and the will, and therefore a *human performance*, as much so as “*soundness in external order*,” has as great influence towards our salvation as “*the merits of the Lord Jesus!*”† I mean not, however, to impute this position to you. But you must take your choice—either acknowledge that your reasoning against me is fallacious, or incur the censure of placing *human performances* on a level with the merits of Christ. Whether these performances be *faith*, or *soundness in external order*, is of no consequence. God forbid that I should depreciate faith as a Christian grace, or attempt to lower its rank among the conditions of salvation. But it is surely impious to place *any qualifications in the creature*, even though they may be wrought in him (as faith certainly is) through the agency of the Holy Spirit, upon a “level

\* Christian’s Magazine, p. 98.

† It really appears to me, that in what you say of *faith*, you are in danger of running from the popish absurdity of the *merit of works* into the equally great absurdity of the *merit of faith*. In fact, I think, this is an error to which Calvinistic writers in general expose themselves. The instrumentality of faith in our justification is concisely and clearly stated by Bishop HORSLEY, whom I quote with the more pleasure, because he has been supposed by some (in my judgment unjustly) to be favourable to the *peculiarities* of Calvinism. “It is not by the *merit* of our *faith* more than by the *merit* of our *works* that we are *justified*: there is indeed no hope for any merit of our own, but through the *efficacy* of our *Lord’s atonement*. For that we ‘are *justified* by *faith*’ is not on account of any merit in our faith; but because faith is the first principle of that communion between the believer’s soul and the divine Spirit, on which the whole of our spiritual life depends.” Bishop Horsely’s Charge to his Clergy, 1790.

with *the merits of Christ* in the article of acceptance with God."

I complain, that in your attempt to fix on me the imputation of making "Episcopacy of primary, and faith of secondary importance,"\* you have materially misstated a passage in my writings. This passage you thus introduce: "We are told again, that 'whoever is in communion with the bishop, the supreme governor of the church upon earth, is in communion with Christ the head of it; and whoever is NOT in communion with the bishop, is thereby cut off from communion with Christ,' and this is said to be a 'general conclusion' 'established' by 'the uniform testimony of ALL the apostolic and primitive writers.'" Now, the passage which you *dissever* and *alter*, and the parts of which you *arrange* to suit your own purposes, is as follows: "The uniform *testimony* of all the apostolic and primitive writers establishes the general conclusion, that whoever WAS in communion with the bishop, the supreme governor of the church upon earth, WAS in communion with Christ the head of it; and whoever WAS not in communion with the bishop, WAS thereby cut off from communion with Christ."† The difference is striking and material. According to your quotation of this passage, you make me state a *doctrine* of my own, in *terms* of my own choice. Whereas, the passage as it stands in the Festivals and Fasts, and in Daubeny, from which it is taken, states an *historical fact*, that such WAS the opinion of the APOSTOLIC and PRIMITIVE WRITERS. The difference, I say, is striking and material. For in the passage as you state it, I am answerable not merely for the doctrine *intended* to be conveyed, but for the *language* also; which, in such ingenious hands as yours, may be twisted and perverted to a dangerous and erroneous construction. But in the passage, as it appears in Daubeny, and in the Festivals and Fasts, the Apostolic and primitive writers alone are answerable for the

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 99, 100.

† Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, p. 59.

*terms* in which they convey their doctrine. And as it was your object, from this passage, to raise in your readers that “gaze of astonishment or swell of indignation” which held you “in suspense,” “after perusing it”—it was unwarrantable in you to distort and alter the passage, and change the arrangement of the parts.

The primitive fathers believed what the Presbyterian confessions of faith assert, that “out of the *visible church* there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”\* And as they knew no church without a bishop at the head of it,† of course they were compelled to conclude, that there was no “*ordinary possibility* of salvation” but through the bishop. The only difference between you and them is, that they believed there could be no *visible church* but where there was a bishop; and you believe a “perfect equality in the ministry” to be the principle of church unity.‡ You both agree that *visible communion* with Christ is maintained by *communion with the church*, through baptism and the Lord’s supper. For, according to the Presbyterian confessions of faith, these ordinances were instituted “to put a *visible* difference between those who *belong* unto the *church* and the *rest of the world*.”§

Your confounding this *visible communion* with Christ through his church, with that *spiritual communion* which commences in true faith, but which must be “sealed” and “nourished” by the ordinances of the Church, has led you to represent me as maintaining that “there is no access to communion with Christ but through the bishop;” and that “faith in Christ is impossible where there is no communion with the bishop.”|| That there can be no *visible communion*

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxv.

† “It was the *general* received opinion of the *ancient Christian world*, that *Ecclesia est in Episcopo*, the *outward being of a church*, consisted in the *having of a bishop*.” Hooker, book vii. sec. 5.

‡ Christian’s Magazine, introduction, p. 12, 13.

§ Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii.

|| Christian’s Magazine, p. 99.

with Christ but through the bishop, I undoubtedly maintain. For, on Episcopal principles, none but a bishop can give a valid commission to administer those *ordinances* on which this visible communion depends. But *spiritual* communion with Christ, that communion whereby we spiritually discern his gracious offices, and apply them to our souls, depends upon the exercise of genuine faith. While, therefore, I maintain that "true faith vitally unites its possessor to Christ," I can consistently maintain, that this communion must be "sealed," must be "confirmed," by communion with the church through its duly authorized ministers; and that he who *wilfully* rejects this communion with the visible church, "out of which there is no *ordinary* possibility of salvation," will forfeit those blessings to which his communion with Christ by faith would otherwise entitle him. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. *Baptism* and the *Lord's supper* are, on Presbyterian principles, the "seals of the covenant."\* And can he lay any claim to the blessings of this covenant who wilfully rejects its "holy seals?" If he can, to what purpose serve these seals? And if he cannot, as these "seals" are, on Presbyterian principles, "not to be dispensed by any but a *minister* of the word, *lawfully ordained*,"† does not *communion with Christ*, through the "seals" of the covenant, depend, yourself being judge, on *communion with lawful ministers*? The only difference between us then is on the question, Who are *lawful ministers*? We both agree that by true faith the believer becomes interested in the blessings of the covenant; but that to these blessings (cases of unavoidable ignorance and involuntary error excepted) he can have no regular title before they are sealed and confirmed to him in those divine ordinances which Christ instituted to be the "*means* whereby we receive" these blessings, "and a *pledge* to assure us thereof."‡

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. xxviii. xxix.

† Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. 4.

‡ Church Catechism.

Nor is your charge just, that I lessen the importance of faith. On my principles, without *true faith* all external communion with Christ through his church can be of no avail, and will only tend to our greater condemnation. I assert, that to the "BELIEVER" only are "the merits and grace of the Redeemer applied, in the *devout* and *humble* participation of the *ordinances* of the church, administered by a priesthood, who derive their authority, by regular transmission, from Christ."\* "Pardon, salvation, and grace, the inestimable blessings of this sacred ordinance (the Lord's supper) are conveyed only to the TRUE BELIEVER."† "Communion with the church is the appointed mode by which the *faith* and obedience of Christians is to be quickened and preserved, and made acceptable unto God. But unless their communion with the church conduces to this end, and advances them into a conformity to Christ their holy and divine head, it is not sincere, and will not be effectual to their salvation. Those who, admitted into the church, live in a course of sin and disobedience, will incur the heavy condemnation of having *resisted God's grace*, of having *done despite unto his spirit*, of having contemned the offers of divine mercy, and counted the *blood of the covenant an unholy thing*."‡ So far then from your accusation being just, that I "hold up Episcopacy as of primary, and faith in Christ as of secondary importance;"§ on the contrary, I make all effectual or beneficial communion with the bishop to depend on faith; and, agreeably to your own conclusion, "that the one upon which the existence of the other depends must be the more important of the two,"|| I make, of course, faith in Christ of more importance than communion with the bishop. This communion with the bishop can take place only through baptism and the Lord's supper, dispensed by ministers Epis-

\* Preface to the Companion for the Altar, p. 5.

† Companion for the Altar, p. 111.

‡ Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, p. 203.

§ Christian's Magazine, p. 100.

|| p. 100.

copally ordained. And for baptism in the case of adults, and for the Lord's supper, faith is a preparatory, an essential qualification. As, therefore, on my principles, faith *precedes* communion with the bishop, it is *distinct from* this communion, and *independent* of it.\* How then can I be accused of making "faith impossible where there is no communion with the bishop," and of holding principles which make "all non-Episcopalians, of necessity, infidels?"† All your ingenious reasoning, which appears to have cost you so much labour, and by which you attempt to justify your odious charges against me, is founded on an unçandid construction of my language, on consequences *unfairly* deduced from my principles.

Really, sir, it pains me to be compelled to charge you with having, in my judgment, wielded the pen of controversy with so little candour and moderation. It is impossible for any person to write in such a manner as to prevent insulated passages and expressions from being tortured into a meaning utterly foreign to his sentiments and intentions, and to the general strain of his reasoning. Hence no rule is more universally acknowledged; no rule more sacredly regarded by all candid critics, than that which determines the sentiments of a writer from the general tenor of his remarks, and permits the various parts of his writings mutually to explain and qualify each other. Did I possess your ingenuity and vigour of remark, and were disposed to violate this rule of candid criticism, I could deduce from *detached* parts of the sacred oracles themselves, the most contradictory and even blasphemous opinions. This obvious and ne-

\* This is doubtless in a certain sense true. But if, through "communion with the bishop," we enjoy the highest *fellowship with Christ*; and if this fellowship be designed to exalt and perfect within us the essential graces of the Christian character, may it not be questionable how *far* or how *long* we can have *gospel faith* without "communion with the bishop," or through him with CHRIST the divine head of the Church, which the gospel enjoins as so important a means of grace?—ED.

† Christian's Magazine, p. 99.

\* i.e. as mediator!!!

cessary rule, which should be sacred with every just reasoner, is, in your hands, no more than a straw in the hands of a giant. Rarely, rarely indeed, have you the candour and justice to extend it to my writings. It is your invariable practice to take particular expressions, and without considering their connection with other passages which qualify their application, and determine the meaning in which I use them, to force them into whatever sense it may suit your purpose. And you act thus unfairly, not to convict me of *venial* errors, but to fix on me "positions of deep-toned horror!" Is this to "do to others as you would that they should do to you?" Honestly ask your own heart. Appeal to your own conscience.

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## LETTER VII.

SIR,

I AM justified, therefore, in disclaiming as *uncandid* and *illegitimate* the *consequences* which you deduce from my opinions. I expressly guarded against these consequences. Without involving myself in any contradictions, I can disclaim them. I shall now prove that the same *uncandid and unfair arts* would involve many of *your principles* in odium, and fix on you consequences of your opinions which you will doubtless abhor and disclaim.

You take insulated sentences from my books; and without permitting other passages to explain or modify them, deduce obnoxious consequences from them.

Let this method be applied to many of your own principles and assertions. Let us suppose some ingenious sophist resolves to dispute Dr. Mason's pretensions to superiority in the arts of plausible but false deduction, of blackening opinions that they may be "urged over the precipice." He opens the Christian's Magazine, and thus breaks a lance with its giant editor.

According to Dr. M. the visible church on earth is the

“nursery of the church in heaven.”\* Now, the *ministry* and *ordinances* are the only external means by which the visible church “nurses” men for heaven. Therefore the *ministry* and *ordinances* of the visible church “nurser” men for heaven. And as divine grace “can do no more,” it follows, that *Dr. M. places the ministry and ordinances on a level with divine grace* in the “article” of “nursing” men for heaven.

Again. Dr. M. being judge, “habitual disobedience to any of the known commands of Christ,” to any law of God, to any thing which he hath prescribed, “excludes from the kingdom of heaven.”† But according to Dr. M. “Presbyterial government,” in which there is “perfect equality of rank among ministers,” is the “law of God’s house;”‡ it is the “*true and only government which the Lord Jesus Christ hath prescribed in his word.*”§ Therefore *habitual disobedience to Presbyterian government excludes from the kingdom of heaven!!* And, of course, Dr. M. makes *obedience to Presbyterian government* “the *hinging point of salvation.*” He rushes, with his eyes open, into the very crime for which he denounces “Mr. H. and his compeers.” Unless he “flinch from the consequences of his own doctrine,” he cannot even take his choice between “*contradiction and crime.*” For, if habitual disobedience to Presbyterian government excludes from the kingdom of heaven, obedience to this government is made by Dr. M. “the hinging point of salvation;” and thus he *contradicts* his own declaration, that this point is “faith in the Lord Jesus.”|| And as Dr. M. maintains that habitual disobedience to Presbyterian government (which, according to him, is a “known command” of Christ) “excludes from the kingdom of heaven;”

\* Christian’s Magazine, introduction, p. 9.

† Christian’s Magazine, p. 100.

‡ Christian’s Magazine, introduction, p. 12, 13.

§ Constitution and Standards of the Associate-Reformed Church, p.

|| Christian’s Magazine, p. 98.

and as rejection of Christ can do more, therefore *Dr. M. makes disobedience to Presbyterian government equally criminal with rejection of the Lord Jesus!!* He is guilty of the *crime of degrading the merits of the Lord Jesus to a level with a point of external order, obedience to Presbyterian government;* for he annexes the same penalty to the rejection of both—*exclusion from the kingdom of heaven.*

And, further, as according to Dr. M. “habitual disobedience” to Presbyterian government—which he maintains is a “known command of Christ”—“excludes from the kingdom of heaven;” therefore he excludes from heaven Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, all of whom *habitually disobey Presbyterian government!!* “The alternative, then, is” PRESBYTERIANISM “OR PERDITION!!” No, no, Dr. M will indignantly exclaim, I allow that “there are sins both of *ignorance* and *infirmity*, which consist with a gracious state.” And pray, did not Mr. H. make the same concession when he declared that sins of “*unavoidable ignorance and involuntary error*” would not be punished, and, of course, consist with a gracious state? What is involuntary error but a sin of infirmity? “Measuring,” therefore, to Dr. M.’s assertions the same measure which he meted to the assertions of Mr. H. and his “fellows;” it results that Episcopalians and others who renounce the divine institution of Presbyterian government, are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Dr. M. indeed, “softens this sweeping sentence of proscription, by representing it as not inconsistent with that charity which extends mercy to all” who sin through *ignorance* or *infirmity*. But “as there are few districts where this question can be agitated” without Presbyterians, or their ministers, or their writings, “the error” in rejecting Presbyterian government “must almost always be *wilful*.” And, besides, Episcopalians and others “have no ground for this very precarious mercy but the charity” of Dr. M. “and his brethren.” And surely “he is a fool” who would run the risk of being excluded from

the kingdom of heaven by rejecting Presbyterian government "on the credit of the charity" of Dr. M. and the Christian's Magazine. The very reasoning, the very language by which Dr. M. endeavours\* to render odious Mr. H.'s principles, blackens his own.

Far be it from me to impute to you the conclusions to which your able competitor in the arts of sophistical reasoning would drag you. But I must declare, that the above obnoxious consequences are deduced from insulated expressions and sentences of your writings, by reasoning equally fair and legitimate with that by which you deduce, from insulated expressions and sentences of my books, the obnoxious opinions which you impute to me. *The weapons which you have aimed against me recoil upon yourself.*

It will require the exercise of much more moderation and candour than you have displayed, to reduce your principles and reasonings into an harmonious system. The object of the essay on "the visible church," is to impress on Christians the important doctrines—that there is an "external visible church;" † that this church is "the house of the Lord;" ‡ that this church has a "*visible ministry, visible worship, visible sacraments*;" § that to this visible church (and of course through its *visible ministry and sacraments*) "the Lord added such as are saved;" ¶ for in this "public visible society which God has appropriated to himself—his name is known, and his mercies vouchsafed:" || in the words of the Presbyterian confession of faith, there is "ordinarily out of this church no possibility of salvation." Now, it would be difficult to prove that I have laid greater stress on *external order* than the foregoing language will warrant. Yet, when I turn to your "review of the Essays on Episcopacy," I find that I am condemned for laying greater stress upon external order than is laid upon it in the word of God. And all the divine institutions you involve in one single principle, *faith.*

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 94, 95. † p. 54. ‡ p. 71. § p. 62. || p. 72.

Again. In the essay on the visible church we are repeatedly told that this church is but ONE.\* Its *visible unity* is particularly insisted on. It is spoken of in the language of scripture as the "body of Christ;" to which, of course, we must conclude, that, "ordinarily," all must be united, who would partake of the saving influence of its divine head. Nay, we are told that to the church "God hath given his ordinances"—"the MEANS OF SALVATION."† And, consequently, there is indeed very good cause why the writers of the New Testament should "argue against *schism*."‡ Whereas, on the principles advanced in the "review of the Essays on Episcopacy," *schism* is only a name, "*vox et preterea nihil*, mere noise," a scare-crow to "disquiet timid consciences." On your principles the single act of faith unites the Christian so effectually to Christ, that he can *never finally fall away*. Of what consequence then is "the visible church," its "external ordinances," its "means of salvation?" For Dr. M. being judge, faith in the testimony of God does not depend on "going through the gate of Episcopacy," nor, for the same reason, through any other gate of *external order*; and faith alone infallibly saves us. Where then is the guilt or danger of schism, of separation from the "external ordinances" and the "visible ministry" of the church? While true believers have faith, they are united to Christ. And they may, therefore, divide and divide the "body of Christ" without end; may split into innumerable sects and parties; may, in fact, lay aside the "ministry and ordinances" appointed and commanded by Christ himself as "means of salvation;" and yet, if they only have faith—all is well—for faith is "the hinging point of salvation:" the inquiry, "whether a man shall go to heaven or to hell," is "fixed to this point" only, "whether he was a believer in the Lord Jesus!" On your principles faith is entirely unconnected with "external order," and faith alone is essential to salvation. You argue indeed precisely as one who

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 63, 70.

† p. 71.

‡ p. 61.

insists that there is no visible church would wish you to argue. For if a correct definition of the church be, that it is "the whole body of believers;" and if, in order to become a believer, it is not necessary to go through any gate of *external order*; if, of course, faith simply and alone admits into the church, a *visible ministry* and *sacraments* are not necessarily connected with *the church*. It follows, *there is no visible church*. A single "dash of your pen" has thus demolished *the visible church*, consigned to contempt its *ministry*, its *ordinances*, its *visible unity*, and made that heinous crime *schism* but an "empty name."

The reasoning in the "essay on the visible church," is founded on the principle, that the "visible church is in *substance* the same under both Testaments. The New Testament Church is the *very same* great society which God *formerly* erected for the praise of his glory, and has caused to pass under a new form of dispensation."\* Of course, we may conclude that the "visible ministry" and "visible sacraments"† of this *new* and more perfect dispensation, are not less glorious, nor less important, nor less obligatory than those of the *old* dispensation. Under the Old Testament dispensation they "perished," who, like "Korah," "gainsayed," rebelled against the Jewish priesthood. But under the new dispensation, though the Apostle still speaks of those who perish "in the gainsaying of Korah,"‡ your reasoning will sanction the conclusion, that "rejection of the ministry" does not affect the eternal destiny of the offender—for "*faith* alone is the hinging point of salvation." Communion with the church under the Old Testament was the *mean* and *pledge* to the believing Jews of their being in a *covenant* state; and this communion was maintained by communion with the priesthood. And yet under the New Testament dispensation it would appear, according to your principles, that faith alone, effectually, and finally, and unchangeably, and independently of all *external order*, brings men into *covenant* with God. For

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 72.

† p. 71.

‡ Jude.

faith alone, as opposed to external order, you declare, is "the hinging point of salvation." Of course, if a man be united to Christ by faith, it does not affect his salvation whether he be in the church or out of it; whether he submit to a ministry of divine appointment, or one only of human invention; or whether in fact he submit to "the visible ministry and ordinances of Christ," or reject them all as mere "beggarly elements," unnecessary to genuine faith, or the saving operations of the spirit. Your principle is indeed that corner-stone of Calvinism, that the salvation of believers depends solely on the unconditional *decree of God*; of an interest in which decree, faith is the sole and unfailing assurance. And this principle, I am bold to say, will drive its defenders, "if closely followed up," through the Fanatical and Antinomian "camps," into *fatalism* itself; into making God the author of sin, and seating a blind and cruel destiny on that throne which now beams forth unutterable holiness and mercy.\*

I am aware that you qualify your position, that faith alone is essential to salvation, by the assertion, that "habitual disobedience to any of the divine commands excludes from the kingdom of heaven." But how is this to be reconciled with the doctrine that "faith is the hinging point of salvation?" For surely whatever *excludes* from *the kingdom of heaven*, is the hinging point of salvation. And whatever falls under the denomination of "habitual disobedience to a divine command," let that command respect *external order*, or matters of *doctrine*, becomes then as much the hinging point of salvation as faith is. I shrewdly suspect, sir, that the more you "stir these troubled waters," "confusion will become worse confounded." If you undervalue external order, you are frowned upon by the palpable declarations of the Bible, and of all the standards of doctrine of the Pres-

\* The language which I here use is justified by your's, p. 25 of the Christian's Magazine.

byterian churches. And if you consider obedience to external order (though it be commanded by God) as a condition of salvation, you are in danger of encroaching on the Calvinistic principle, that faith, as the infallible testimony of our being the objects of the decree of everlasting election, is the point on which our salvation turns.

The truth is, the divine commands are all obligatory. All comparison of the relative importance or obligation of these commands, in order to determine which we may with impunity neglect or violate, is criminal and impious. Let me direct your attention to the language of one, who, though a *prelate* of the Church of England, is, I suspect, a favourite writer with you. Bishop BUTLER, in his "Analogy,"\* thus settles the point of the comparative obligation of the commands of God. "Our obligations to obey *all* God's commands whatever are absolute and *indispensable*,† and commands merely positive, admitted to be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them—an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense." Yes, sir, "he who keepeth the whole law, and yet" habitually and wilfully "offends in one point, he is guilty of all." And were the "whole world" laid at my feet, it should not tempt me to run the hazard of that believer, however much he may boast of the assurance of his faith, who *habitually* and *wilfully* violates "one of the least commandments" of his divine Lord; even though it be that *external order* which you are so confident is not the hinging point of salvation.

\* P. 208, Boston edition.

† Observe, sir, this acute and accurate reasoner uses the term *indispensable* in the same sense in which I apply it in the Companion for the Altar.

## LETTER VIII.

SIR,

It is a most grievous offence to you that the advocates of Episcopacy “unchurch” those who reject it, and leave them to “uncovenanted mercy.” This “dreadful excommunication” produces the most awful effects. Your imagination fires—your bosom swells—the voice of thunder proclaims—Mr. H. and his compeers make “the only alternative, EPISCOPACY OR PERDITION”—“The hair stands up like quills upon the fretful porcupine”—“The warm blood is frozen at its fountain.” I am persuaded that the candid reader, who has impartially considered my defence against these charges, in the preceding pages, will smile when he sees you so violently agitated at a phantom which possesses no terrors but what your vivid imagination has thrown around it. In fact, sir, I deny that in an *unqualified* sense, I have unchurched *non-Episcopalians*. What says the “Companion for the Altar?” “To experience the *full and exalted efficacy* of the sacraments, we must receive them from a valid authority.”\* What says the Companion for the Festivals and Fasts? “The Church of Christ is a visible institution. It is to be known by its *priesthood*, which, as we have seen, was established by Christ and his apostles under the three orders of *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons*; by its *doctrine*, and by its *sacraments*. Where these are as Christ ordained them, there is the Church of Christ; where these, or any of them, are wanting, there the church is not; at least, *not in a sound and perfect state.*”† As far as any particular church corrupts the doctrine and sacraments, or renounces the duly authorized ministry of Christ’s Church, so far she ceases to be the CHURCH “in a *sound and perfect state.*” Nor do I

\* Companion for the Altar, p. 203.

† Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, p. 56 and 57.

leave non-Episcopalians in any other sense to “uncovenanted mercy,” than you do those who, though they have faith in Christ, do not deem it necessary to be baptized, or to receive the Lord’s supper. For as they reject those sacraments which (yourself being judge) are not merely the “signs,” but the “seals of the covenant of grace,” of “ingrafting into Christ,” of all the “benefits of Christ’s sacrifice,”\* they surely cannot be said to be regularly and fully “within the covenant,” “ingrafted into Christ,” or entitled to the “benefits of his sacrifice.”

My business now shall be to show that I do not proceed as far in this business of unchurching as my accuser. You warmly recommend Mr. M’Leod’s Catechism. It would be an affront to suppose that you have not attentively weighed the principles in that book; and after this solemn examination, to recommend them as reviewer, *ex cathedra*, is to make them your own. Let us now see how far your principles “unchurch” Christians, and leave them to “uncovenanted mercy.”

1. Mr. M’L. and yourself *unchurch the* QUAKERS. For you make “a legitimate ministry” one of the characteristics of the TRUE church;† and as the Quakers certainly have not what you consider a legitimate ministry, they are not of the true church.

2. Mr. M’L. and yourself *unchurch* EPISCOPALIANS. You call a legitimate ministry “ecclesiastical officers ordained according to Christ’s appointment.”‡ Now, as you consider the power of the Bishop in ordination an “usurpation” of course, those ministers who are Episcopally ordained are not “ordained according to Christ’s appointment;” consequently, are not *legitimate ministers*: and as “a legitimate ministry is one of the characteristics of the true church,” *you make the Episcopal Church not the true church.*

\* Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Churches, chap. xxv. sec. 1. 28, 1. 29.

† Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 8, Q. 18.

‡ p. 8, 20.

Mr. M'L. and yourself maintain, (Eccles. Catec. p. 29. Q. 67) "that a person who is *not ordained by a Presbytery* has no right to be received as a minister of Christ: his administration of ordinances is invalid: no divine blessing is promised upon his labours: it is rebellion against the head of the church to support him in his pretensions: Christ has excluded him in his providence from admission through the ordinary door: and if he has no evidence of miraculous power to testify his extraordinary mission, he is an impostor." What is this but to unchurch Episcopalians, to pronounce their ministers "impostors," and their ordinances "invalid?" For DEACONS, one of the orders of Episcopal ministers, are not "ordained by a Presbytery," but by the *Bishop*, who alone lays on his hands. An Episcopal Deacon, therefore, (according to yourself and Mr. M'L.) is "an impostor"—his administration of baptism "invalid"—"no divine blessing is promised on his labours" of *preaching*: and Episcopalians are guilty of "*rebellion* against the head of the church in supporting him in his pretensions!" In the same predicament stand *Episcopal* PRESBYTERS: for they are ordained by the *Bishop*. The associating of the *Presbyters* with him in the laying on of hands is only an *ecclesiastical regulation*, to denote the *concurrence* of the Presbyters, and to guard the exercise of the Episcopal power of ordination.\* This regulation was introduced into

\* "Doth it hereupon follow that the power of ordination was not principally and originally in the Bishop? Our Saviour hath said unto his Apostles, *With me ye shall sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel*; yet we know that to him alone it belongeth to judge the world, and that to him all judgment is given. The association of Presbyters is no sufficient proof that the power of ordination was in them, but rather that it never was in them we may hereby understand; for that no man is able to show either Deacon or Presbyter ordained by Presbyters only, and his ordination accounted lawful in any ancient part of the church; everywhere examples being found both of Deacons and Presbyters ordained by Bishops alone oftentimes, neither even in that respect thought insufficient." Hooker. Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii. sect. 6.

the *Western* church only by a canon of the fourth century ; the Eastern church having to this day uniformly retained the mode which before prevailed, of "the laying on of the hands" of the *Bishop* alone. An ordination by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, Episcopalians consider as *valid*, though not according to *ecclesiastical usage*. The third order of Episcopal ministers, BISHOPS, being "not ordained by a Presbytery," but by *Bishops*, whose powers are expressly called "usurpations," stand in the predicament with the other two orders. Thus, then, Episcopal ministers, being "not ordained by a *Presbytery*," have "no right to be received as *ministers of Christ* : their administration of ordinances is *invalid* : no divine blessing is promised upon their labours : " Episcopalians are guilty of "*rebellion* against the head of the church in supporting them in their pretensions : " and as they have "no evidence of miraculous powers to testify their *extraordinary* mission, they are IMPOSTORS."

3. Mr. M'L. and yourself unchurch the ROMAN CATHOLIC and the GREEK CHURCH. It would be wasting time to prove that as they have none of your characteristics of *the true church*, neither "sound doctrine, a legitimate ministry, nor a proper use of the sacraments,"\* they are richly deserving of being viewed as "synagogues of Satan !"

4. But what is most astonishing (I tremble while I record it,) Mr. M'L. and yourself unchurch the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND ! You make "the discharge of the duties of their offices according to Christ's direction," † an essential characteristic of that "legitimate ministry" which is necessary to "*the true church*." And it is notorious that the fundamental cause of the separation of the sects of Seceders from whom you and Mr. M'L. are descended, (and the principles of which separation you still sacredly maintain) is, that the "ministry," the "ecclesiastical officers" of the

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 8-18.

† Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 8-20.

Church of Scotland, did not “discharge the duties of their office agreeably to the *direction of Christ*.” Of course, they are not a legitimate ministry; and, therefore, *the Church of Scotland is not the true church!*

5. But, alas! it has fallen to my unhappy lot to record, that “in the beginning of the 19th century,”\* two distinguished divines have “committed to writing,” a *sentence of excision on the whole* VISIBLE CHURCH! Mr. M'L. and yourself maintain that “the characteristics of the TRUE CHURCH, are sound doctrine, a legitimate ministry, and the proper use of the sacraments.” Now there is no church (Mr. M'L. being judge) † which is perfectly “sound in doctrine.” There is no church, the ministry of which discharge their office in all respects, “agreeably to Christ's direction;” which it is necessary they should do, in order to be “a legitimate ministry.” ‡ There is no church, whose ministry administer the sacraments in all respects “in the *true spirit* of the institution;” which is necessary to “the proper use of the sacraments.” § And as all these Mr. M'L. and yourself make necessary to “THE TRUE CHURCH, it follows, that *there is no true church on earth!!!* Mr. M'L. and Dr. M. by “a single dash of the pen,” blot out that “church,” against which its divine founder promised “the gates of hell should not prevail.” It is true, you soften “this sweeping sentence” by “some reliefs,” and some “concessions.” || But they are “not worth accepting,” for they are “in direct repugnance” to your definitions of the true church, and only show that “you flinch from the consequences of your doctrine.” God forbid that I should believe you serious in this “dreadful excommunication.” But I insist that a specimen of fairer deduction from acknowledged premises does not grace any page of the “review of the Essays on Episcopacy.”

\* I borrow these words from Mr. M'L. Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 113.

† Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 7-15.

‡ p. 8-20. § p. 9-21.

|| I have recourse again to your own language.

The fact is, that Mr. M'L. applies to the "*true church*" the characteristics of a *sound and perfect church*.\* I really think you should call Mr. M'L. to an account for the dilemma in which he has involved both you and himself through want of precision in the use of terms. I can give you another specimen of this gentleman's accuracy in his definitions. Christians in general have hitherto supposed that baptism was the "sacrament ordained by Jesus Christ for the *solemn admission* of the party baptised into the visible church."† But Mr. M'L. has found out that the sacraments are to be administered only "to regularly received members of the church;"‡ that is, baptism, which is one of the sacraments, and by which a person becomes a regularly received member of the church," is not to be administered to him until he is a "regularly received member!!" It is really curious to observe Mr. M'L.'s application of scripture. For example, he proves that the "Shorter Catechism, compiled by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, is the most complete and comprehensive summary of the doctrines of the gospel," from the text, 2 Tim. i. 13. "Hold fast the form of sound words."§ He proves that "the form of church government is wisely adapted to every state of the church," from the text, Rev. i. 20. "The mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."|| He proves that "Presbyterial order is divinely appointed for the perfecting of the saints, and all are bound to submit to it," from the text, Rev. iii.

\* Mr. M'L.'s definition of a *true church*, which indeed proves there is not a *true church* on earth, appears not only in his Ecclesiastical Catechism, but in the standards of the church of which he is a minister. See "Reformation Principles," part ii. chap. xx. sect. 7.

† Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxviii. 1.

‡ Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 9.

§ Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 8.

|| p. 14.

22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."\* He proves the "reasonableness and excellency of the Presbyterian constitution of church government," from the text, Ezek. xliii. 12. "The whole limit thereof round about shall be holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."† And, wonderful discovery! he proves that the deacon's office "respects only temporal affairs," from the text, Rom. xii. 8. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity."‡ Really, I should not despair that Mr. M'L. would be able satisfactorily to prove from scripture, what all Lord Peter's *bulls* have hitherto failed to establish, that "a twelve-penny leaf is a shoulder of mutton!" Yet this is the gentleman who has kindly undertaken to instruct us, poor simple Americans, in the principles of ecclesiastical government; and who has written in the most contemptuous manner of the principles and institutions of the Episcopal Church.

You maintain that faith alone is the condition of salvation, and that it is an abominable error to rank participation of the ordinances by the hands of Christ's authorized ministers among the appointed conditions of salvation.

From the references which I have occasionally made in the preceding pages to the Presbyterian confessions of faith, I think it must be evident that I do not lay any greater stress on *external order*, on communion with the church through its ministry and ordinances, than the standards and confessions of faith of the Presbyterian churches will warrant.

Do I maintain that (except in cases of unavoidable ignorance or involuntary error) it is only by communion with the visible church, that we can obtain a title to the blessings of salvation? I open the confessions of faith of the Presbyterian churches, and find them maintaining the same doctrine. "The visible church,"—is the *kingdom* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the *house* and *family of God*, out of which there is

\* p. 31.

† p. 87.

‡ p. 35.

no ordinary *possibility of salvation*.”\* I shield myself under your great master Calvin, who declares, “that departing from the church *is a denying of God and Christ*.”†

Do I maintain that communion with the visible church can only be maintained by the participation of the sacraments from the hands of duly authorized ministers? I only avow Presbyterian doctrine. On Presbyterian principles a *ministry* and *ordinances* are essential to the *visible church*. “Unto this Catholic *visible church* (say the Presbyterian confessions of faith) Christ hath given the *ministry*, oracles and *ordinances* of God for the *gathering* and *perfecting* of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own *presence* and *spirit*, according to his promise, make them *effectual thereunto*.”‡ Baptism and the Lord’s supper are “*holy signs and seals* of the *covenant* of grace,” appointed by Christ for our “solemn admission into the Church,” and for “confirming and sealing our interest in him;” and they are not to be “dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained.”§ The great reformer, Calvin, holds the same language—“*Forgiveness of sins* is a benefit so *proper* to the *church*, that we cannot *otherwise enjoy it*, but if we abide in the *communion* thereof. It is *distributed* unto us by the *ministers and pastors*, either by preaching the gospel, or by ministering of the sacraments. Wherefore let every one of us think this to be his duty, *no where else* to seek *forgiveness of sins*, than *where* the Lord hath left it.”|| Is it possible to lay greater stress on external order than CALVIN does, who declares “neither the light and heat of the sun, nor meat and drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain this present life, as the *office of the apostles and pastors* is

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxv. 2.

† Calvin’s Institutes, book iv. chap. i. sect. 10.

‡ Prysbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxv. 3.

§ Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. xxviii. xxix.

|| Calvin’s Institutes, book iv. chap. i. sect. 22.

necessary to *preserve* the church.”\* Would any person have believed it possible, that a disciple of Calvin, a minister who holds the sentiments above quoted from the Presbyterian confession of faith, would impeach me with laying an undue stress upon “external order?” Would any person have believed it possible, that a minister who holds these sentiments, who even makes the comfort which a believer takes in his faith to depend upon “the offer of reconciliation” being “made to him by the mouth of ministers *having commission to that effect*,”† should yet impeach me for insisting on “soundness in external order,” as one of the conditions of salvation? Yes, sir, you are the man! But, would you shield from guilt any of your own people, however warm and strong his faith, who, emboldened by your declamation against me for insisting on the ministry and ordinances as conditions of salvation, should reject them, as derogating from the all-sufficiency of the merits of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit? Would you not urge on his conscience that he was hazarding his salvation, by impiously contemning the divine “seals of the covenant,” those “*ordinances in which the covenant is dispensed*,”‡ and by thus rejecting *covenanted* mercy? Now, sir, does not this reasoning involve the very principle for which you so bitterly condemn me—*confining covenanted mercy to the ministry and ordinances appointed by Christ*? My confining the ministry and ordinances appointed by Christ to the Episcopal ministry and ordinances, makes no difference as to the *principle* involved, and which you so loudly condemn. This *principle* is, *the making of the blessings of salvation dependent on “external order.”* The criminality of this principle, which, according to you, places “external order on a level with the merits of

\* Calvin’s Institutes, book iv. chap. iii. sect. 2.

† Constitution of the Associate-Reformed Church, p. 603. “Sum and substance of saving knowledge,” originally set forth by the Westminster “Assembly of Divines.”

‡ Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. vii. 6.

Christ in the article of acceptance before God," is the same whether this "external order" be "Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Independent."\* Really, sir, in my humble judgment, candour, consistency, and regard for the sacred principles of your own church, should make you blush whenever you open a page of your "review of the Essays on Episcopacy." Pardon me if I assert that it is "*vox et preterea nihil*, mere noise, and need give no disquiet to the most timid"† Churchman, nor shake him a moment from his principles. I shall be justified in addressing to you remarks similar in spirit to those with which you seek to rouse the conscience of Dr. Nott. Your talents and acquirements, which are certainly of no ordinary kind, and, above all, your sacred character should lead you to spurn the ignoble arts of crushing a cause which you oppose, by blackening it with *consequences* disclaimed by its advocates, and not fairly deducible from its principles. There is not an observation by which you attempt to prejudge me, which may not be directed with equal force against your own principles. The Quaker, who on your principles does not possess that ministry and those ordinances which are the "seals of the covenant," and by which "it is dispensed," may exclaim—What! will "no 'repentance toward God;' no 'faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;' no conformity to his image; no zeal for his glory, be of any avail?"‡ Will the "simple fact of my separation from the authorized, that is to say," Dr. M.'s "priesthood, mar my religion, and render it stark naught?" Does then Dr. M. make, for every Quaker, however humble, pious, and holy his faith, the only alternative, *submission to a hireling priesthood or PERDITION!!* "Alas! alas! *pudet! pudet!*" The mode you pursue will exalt the triumphs of the infidel; will enable him to push some insulated doctrine of the gospel to the *extreme*, and then to exclaim, These are "positions of deep-toned horror!"

When I see you, instead of dispassionately investigating

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 98.

† p. 101.

‡ p. 94.

my principles, urge against me charges which may be all made to recoil upon your own, I am "held in suspense between the gaze of astonishment and the swell of indignation." May not such conduct with great propriety be considered as evidence of the weakness of your cause? When the most potent champion of a cause resorts to such disingenuous arts, and, at the *outset*, attempts to rouse prejudice and passion, there is at least strong presumption that the cause is a weak one. Let then this system of *denunciation*, of *illegitimate deduction*, be renounced. Test my principles by SCRIPTURE, as elucidated and supported by ANTIQUITY. Wrest from my superstructure this sacred foundation, and I will join with you in chaunting hallelujahs to its downfall. But while the venerable edifice of Episcopacy rests its solid base on the ROCK OF AGES, it will proudly defy the tempests of invective and denunciation which roll against its lofty battlements.

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## LETTER IX.

SIR,

To the *law* and to the *testimony*, to the word of God, and to the testimony of the Apostolic and primitive age, let us then bring the claims of Episcopacy. You affect indeed to consider Presbyterianism as coming down to us with the awful and venerable sanction of ages; while the *upstart* pretensions of Episcopacy are to be "hunted" down as equally *novel* and "arrogant." This is an assurance which would qualify a man for the task of proving that the books of the New Testament are forgeries of recent ages. The very same testimonies, which establish that the books of the New Testament are genuine and authentic, determine the fact of the Apostolic institution and universal reception of Episcopacy.\* This is acknowledged by the learned STILLING-

\* This fact is proved by the learned Leslie, the author of that incompa-

FLEET, the author of the "Irenicum," to which the Christian's Magazine will probably be indebted for many of its arguments against Episcopacy. This book was written by *Stillingfleet* as the early age of twenty-four years, in the vain hope of *healing* the divisions on the subject of church order, by a system of mutual concession. Accordingly he labours to refute the opinion, that there is any precise form of church government, extending to all matters of discipline, rites, and ceremonies, laid down in scripture. He thus bears as hard on those who maintain that *Presbyterian government*, in all its parts, is established in scripture, as he does on those who maintain the same concerning Episcopal government. Presbyterian writers are very fond of employing the arguments which he uses against their opponents, while they pay no respect to those which he urges against themselves. It is certain that *Stillingfleet* retracted all those opinions in his "Irenicum," which militated against the *Apostolic institution of Bishops*. He apologizes for this work in his "Preface" to the "Unreasonableness of Separation." "Will you not allow," says he, "one single person who happened to write about these matters when he was *very young*, in *twenty years* time of the most busy and thoughtful part of his life, to *see reason to alter his judgment?*" In a sermon which was the result of his most mature judgment and examination, we find him declaring, "I cannot find any argument of force in the New Testament to prove that *ever* the Christian churches were under the sole government of *Presbyters*." "This *succession* was not in mere *presidency of order*, but the *Bishops* succeeded the Apostles in the *government* over those churches." "There is as great reason to believe the *Apostolical succession* to be of *divine institution*,"

rable tract, the "Short Method with the Deists," in his treatises on Episcopacy, published in the "Scholar Armed." And an able writer of our own country, in the Churchman's Monthly Magazine for November, 1806, has taken up the primitive evidence for the divine authority of the books of the New Testament, and proved that the very same evidence supports Episcopacy.

as the *canon of scripture*, or the observation of the Lord's day."\*

Episcopacy has the sanction of *ancient, universal* usage; while Presbyterianism sprang up but a few centuries ago. At the period of the Reformation, EPISCOPACY was the *universally acknowledged* government. PRESBYTERIANISM was looked upon as an upstart, utterly destitute of all pretensions to *antiquity*; insomuch that we find Hooker declaring, "A very strange thing, sure it were, that such a discipline (Presbyterianism) as you speak of, should be taught by Christ and his Apostles in the word of God, and *no church have found it out, nor received it, till this present time!*"† Accordingly we find Hooker repeating the bold challenge, "We require you to find out but *one church upon the face of the whole earth*, that hath been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by *Episcopal regiment*, since the time that the *blessed Apostles were here conversant.*"‡

What then is the state of the case? An order of ministers, superior to Presbyters and Deacons, and styled Bishops, possess the power of ordination, and the supreme power of governing the church. We look back a very few centuries, and find them in universal possession of these powers, of which indeed they have been stripped but in only a very few Christian churches. They hold their rights therefore by *prescription, by long immemorial usage*. This is a title which has peculiar claims to the respect and obedience of all friends to institutions sanctioned by the wisdom of ages. You, of all others, are bound to respect it. For you would scorn being ranked among those who are "given to change," and who desire to "remove the *ancient landmarks.*"—Poh—you will say—the Pope of Rome supports his corrupt throne by the same plea, *long immemorial usage*. But stop, sir, if you please, not so fast. No Protestant will admit this plea of

\* Sermon preached by Stillingfleet at an ordination at St. Paul's, 1684.

† *Preface* to Ecclesiastical Polity, sect. 4.

‡ Sect. 4.

popery. We can fix within a certain period the commencement of the reign of *antichrist*. A distinguished divine, whose authority I think you will not dispute, when speaking of the *commencement* of the reign of antichrist, declares, "The *earliest period* which can be suggested is the year 325."\* Yes, sir, prior to that period Protestants are able to disprove, by the most abundant and unequivocal testimonies from primitive writers, the false pretensions of the Papal power. And can you, within this period, produce any testimony against Episcopacy? No, sir; the challenge of Hooker may be here repeated—"Produce one church that was not governed by Episcopal regiment," and we give up our cause. Where, then, is the parallel between Episcopacy and Popery? The Pope of Rome did not arrive to "full stature" until the fourth, and the generality of Protestants maintain, on stronger evidence, until the seventh century.† But the opponents of Episcopacy are compelled to trace it back to the *Apostolic age*;‡ and even then to rest the change from Presbyterianism to Episcopacy on mere *conjecture*. In vain they seek for explicit testimony, for express record of so extraordinary a fact. If Episcopacy be an usurpation, how happens it that the discovery has never been made until within a very late period?

But against the supposition that the powers which Bishops exercise by long and immemorial usage, were originally an usurpation, there is an argument, which even with every candid Presbyterian must be conclusive. If Episcopacy were an usurpation; if the power of the Bishops, like that of the Pope, were "anti-Christian and unscriptural," would not the illustrious Reformers have denounced Episcopacy with as much zeal as they did Popery? To suppose that they would not, is to impeach at once their talents and their

\* The Rev. Dr. Livingston, in his *Missionary Sermon*, p. 58.

† "The *rise of antichrist* is to be dated in the sixth year of the seventh century." So says Mr. M'L. in his "Reformation Principles," p. 42.

‡ *Blondel*, one of the most learned opponents of Episcopacy, supposes that it took its rise about the year of our Lord 140.

sincerity. The *hierarchy, in its various modifications*, was an object of jealousy, of close, bold, and unrestrained investigation; and the primitive writers were faithfully explored in order to test its pretensions. If, under these circumstances, the Reformers,\* while they denounced the Pope as “anti-christ,” the “man of sin,” the “son of perdition,” not only refrained from censuring Episcopacy, but spoke of such an Episcopacy as the Church of England possesses in the most respectful terms, I think, the conclusion is irresistible, that Popery and Episcopacy are not equally untenable, and that *Bishops* may still claim for their power, *prescription, long and immemorial usage*.

The fact is remarkable and indisputable, that the great Reformers, CALVIN, BEZA, and other divines of the Reformed churches on the continent of Europe, in opposing the hierarchy, opposed only the *corrupt* hierarchy of the Church of Rome; approved in the strongest language of a *primitive Episcopacy, such as the Church of England possessed*; and lamented the imperious circumstances which deprived them of it. CALVIN, in his book concerning the “necessity of reforming the church,” makes a declaration which has frequently been adduced: “*If they would give us such an hierarchy, in which the Bishops should so excel, as that they did not refuse to be subject to Christ,*” &c. &c. “then I will confess that they are worthy of all ANATHEMAS, if any such shall be found, who will not reverence it, and submit themselves to it with the utmost obedience.”† What strong lan-

\* The Bishop here manifestly speaks of the *continental* “Reformers.”  
—EDITOR.

† “*Talem nobis hierarchiam si exhibeant, in qua sic emineant Episcopi ut Christo subesse non recusent, ut ab illo tanquam unico capite pendeant, et ad ipsum referantur; in qua sic inter se fraternam societatem colant, ut non alio nodo quam ejus veritate sint colligati, tum vero nullo non anathemate dignos fateor, si qui erunt, qui non eam reverentur, summaque obedientia observent.*” This declaration of CALVIN has been often quoted. I have examined the tract *de necessitate, reformandæ ecclesiæ*, which is contained in a volume of the works of Calvin, published

guage is this? He could not get an Episcopacy but what was subject to the Pope of Rome. But, says he, "if they would give us an hierarchy subject to Christ alone," he not only professes a willingness to receive it, but denounces an "anathema" against all who should reject it. Nay, so firm appears his conviction, that such an Episcopacy was scriptural and primitive, that he expresses a doubt whether "any such should be found!"

The Episcopacy which CALVIN here recommends, could not be a Presbyterian or Parochial Episcopacy, in which all the ministers are on a level, and in which every pastor or bishop has the charge of only one congregation. The distinction of *superior* and *inferior* orders of ministers is always connected with a *hierarchy*, and by this term CALVIN distinguishes the Episcopacy he recommends. He is defending himself from the charge of being guilty of schism in departing from the hierarchy of the Church of Rome. And he does not justify this departure on the ground that the bishops of the Church of Rome were *diocesan*, or exercised authority over *churches* consisting of *several congregations* with their *ministers*, but that these bishops were not *subject to Christ*. "If they would give us *such an hierarchy*, in which the *bishops should so excel*, as not to refuse to be *subject to Christ*," then he denounces an *anathema* against all who should reject it. The very expression, "*in qua sic episcopi emineant*," "*in which the bishops should so excel*," denotes that the *bishops* meant by Calvin, exercised *superior powers* over their brethren, and, of course, were not Presbyterian bishops. They were so to excel, so to be *superior*, as not to refuse subjection to Christ. Calvin also refers with approbation to the state of the church in the time of CYPRIAN, when the *bishops* certainly were *diocesan*, exercised power over *clergy and congregations*. CYPRIAN had several presbyters subject

by Beza, entitled, Joannis Calvini tractatus theologicus omnes, in unum volumen certis classibus congesti, &c. The passage cited above is at the 69th page of the volume.

to him, and CORNELIUS, his contemporary, Bishop of Rome, had under him in the diocese of Rome, forty-six presbyters and seven deacons. It is incredible, also, that *Episcopacy* should *not* have been *diocesan* in the time of Cyprian; and yet that EUSEBIUS, who wrote his ecclesiastical history within less than half a century after the death of Cyprian, should trace the succession of *diocesan bishops* to the *Apostles*.

Surely Presbyterian writers who constantly and invariably apply the term HIERARCHY, as designating church government, solely to *diocesan Episcopacy*, in which there is "rank and subordination" of ministers, cannot consistently plead that Calvin, by this term, meant *Presbyterian or Parochial Episcopacy*, in which there is a perfect parity of ministers. I believe no instance can be produced where the term is applied to any sacred government or community in which there is not *distinction* and *subordination of sacred orders*.

The divines of the French Protestant Church understood Calvin as applying this term, *hierarchy*, to the *English Episcopacy*. This very passage is so understood and cited by M. DE L'ANGLE, minister of the French Church at Charenton, in a letter addressed to the Bishop of London—"Since the Church of England is a *true church* of our Lord; since her *worship* and *doctrines* are *pure*, and have nothing in them contrary to the word of God; and since that when the Reformation was there received, it was received together with *Episcopacy*, and with the establishment of the Liturgy and Ceremonies, which are there in use at this day; it is, without doubt, the duty of all the reformed in your realm, to keep themselves *inseparably united to that church*.—This was so much the opinion of our great and excellent CALVIN, that in his treatise *of the necessity of the Reformation*, he makes no difficulty to say, that if there should be any so unreasonable as to refuse the communion of a church that was pure in its worship and doctrine, and not to submit himself with respect to its government, under pretence that it had retained an *Episcopacy qualified as yours is*; there would be no cen-

sure nor rigour of discipline that ought not to be exercised upon them.”\*

Another divine of the French church, Mons. DAILLE, understands Calvin to the same effect—“CALVIN himself honoured all *Bishops that* were not subjects of the Pope, &c. such as were the *PRELATES OF ENGLAND, CRANMER, Archbishop of Canterbury, HOOPER, and others.*—We confess that the *foundation of their charge is good and lawful, established by the Apostles, according to the command of Christ,* in the churches which they founded.”†

CALVIN disclaims that *equality* in the ministry which the Christian's Magazine maintains is the “law of God's house.” In his comment on the text in Titus, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mightest ordain elders in every city,” &c. he observes, “Hence we learn, that there *was not any equality* among the ministers of the church, but that *one was placed over* the rest in *authority and counsel.*” CALVIN here acknowledges what the advocates of Episcopacy maintain, that Titus was the *head and supreme governor* of the church in Crete.

CALVIN indeed did not pretend that the Presbyterian form of government which he established at Geneva was primitive. In his epistle to *Cardinal Sadolet*, he says, “We deny not that we *want* a *DISCIPLINE* such as the *ancient church* had; but can they with justice accuse us of having overthrown the discipline of the church, who are the only men who have destroyed it from the foundation, and who, when we *endeavoured to restore the same*, have hitherto opposed that work? But as for *doctrine*, we are willing to be tried by the *ancient church.*”‡

BEZA, the colleague, and afterwards the successor of Cal-

\* This letter is annexed to Stillingfleet's “Unreasonableness of Separation.” It was written in 1680.

† See Bingham's French Church's Apology for Church of England, annexed to the second volume of his works.

‡ Ad Sadoletum Responsio. Joan. Calv. Trac. p. 125.

vin, in his treatise against Saravia, observes, "If there are any (which you shall hardly persuade me to believe) who reject the *whole order of Episcopacy*, God forbid that any man of a sound mind should assent to the madness of such men!" How far removed then, from insanity and madness, in the judgment of Beza, are those men who pronounce *the whole order of Episcopacy* to be "anti-Christian and unscriptural!" This order of Episcopacy was the Episcopacy possessed by the Church of England: for in the same treatise he styles it a "singular blessing," and prays that it may be "perpetual" to that church.

VIDELIUS, a distinguished divine of the Church of *Geneva*, afterwards Professor of Divinity in the Reformed Church of *Holland*, who lived in the seventeenth century, maintains the genuineness of the Epistles of Ignatius, which bear such decided testimony to Episcopacy, and asserts, "that after the death of Linus and Cletus, *Clemens* was left alone; and retained the name of Bishop, both because he then survived all those who had been assistants of the Apostles; and also for that the *distinction of the names of bishop and presbyter was even then in force.*"\* VIDELIUS here testifies to *diocesan Episcopacy*, for he makes CLEMENS to be *alone* Bishop of Rome; and surely there must have been more than one congregation of Christians in that city. The learned CASAUBON, a divine of the Church of *Geneva*, in the seventeenth century, observes concerning the Church of England, "that no church in the world came nearer to the form of the most flourishing *primitive church*; having observed a middle way betwixt those churches which have failed either by excess or defect."†

Let us pass on to the testimony of the *Reformed Church of Holland* in favour of Episcopacy, made by the famous SYNOD OF DORT. At this Synod several of the bishops of England attended by invitation. In a tract which these

\* Videl. Exer. 8. in Ign. epist. ad Marium, cap. iii.

† See Durel's View of the Reformed Churches, p. 296.

bishops published, they declare, "in our private converse with the most eminent of the ministry, we found many more ready to *deplore* than to defend their *own estate*, and *wished* rather than *hoped* to be made *like the flourishing Church of ENGLAND.*" And when the British delegates "asserted publicly and openly in the Synod the *divine right of Episcopacy*, and appealed therein to the judgment of *antiquity*," the members of the Synod replied, "that they had a great respect and value for the good *order and discipline of the Church of ENGLAND*, and wished with all their hearts that the *same order* were observed and settled there; that they durst not, however, hope for such a happiness in the present state of affairs; but hoped that, though their *ability bore no proportion to their will*, God would assist them by his grace and favour, and that they would do all in their power towards it."\* A famous divine of the same church, LE MOYNE, Professor of Divinity at *Leyden*, in Holland, in a letter addressed to the Bishop of London in 1680, not only defends Episcopacy, but expressly asserts that it had always subsisted throughout the universal church; "for the EPISCOPAL government, what is there in it that is dangerous?" &c. &c. "For the space of fifteen hundred years, all the other churches of the world had no other kind of government."†

Equally decisive in favour of Episcopacy are the sentiments of divines of the *French Protestant Church*. They extol Episcopacy, and expressly plead necessity for departure from it. Mons. LE MOYNE, a Protestant minister of Roan, in France, in a letter written in the year 1661, and addressed to an English clergyman, thus extols Episcopacy—"Truly I believe not that it is possible to keep either peace or order in your church without preserving the *Epis-*

\* This fact is also stated by Bishop HALL, who attended the Synod, in his *Divine Right of Episcopacy*; by Collier, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 717, &c. and by Brandt, in his *History of the Reformation*, vol. iii. p. 288.

† The letter is published at length in the appendix to Stillingfleet's "Unreasonableness of Separation."

*copal dignity.* And I confess that *I conceive not by what spirit they are led that oppose that government, and cry it down with such violence.* For I defy any man, whoever he be, to show me, if he can, any other order more *suitable with reason, yea, or better agreeing with holy scripture, and of which God hath made more use for the establishment of his truth, and the amplification of his kingdom.*"\* The plea of *necessity* for departing from Episcopacy is expressly urged by another divine of the French Reformed Church, Mons. Du Bosc—"We acknowledge that this order hath signal advantages; and I think not that any of my brethren will contradict me, if I say that WELL-ORDERED EPISCOPACY *hath most important and considerable utilities which cannot be found in the PRESBYTERIAN DISCIPLINE.* If we have followed the *last* in our churches, it not for any aversion we have to the former; it is not because we hold Episcopacy to be contrary to the nature of the gospel, or because we think it less convenient for the good of the church, or less worthy of the condition of the true flocks of our Lord; but because it is *NECESSITY hath obliged us to it*; because Reformation having been begun in this kingdom by the people and by inferior churchmen, the places of Bishops remained filled with men of a contrary religion, so that we are *constrained* to content ourselves with ministers and elders as well as we could," &c.† The testimony of DAILLE and L'ANGLE, ministers of the same church, has been already adduced, and is well worthy of attention. ))

Let us pass on from the Calvinistic to the LUTHERAN churches. The Lutheran churches of *Sweden* and *Denmark* have preserved the EPISCOPAL SUCCESSION.‡ And even those

\* The letter is published at length in Durel's "View of the Government and Worship of the Reformed Churches."

† The letter is published in Durel's "View," &c.

‡ In Sweden and Denmark, the Roman Catholic Bishops were compelled to submit to the Reformation; their temporal power was abolished; and they retained only the spiritual part of the Episcopal office.

Bishops could not be had, because they were all for Rome!—So then these

Lutheran churches of *Germany* who could not preserve the *succession of Bishops*, entertained so great a respect for *Episcopacy*, and for its ancient and primitive claims, and were also so impressed with its *utility*, that they adopted and still maintain the *forms* of *Episcopacy*; having distinction of rank in the ministry, and placing over the clergy *superintendents*, to exercise the general powers of superintendence and government.

Now I may confidently appeal to any candid person—If *Episcopacy* were a novel institution; if it had been unknown to the apostolic and primitive church; if it had sprung from that accursed ambition, and desire of “lording it over God’s heritage,” which nourished and advanced to full stature the “man of sin;” if *Episcopacy* were, as you maintain, “unscriptural and anti-Christian,” would the REFORMED CHURCHES have spoken thus respectfully of it? Would some of the LUTHERAN CHURCHES, who were unable to obtain the *Episcopal succession*, have yet preserved, as far as possible, the *forms* of *Episcopacy*? Would the CALVINISTIC REFORMERS and divines have commended “a well-ordered *Episcopacy*,” such an *Episcopacy* as the *Church of England* possessed, as both “suitable with reason, and agreeing with holy scripture?” Would they have pleaded that “necessity obliged them to depart from it;” that “as the Reformation was begun by the people and inferior churches, the places of the Bishops remained filled by those of a contrary religion?” Would they have lamented that “the state of affairs did not permit them to hope for obtaining it,” and have prayed that “God would assist them by his grace and favour, while they did all in their power to obtain it?” Would the great reformer, CALVIN, have expressed his approbation of it, and pronounced an awful ANATHEMA on all those who should reject it? Could these illustrious Reformers and divines have been ignorant of the constitution of the primitive church—they who by their talents and learning felled the deep-rooted and towering pretensions of the Pope of Rome?

Could they who beheld in the Bishops who surrounded them the obsequious flatterers and tools of the papal church, have had any inducement to flatter this order as “under any form,” primitive and apostolic? Could they, who boldly defied the papal thunder that rolled over them, have wanted the courage and the zeal to renounce and oppose the order of Bishops, if, with the Presbyterians of later ages, they had believed this order, “under whatever form or pretext adopted, was unscriptural and anti-Christian?” Ah! sir, beware how you grossly libel the talents, learning, piety and zeal of these “heroes of the truth, who rescued millions from the man of sin, lighted up the lamp of pure religion, and left it burning with a pure and steady light to the generation following.”\* No, their testimony in favour of Episcopacy can only be accounted for, consistently with an acknowledgment of their learning and their piety, on the principle laid down by Daille, that “the foundation of the charge of Bishops is good and lawful, established by the Apostles, according to the command of Christ, in the churches which they founded.”†

Here then methinks the dispute between us should end. Here then Episcopacy may take her stand, and convict of gross departure from the original‡ principles of the Reformed churches, and expose to the ANATHEMA of CALVIN, all who shall refuse to “reverence her, and submit themselves to her with the utmost obedience.”§ In this view of the subject it is of no importance whether Episcopacy, as the divinely instituted method of conveying the ministerial authority be unalterable, or whether it be only an ancient and primitive practice, instituted for the preservation of peace

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 96.

† Daille here means such Bishops as the Church of England possessed. See p. 93, 94.

‡ I say *original*; for it is certain they did not all continue to maintain those sentiments concerning the Episcopacy of the Church of England which they at first expressed.

§ See Calvin's Declarations, p. 91.

*Witnessed by the authors  
Calvin's Institutions.*

*— says; as holding  
that change of his  
— so did they — see*

and unity in the church. Whatever be the authority for it, we find the universal church in possession of it at the Reformation. We find by far the greater proportion of the Reformed churches preserving Episcopacy (purified from Papal corruptions) either in *substance* or in *form*.\* We find those reformers who renounced it acknowledging that it was an ancient and primitive institution; and lamenting the unfortunate circumstances which compelled them to depart from it. They pleaded that they could not get, as Calvin expresses it, "such an hierarchy in which the Bishops did not refuse to be subject to Christ."

How then should a considerate non-Episcopalian argue? "There can surely be nothing 'anti-Christian or unscriptural' in Episcopacy, or those 'faithful ministers, who went away to their Father's house, under the strong consolations of the Holy Ghost, with anticipated heaven in their hearts, and its hallelujahs on their lips,'"<sup>†</sup> would not have revered it as a primitive and ancient institution, would not have lamented their want of it, would not have denounced an *anathema* against all who should wilfully reject it. A well-ordered Episcopacy, free from Papal corruptions, now subsists, and is within my embrace. The plea of necessity forsakes me. By embracing Episcopacy, I shall at any rate be on the safe side. Agreeably to the concessions of all Christians, I shall then enjoy the true ministry and ordi-

\* Presbyterians remain as they were at first, a comparatively *small sect* among Christians. The GREEK and LATIN churches are Episcopal. So also are the LUTHERAN churches of *Sweden* and *Denmark*; the Church of the *United Brethren*, or *Moravians*; some Protestant churches in *Bohemia*; and the churches of *England* and *Ireland*; the venerable remains of the ancient Episcopal Church of *Scotland*; and the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. The *Lutheran* churches of *Germany*, though destitute of the *Episcopal succession*, are yet *Episcopal* in their form of government. The *Presbyterians* consist of only a few churches on the Continent, some of the dissenting churches in *England* and *Ireland*, the established Church of *Scotland*, and the Seceding churches, and the Presbyterian churches in this country.

† Christian's Magazine, p. 96.

nances of Christ's Church. I shall submit to an apostolic and primitive institution, and thus contribute to heal the divisions that corrupt the truth, and cause the enemies of Zion to laugh her to scorn. I shall promote the "peace of Jerusalem," and thus contribute to make her a "praise throughout the earth." Yes, sir, what reply would you make to a considerate non-Episcopalian who should thus address you? You could not say that Episcopacy was "unscriptural and anti-Christian;" for then he would urge against you the concessions of all the Reformed churches at the outset of the Reformation. He would urge against you the *anathema* of Calvin, that illustrious man who is considered as the founder of your churches; who, according to Mr. M'L. "equalled his contemporaries in piety, accuracy, knowledge, and faithfulness, and surpassed them in the grandeur of his conceptions."\* Nay, sir, he would urge against you your own confession. For you say, "an *Episcopal Church* we do know, in which there are hundreds of ministers and thousands of their people who are 'valiant for the truth,' who exemplify in their own persons the loveliness of the Christian character," &c. &c.† Now, this church which you thus extol, and which is the Calvinistic part of the Church of England, maintains and submits to that very *Episcopacy* which you are asserting is "unscriptural and anti-Christian."

Nor could you urge on the non-Episcopalian the duty of remaining separate from the Episcopal Church, by the plea that she imposes, as terms of communion, doctrines *sinful* and contrary to scripture. This indeed, is the plea by which Protestants justify their separation from the corrupt Church of Rome, and refute all the arguments in favour of communion with it. But this assertion you dare not make. The testimonies of the Reformed churches in favour of the

\* "Reformation Principles," a book drawn up by Mr. M'L. and published as the standard of doctrine of his church, p. 58.

† Christian's Magazine, p. 103.

Church of England would rise in judgment against you. You have yourself commended, in the highest terms, an "Episcopal Church," which glories in the same *articles of faith*, the same *Episcopacy*, the same *worship*, the same *rites and ceremonies* which the Episcopal Church possesses in this country. Nay, if there is any difference, it is in favour of the latter. For Episcopacy is here divested of those adventitious circumstances of temporal power and grandeur which, in the opinion of some of its friends, have not always operated to its benefit.

By what other argument would you answer the plea of the non-Episcopalian, that it is safest to join the Episcopal Church, in which, confessedly, there are valid ministrations and ordinances? Would you urge that it would be sinful in him to join that church because, in your judgment, its members do not exhibit the "power of godliness," and its ministers are not evangelical preachers? Admitting your assertion, which I contend is erroneous, to be well founded; still, none will deny that the *articles* and *prayers* of the church are sound and evangelical. The defects of its members, and the want of good preaching, therefore, cannot be admitted as conclusive arguments against union with a church where there is a *certainty* of a valid ministry and ordinances. The plea of *greater edification*, of *purser administrations*, is the ostensible plea of almost every schism that has rent the church. The admission of it would excite and sanction endless divisions, and a spirit of disorder, enthusiasm and fanaticism destructive to sober truth, to sound piety, to the peace and order of Zion. The admission of this plea would exalt *preaching* above public worship, and those other *ordinances* which are the "signs and seals of the covenant of grace." Such an admission, therefore, would be contrary to the principles of the Presbyterian Church; for she justly and wisely declares, "one *primary* design of public ordinances is to pay *social acts of homage* to the Most High God." "Sermons ought not to be so long as to interfere with the more *impor-*

*tant* duties of *prayer* and *praise*.”\* A defect must be *fundamental*; terms of communion must be sinful, absolutely *contrary* to the divine word, and incompatible with the paramount duty of obeying God rather than man,† before a Christian will be justifiable or safe in renouncing a church where, by the concessions of all, there is a *certainty* of a valid ministry and ordinances, and in joining churches, in which, on the subject of “these signs and seals of the covenant,” there is, to say the least, in the estimation of many, considerable *doubt*.

Admirable is the reasoning by which CALVIN proves that the plea of *purser administrations* and *greater edification* will not justify separation from a church in whose doctrines or ministrations there is nothing *fundamentally sinful*. “There may *some faultiness* creep into the church, in the administration either of *doctrine* or of the *sacraments*, which ought not to estrange us from the communion of it.”‡ “Among the Corinthians not only a few had gone out of the way, but the infection had in a manner seized the *whole body*: there was not only one kind of sin, but many: neither were they light offences, but certain horrible outrageous doings; it was not only *corruption* of *manners*, but also of *doctrine*. What in this case, saith the holy Apostle, the instrument of the Holy Ghost, by whose testimony the church standeth or falleth? *Doth he require a division from them?* Doth he banish them out of the kingdom of Christ? Doth he strike them by the extremest thunderbolt of his curse? He not only *doeth none of these things*, but he both *acknowledgeth and proclaimeth it a church of Christ and fellowship of saints*.”§

CALVIN refutes the plea for schism and for refusing to commune with a true church, because some of its members are corrupt in their lives and manners. “It is one thing to

\* Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church, chap. vi. 4.

† On this ground is separation from the Church of Rome justified.

‡ Calvin's Institutes, book iv. chap. i. sect. 12.

§ Calvin's Institutes, book iv. chap. i. sect. 14.

flee the company of evil men, and another thing for hatred of them to forsake the communion of the church. But whereas they think it sacrilege to be partakers of the Lord's bread with them, they are therein much more rigorous than Paul is. For where he exhorts us to a holy and pure partaking, he requireth *not that one should examine another, or every man the whole church*, but that they should *each one prove himself*. 1 Cor. xi. 18. If it were unlawful to communicate with an unworthy man, then truly Paul would bid us to look circumspectly, whether there were any in the multitude by whose uncleanness we might be defiled. Now, when he requireth only of every man the proof of himself, he showeth that it does not in the least injure us if any *unworthy persons thrust themselves in among us.*"\*

CALVIN, as a further proof that we ought not to separate from any church whose doctrines are sound and valid, because its members are corrupt, instances the corrupt state of the Jewish church during the times of the Prophets. "*Religion was partly despised, partly defiled. In their manners are commonly reported thefts, extortions, breaches of faith, murders and like mischiefs. But therefore the Prophets did neither erect to themselves new churches, nor build up new altars on which they might have several sacrifices; but of whatsoever manner of men they were, they considered that God had left his word with them, and ordained ceremonies whereby he was there worshipped: in the midst of the assembly of the wicked they held up pure hands unto him. Truly if they had thought that they did gather any infection thereby, they would rather have died a hundred times than have suffered themselves to be drawn thereunto. Therefore nothing held them from departing, but desire to the keeping of unity. But if the Prophets thought it against conscience to estrange themselves from the church for many and great wicked doings, not of one or two men, but in a manner of the whole people, then we take too much upon us, if immediately*

\* Calvin's Institutes, book iv. chap. 1. sect. 15.

we dare to depart from the communion of that church where not all *men's manners* do satisfy our judgment, yea, or the Christian profession."\*

Would to God that all those who make greater edification the plea for rending the peace of the church, would listen to the remonstrances of Calvin! How clearly does he prove that corruptions in doctrine, unless they be fundamental, or defects in the lives of the ministers or members of a church which is sound in the essential points of doctrine, and which possesses a valid ministry and ordinances, will not justify separation!† There is, then, a rule by which the plainest Christian may be regulated. He should choose that church which does not prescribe terms of communion *fundamentally sinful*, and which even her opponents acknowledge possesses a valid ministry and ordinances.

Sir, a non-Episcopalian may compel you, on your own principles, to admit that it is safest and best to "rush into the arms of an Episcopal church," in which it is possible to be "valiant for the truth," and to "exemplify all the loveliness of the Christian character;" in which he will be sure of enjoying valid ministrations; and in which he will enjoy that Episcopacy which is the centre of *unity* in the church; which CALVIN once commended as ancient and primitive; and the want of which many divines of the Reformed churches deplored.

Your friends in the Church of England, the *Wilberforces*, the *Thorntons*, the *Grants*, and others, will doubtless consider your commendation of them as no more than a just return for

\* Calvin's Institutes, book iv. chap. i. sect. 18.

† What judgment do you think CALVIN would have pronounced on the *Secession* from the Church of Scotland, the principles of which *secession* are still maintained by you, and lead you and others to remain *separate* from the church commonly known as the Presbyterian Church in this country? What judgment would he have pronounced on Mr. M'L. and his religious society, commonly distinguished as COVENANTERS, who refuse Church fellowship with all other Christians, and confine the *pure word and ordinances* to their own sect, which is scarcely known in the Christian world?

And what on the Episcopal ch. which

For 11. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20.

their attention to you, and for the pecuniary favours which the religious society to which you belong received from them. These commendations may induce them to pass over other parts of your review which bear not very lightly on that "external order," and that venerable church to which it is their pride to adhere. I shall be the last man to complain of your commendation of them, even though it is accompanied by the unjust, unfounded, and cruel aspersion, that they are "hated, reviled, persecuted" by such "high Churchmen as Mr. H. and his friends."\* No, Sir, Mr. H. and his friends detest the spirit and the conduct which you indirectly ascribe to them. While they respect the right of other religious denominations to profess and maintain their principles, *Churchmen* trust that there is not a system of denunciation and persecution organized to deter them from the exercise of the same right. They revere, they esteem, they love the Christian spirit, the "power of godliness," by whomsoever manifested. And you ought to know that DAUBENY, whom you denounce as among these persecuting Churchmen, in all his writings, speaks in the most exalted terms of *Wilberforce*, and with the utmost moderation and mildness opposes what he deems his errors. "High Churchmen in England hate, revile, persecute" the Calvinistic members of that church! My impression is directly the reverse. It is well known that these people, whom you so much extol, "hate, revile, persecute," all ministers of the church who will not preach the *peculiarities of Calvinism*, the doctrines of *unconditional election*, *irresistible grace*, and *final perseverance*; denouncing those who reject these doctrines as not being "gospel preachers," as strangers to "the power of godliness," and resting merely in its "form." Sir Richard Hill, the leader of the Calvinistic band in the Church of England, in his criticisms on Daubeny's *Guide to the Church*, remarks, that "few will presume to question the doctrine of particular election" (in the sense in which it is held by Calvinists)—"but they who

\* *Christian's Magazine*, p. 103, &c.

are *strangers to the power of sin in themselves*, or to the *riches of grace in God?*" What is this if it is not "reviling and persecuting?" And what return does DAUBENY give to this harsh treatment? "As a pious and exemplary Christian, I look up to you, Sir, with respect; I could almost add, with veneration; for I cannot but venerate a man who, in the midst of great worldly consideration, attends to the first and most important duties of life."\* Does this look like hating, reviling, persecuting? It pains me to find you involving, in such general and unjust charges, individuals who have the misfortune to incur your displeasure for asserting the claims of *Episcopacy*.

Gratified with your strong commendations of "an Episcopal Church," I shall not inquire how you will reconcile these commendations with the standards of your church, which pronounce *Episcopacy* to be "unscriptural and anti-Christian." It is not my business to inquire how you will answer the charge of forsaking the principles of the *Seceders* in Scotland, from whom your religious society is descended, and with whom you yet preserve some kind of ecclesiastical intercourse. Hatred to *prelacy*, to the "hierarchy in its various modifications," first vented in the "solemn league and covenant," has been cherished and displayed in the various religious "testimonies," which the *Seceders* in Scotland, and the corresponding sects in this country, have set forth. Yet in the face of those solemn testimonies you extol, in the warmest language, "an Episcopal Church," which submits to a *prelacy*; Ministers who compose a part of the *hierarchy*, and derive their commission from usurping Bishops; and Laymen who cherish this "hierarchical" church, as the bulwark of Christendom and Christianity. I sincerely wish you may run no risque of being accused of "*trimming* on the points of faith and duty!"

\* Daubeny's Appendix to his Guide. Introductory letter.

## LETTER X.

SIR,

ONE important title, then, by which Bishop's hold their powers, is *prescription*, the *universal* and *immemorial usage of the Christian Church*. The burden of proof is thus placed upon the opponents of Episcopacy. They are bound to ascertain precisely and determinately the period when *Presbyters* possessed *solely* the ministerial power, and when the Bishops usurped, throughout the whole Christian Church, their *superior prerogatives*. If the records of the early ages take no notice of an event so memorable; if, while they record minutely the heresies and the schisms which distracted the church, they take no notice of a heresy and schism in which Bishops, not in some particular province, but throughout the world, usurped superior powers; if the early records take no notice of a fact which, shaking the church to its foundations, must have been of the most important and public notoriety; the conclusion is certain and irresistible, that no such usurpation took place; but that the Bishops hold their powers by the same tenure which supports Presbyters in theirs, the institution of Christ and his Apostles.\*

\* It has been asserted, that the WALDENSES, who separated in the twelfth century from the Church of Rome, were, in "the order of their church," and in their form of government, "strictly Presbyterian." They were, on the contrary, *strictly Episcopal*. MOSHEIM, who certainly was not very partial to the Episcopal cause, asserts, "The government of the church was committed by the Waldenses to *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons*; for they acknowledged that these three ecclesiastical orders were instituted by Christ himself."† Another historian‡ asserts, that "the Protestants of Bohemia, who were apprehensive that *ordinations*, in which *Presbyters* and not a *Bishop* should create another Presbyter, would not be *lawful*—sent deputies to the remains of the ancient *Waldenses*, upon the confines of Moravia and Austria, by *whose Bishops* these deputies were consecrated to the *Episcopal office*, which they have ever since *transmitted to their successors*." And the learned Dr. Allix,

\* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, century twelfth, part ii. chap. v.

† Commenius, quoted in Dr. Chandler's Appeal defended.

"Brethren doth never prosper. What's the reason?"

For an examination of this important question, whether the powers of Bishops are an usurpation, no period could have been more favourable than the *Reformation*. Bishops were part of the hierarchy of the Church of Rome. Against this corrupt church the indignant zeal of the Reformers was roused. They wanted not motives, and surely they wanted not the talents and learning to test the pretensions of the Bishops, to unmask these usurpers, if such they were, and to consign them to that merited execration with which they regarded the corrupt hierarchy of the Church of Rome. On examining the sentiments of the Reformers, we find, to our astonishment, that instead of treating a *primitive Episcopacy*, "such as the Church of England possessed," as an *usurpation*, they regarded it with approbation; expressed the hope, that "the Church of England might long enjoy it;" and even denounced an *anathema* against all who should reject it.

That these were the sentiments of CALVIN and other eminent divines of the Reformed churches concerning the *Episcopacy of the Church of England*, sufficient proof has, I conceive, been adduced in my last letter. I cannot avoid, however, calling your attention to the following corroborating evidence, that Calvin and the Reformed divines approved of the Episcopacy of the Church of England, and would have adopted it, had circumstances favoured such a measure. The diligent, learned and accurate historian, STRYPE, furnishes this evidence. It may be proper to premise, that the following quotations from this historian, have been adduced as decisive evidence of the preference of Calvin and other Reformed divines to the English Episcopacy, by the Rev. AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, in his "Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England." TOPLADY, let it be remembered, was a *rigid Calvinist*; a warm admirer and

in his "Remarks on the ancient Churches of Piedmont," proves, that though the WALDENSES opposed the *corrupt hierarchy* of the *Church of Rome*, they still held to the three primitive orders of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*.

panegyrist of Calvin; and his works rank high in the estimation of Calvinists.\*

STRYPE and TOPLADY both adduce the passage in which CALVIN denounces an *anathema* against all who should reject a primitive HIERARCHY as a proof of his approbation of the Episcopacy of the Church of England. TOPLADY observes, "that great reformer (CALVIN) *wished* for the introduction of *Protestant Episcopacy* into the *Reformed churches abroad*."† And then he quotes the following passage from STRYPE— "How Calvin stood affected in the said point of *Episcopacy*, and how *readily and gladly he and other heads of the Reformed churches would* have received it, is evident enough from his writings and epistles. In his book of the necessity of reforming the church, he hath these words: "*Talem nobis hierarchiam exhibeant*," &c.—*Let them give us such an hierarchy*, &c.‡ TOPLADY agrees with STRYPE in considering the above passage as a proof that "Calvin's opinion was favourable to the *English Episcopacy*."§

TOPLADY asserts, that "CALVIN made a serious motion of uniting Protestants together;"|| and, in proof of his assertion, quotes again from STRYPE—"They (the foreign Protestants) took such great joy and satisfaction in this good king (Edward VI.) and his establishment of religion, that BULLINGER, CALVIN, and others, in a letter to him, offered to make him their defender, and to *have Bishops in their churches, as there were in England*; with a tender of their service to assist and

\* The accuracy and fidelity of STRYPE as a historian, has never, I believe, been impeached. We are indebted to his faithful and indefatigable industry for much valuable information relative to the Reformation, in his "Annals," and other works, particularly his "Lives" of the Archbishops Cranmer, Parker, and others. He is characterized by TopladY as "an useful and laborious collector,"\* and as an "excellent historian;"† and is frequently quoted as authority by him.

† TopladY's Works, vol. ii. p. 153. London edition.

‡ Strype's Life of Archbishop Parker, p. 69, 70.

§ TopladY's Works, vol. ii. p. 153.

|| p. 151.

\* TopladY's Works, vol. ii. p. 17, note.

† p. 15.

unite together.”\* Of this scheme of CALVIN to unite Protestant churches under Bishops, such as the Church of England enjoyed, TOPLADY observes, “Nothing could be more wisely or more benevolently planned than this excellent scheme. It was, however, frustrated; and frustrated by whom? By the Papists of that time,” who, “by dint of collusive management, disconcerted a measure so formidable to the interests of Rome.” For “they verily thought that all the *heretics*, as they called them, would now unite among themselves, and become one body, *receiving the same discipline exercised in England*; which, if it should happen, and they should have heretical *Bishops* near them in those parts, they concluded that *Rome and her clergy would utterly fall.*”† TOPLADY observes on this statement, “the restless intrigues of the emissaries of the Church of Rome, who, under various characters and appearances, went about sowing division, and seeking to unsettle the minds of the people, doubtless contributed much to impede and dissipate the intended salutary *union.*” Thus then this plan of “*embracing into one church* all the friends of the Reformation in every country,” which Mr. M‘Leod considers as an evidence of the “capacious mind” of CALVIN, and of the “grandeur of his conceptions,”‡ contemplated their “receiving the same *discipline exercised in England*,” their “having *Bishops* in their churches, as there were in England!” CALVIN proposed that EPISCOPACY—yes, such an EPISCOPACY as the Church of England possessed, should constitute the UNITY of the church, that “essential principle of Christ’s kingdom.”§

\* Strype’s Memorials of Cranmer, p. 207.

† And yet Episcopalians are sometimes sneeringly impeached with being only a few “bowshots off from the territories of our sovereign lord the Pope.” The fact is, that the Church of Rome has always regarded, with the most lively apprehensions, the Church of England, from the persuasion that from her being so nearly conformed to the primitive and purest age of the church, she is the most dangerous enemy to papal usurpations and corruptions.

‡ Reformation principles, p. 58.

§ p. 55.

TOPLADY adduces from Strype “another very remarkable proof, both of CALVIN’S *regard* for *Episcopacy*, and of the manner in which a seeming difference arose between the plan of ecclesiastical government adopted by that Reformer, and the plan of Episcopal government adopted by the Church of England. TOPLADY quotes “a curious paper, in Archbishop ABBOT’S own hand-writing, found among Archbishop Usher’s manuscripts, and published by Strype;” and then subjoins—“So wrote that most respectable prelate, Archbishop ABBOT, whose evidence may be thus summed up—CALVIN’S last letter concerning *Episcopacy*, sent to the ruling clergy of England, in the reign of Edward VI. was craftily intercepted by Bonner and Gardiner; who (to crush CALVIN’S scheme for *episcopising the foreign Protestant churches*) forged a surly, snappish answer to Calvin, in the names of the divines to whom his letter had been addressed, but whose hands it had never reached. Calvin, being disgusted at the rudeness with which he supposed his overture had been received here, dropt all thoughts of making any further advances on the subject. And thus had not two Popish extinguishers put out the design, CALVIN *had admitted the discipline of the Church of England*, with as much zeal and heartiness as the Church of England actually adopted Calvin’s doctrine.”\* How far the Church of England “adopted Calvin’s *doctrine*” will be best ascertained by a comparison of her Articles and Liturgy with his *Institutes*; by which it will appear, that on all the *distinctive* points of Calvinism, there is the most marked difference between the language of the Church of England in her Articles and Liturgy, and the *Institutes* of Calvin. In the above passage, however, we have the decided opinion of an eminent Calvinistic historian and writer, founded on the most satisfactory documents, that CALVIN was attached to the Episcopacy of the Church of England, and was desirous to introduce it into all the Reformed churches.

\* Toplady’s Works, vol. ii. p. 153, 154, note.

The same historian, TOPLADY, asserts—"Nor did Calvin's learned colleague and successor, the illustrious BEZA, entertain a less respectful idea of our national establishment."\* In proof of this, Toplady introduces from Strype an account of a letter from Beza, in answer to one from Archbishop Whitgift, "blaming him for his (supposed) meddling with the church and state of England without any lawful commission." In his defence Beza states that the letter of the Archbishop "indeed troubled both him and Sadeel (another of the ministers of Geneva) in some sort; as being greatly afraid, lest some sinister rumours were brought to him (to the Archbishop) concerning them; or lest what they had written, concerning church government, *properly against the anti-Christian tyranny* (of the Romish Church,) as NECESSITY required, might be taken by some in that sense, as though they ever meant to compel to their order those churches that thought otherwise. That such arrogancy was far from them," &c. &c.† Toplady further remarks—"As to Beza, if he were afterwards so far wrought upon, by dint of misrepresentation, as to countenance, in any measure, the forwardness of the more rigid disciplinarians" (the opponents of the Church of England,) "it ought, in justice, to be imputed neither to any levity nor duplicity in him (for he was equally incapable of both,) but to the wrong informations that were sent to him, by which a foreigner who resided at so great a distance from England, might, easily enough, be liable to undue impression."‡ Toplady also urges the testimony of the famous SYNOD of DORT in favour of the Episcopacy of the Church of England, as an evidence, "that the affection of the foreign Reformed churches to a Protestant and primitive Episcopacy, did not expire with the life of Calvin."§

\* Toplady's Works, vol. ii. p. 16.

† It is worthy of remark, that this letter of Beza to Archbishop Whitgift, containing concessions in favour of the Episcopacy of the Church of England, was written several years after some of his works which contained different sentiments.

‡ Toplady's Works, vol. ii. p. 18.

§ p. 154.

After thus adducing evidence of the attachment of the foreign Reformers to the Episcopacy of the Church of England, this *Calvinistic* writer and historian, TOPLADY, observes, "CALVIN, BEZA, ZANCHIUS, SADEEL, BULLINGER and GUALTER, entertained very respectful and affectionate sentiments, concerning the *ritual, decency and order*, together with the EPISCOPAL REGIMEN, of our INCOMPARABLE CHURCH. And to the approbation of those most learned persons might be added (if need required) that of *many other foreign Calvinists*, who are deservedly numbered among the first ornaments of that country."\*

If these testimonies of CALVIN, BEZA, and other Reformed divines in favour of the Episcopacy of the Church of England, cannot be urged as conclusive evidence that these Reformers advanced it to the rank of a divine institution, they at least show that they approved of it as an ANCIENT and PRIMITIVE institution, handed down from the APOSTOLIC AGE; that imperious circumstances only led them to deviate from it, and prevented the execution of a plan to introduce it into all the Reformed churches. Alas! that a plan which displayed "the grandeur of the conceptions" of the great Reformer CALVIN, should have failed. The Protestant churches, cemented by the *ancient, primitive and venerable* bond of Episcopacy, would have been at UNITY among themselves; and thus have set at defiance the insidious arts and open assaults of popery, the ravages of heresy and schism, and the scoffs of infidelity. "Jerusalem would have been as a city that is at *unity* in itself." The prayer of Jesus for his followers would have been answered—that *they all might be ONE*.

I call then on every candid non-Episcopalian seriously to weigh the sentiments on the subject of Episcopacy of these pious and holy men, who "lighted up the lamp of pure religion." To suppose that, if they had viewed Episcopacy as an usurpation, any "human regards" would have led them not only to disguise their sentiments, but to speak in the

\* Toplady's Works, vol. ii. p. 19.

most respectful terms of it, and even to wish its universal adoption as the *bond of UNITY in the church*, would be to fix an indelible stigma on their character; to impeach that exalted *integrity* and *firmness* which it is our glory to claim for the "heroes of the Reformation." To suppose, on the other hand, that they were incapable of examining the claims of *Episcopacy*, would be an impeachment of their talents, their learning and zeal. The *inquisitive*, the *jealous*, the *learned*, the *pious*, the *faithful* period of the Reformation, *applauded* and *sanctioned* the *Episcopacy of the Church of England*. What that period failed to discover or proclaim has been reserved for the superior *jealousy*, *learning*, *piety* and *faithfulness* of a later age! A primitive *Episcopacy*, such as the Church of England possesses, is *now* denounced as an *usurpation*, as "anti-Christian, and unscriptural." "Venerable CALVIN!" stay thy awful ANATHEMA. "Illustrious BEZA!" I hear thee pouring forth the indignant language—"God forbid that any man of a sound mind should assent to the madness of such men."\*

This title then of ANCIENT USAGE—a title acknowledged by those eminent Reformers who were led by imperious circumstances to deviate from *Episcopacy*, should induce every Christian, when it is in his power, to embrace that church which enjoys the "singular blessing" of a *primitive Episcopacy*, reformed from Papal corruptions. Prudence obviously dictates this choice. *Of the validity of Episcopal ministrations there never has been, there never can be the least doubt:* while the validity of non-Episcopal ministrations, whatever allowance in certain cases may be made by the judgment of charity, remains still, to say the least, a *disputed point*.

But *Episcopacy* claims our reception by a still higher title. EPISCOPACY RESTS ON DIVINE AUTHORITY. It is the *institution of Christ and his Apostles*.

In discussing any subject, it is essential to the discovery of truth, and to bringing the discussion to a speedy issue, that

\* See page 95.

What do these people mean by these

the precise point in dispute should be clearly ascertained, and the proposition to be proved plainly and definitively stated. The opponents of Episcopacy have often connected with it points that are not essential to it; and when they have demolished these, they triumphantly suppose that the cause of Episcopacy is subverted.

The essential and characteristic principles of Episcopacy are—That there are *three* grades of ministers instituted by *Christ and his Apostles*; that the *first* grade, in addition to the ministerial powers, possess the *sole power of ordination*, with the *right* of exercising *supreme authority* over the *congregations* and *ministers* who may be subject to them.

From this statement of the *essentials* of Episcopacy, the following conclusions result.

1. *It is immaterial* by what *names* these grades of the ministry are distinguished.

The question concerns merely the *distinctive powers* which they possess; and the *subordination* of the two inferior grades to the first. Episcopalians concede that the names of *Bishop*, *Presbyter*, and *Deacon*, are, in scripture, interchangeably applied to the three grades. Still it is apparent, from the different *powers which they exercised*, or which were committed to them, that there was a distinction of authority, and a subordination among them. It would be fallacious and unfair to argue from a community of names, to a community of all ministerial powers; or to ascertain their *appropriate* and *distinctive* powers by the names applied to them. The term *Deacon*, signifying a *minister*, may be very properly applied to all the three grades. The term *Presbyter*, signifying a *church officer*, may also be indiscriminately applied. And *Bishop*, signifying an *overseer*, may be applied to a *Presbyter*, who has the *oversight* of a *congregation*, as well as to the highest grade of the ministry, who possess the right of *overseeing* ministers and congregations. The *distinction* and *subordination* of their powers is a matter of fact, to be ascertained by an appeal to *scripture*, illustrated and cor-

roborated by the *universal practice* and testimony of the *primitive church*. “Mere names are of little real value.”\* “It is for the *thing* not the name, we should contend.”† The three grades of the ministry were distinguished at first by the names *Apostles*; *Presbyters*, or *Elders*—called also Bishops, as *overseeing* a particular flock—and Deacons. And after the death of the Apostles, the term *Bishop* became appropriate to their successors in the ordinary ecclesiastical powers of ordination and government; and the two inferior grades were styled *Presbyters* or *Priests*, and *Deacons*.

Let it then be noted, that the *distinction* and *subordination* of the offices of these three grades of the ministry is to be inferred, not from their names, but from their *practices*, from the *powers vested in them*, and from their *acts of jurisdiction*. Desperate indeed must be the cause of the opponents of Episcopacy, when they insist that the grades of ministers now distinguished as Bishops and Presbyters possessed originally the *same* powers, because these names were originally applied to the same order. Who would think of inferring that our Saviour was no more than an *Apostle* or a *Bishop*, because these names are applied to him?‡ Or, who would think of maintaining that the *Consuls* of the present day are the same with those of the Roman Republic, because they are distinguished by the same names?

2. Episcopalians consider also as merely *verbal* the dispute whether Bishops and Presbyters are distinct *orders*, or different *grades* of the same order.

They conceive indeed that as *Presbyters* are superior in power to *Deacons*, and *Bishops* to *Presbyters*; and as they are advanced to these superior powers by ordination, the Church of England is justified in declaring,§ that there are three “*orders* of ministers in Christ’s Church.” But still many of the *schoolmen*, and some few divines even of the Church of England, are of opinion, that though Bishops are

\* Mr. M’Leod’s Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 30. † p. 18.

‡ Heb. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 25. § Preface to Ordination Service.

superior to Presbyters in the power of ordination, they are, nevertheless, the same order, as having the same *priesthood*. It would be absurd to conclude from hence, that these divines believed Bishops are on an equality with Presbyters. They contend, on the contrary, that Bishops are invested by ordination or consecration, with that power of ordaining others which Presbyters have not. The only thing, therefore, essential is, that Bishops possess, by apostolic institution, certain *powers*, distinct from and superior to the ordinary powers of Presbyters. This proved, the question in regard to the distinction or community of order becomes a mere dispute about words.

Bishops and Presbyters, with regard to the *priesthood* common to both, by which they were distinguished from Deacons and from the people, might be considered as the same order. Still, in regard to authority and jurisdiction, dignity and power, a Bishop was above a Presbyter. To contend that there were not three grades of ministers in the primitive church, because they were sometimes included in the two names, of *Bishops* and *Deacons*, *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, would be as absurd as to contend that there were not the three orders, of High Priest, Priests, and Levites, among the Jews, because the Jewish priesthood is sometimes included in the two terms, *Priests* and *Levites*; or that there is in the present day only one order of ministers in the Episcopal Church, because the three orders, are often denoted by the single appellation of Ministers, or Priests, or Clergy. Because *Clemens Romanus*, an ancient Father, divides the clergy into two orders, Bishops and Deacons, it is contended that there were in his day only two orders in the church. As well might we contend that there was no High Priest superior to Priests and Levites, because *Clemens* divides the Jewish ministry into Priests and Levites.

3. Nor is it essential to the *peculiar* and *distinctive* functions of a Bishop, that he should always *actually* exercise power over *ministers* and *congregations*; but it is essential

that he should *possess* the power, though it be not called into *exercise*.

A Bishop may sometimes be deprived of his *diocese*, of his ministers and congregations, by the civil authority. In this situation were several Bishops in England and Scotland, who were deprived of their dioceses at the Revolution in 1688. But a Bishop either deprived of, or relinquishing his diocese, no more loses his Episcopal functions than a Presbyter ceases to be a Presbyter when he gives up his congregation, and remains without any pastoral charge. In the early ages of Christianity, a Bishop may have been sometimes placed in a city or village where there was but one congregation of Christians. Still the Bishop possessed the power of ordaining Presbyters and Deacons, and of exercising authority over them. As the number of Christians multiplied, the new congregations, supplied by his Presbyters and Deacons, remained subject to him. But the Bishop, while there was but one congregation in his diocese, no more lost his peculiar and superior powers, than the Bishop in the city of Philadelphia or New-York, would lose his Episcopal functions, should persecution or any other event diminish his diocese to one single congregation.

It is the *possession of the right* to exercise authority over Presbyters and congregations, and not the *actual exercise* of this right, dependent as this exercise is upon circumstances, which is an essential characteristic of the *Episcopal grade* of the ministry. Nor does this bring a Bishop of the Episcopal Church to a *level*, or identify him, with a *Congregational* or *Presbyterian Bishop*, who oversees only *one* congregation. This latter can have no Presbyters, possessing the powers of the ministry, subject to him. He is himself the only person in the congregation vested with the power of preaching the word, and administering the sacraments. His Elders are merely aids to him in discipline; and his Deacons are officers who have the care of the poor and some other *temporal* functions. The right to exercise power over other congregations

and their pastors, is no part of his office. But a *Bishop* of the *Episcopal* Church possesses the *right to exercise authority over Presbyters and Deacons*, who have the *ministry* of the *word* and *sacraments*; and also over the *congregations*, in which these *Presbyters* and *Deacons* minister. Peculiar circumstances may sometimes prevent the *actual exercise* of his powers, but cannot divest him of them.

4. The *name* or the *extent* of the *Bishop's charge*, or his not being *exclusively* fixed to any *particular district*, does not affect his *distinctive* and *essential* powers.

The charge of a *Bishop* is now called a *Diocese*, and that of a *Presbyter* a *Parish*. But to the fourth century the common name of an *Episcopal diocese* was *παροικια*, answering nearly to the English word *parish*. This signified not the places or habitations near a *church*, but a *city* and the *towns and villages near it*. These, together with the city, constituted the *charge* of a *Bishop*, his *παροικια*, or *parish*, or, as it is now called, his *diocese*. But it would be unfair and absurd to argue from the circumstance of the *Bishop's charge* being originally called his *parish*, that it was, what that name now commonly signifies, a single congregation or pastoral care. Arguments drawn from *sameness of names*, to prove *sameness of powers*, of *persons*, or of *things*, are always liable to be fallacious, and betray the weakness of the cause into the service of which they are pressed. "Names are of little real value."\* They are changeable in their signification; and in different places, and at different periods are variously applied. The extent of a *Bishop's charge*, whether confined to a single congregation, or extending over several congregations, is a *matter of fact*, to be determined not by the *name* given to the charge, but by other circumstances. The word *παροικια*, or *parish*, is applied by *Eusebius* to a *Bishop's charge*, in the fourth century, when by the concessions of all the opponents of *Episcopacy* this charge included several

\* Mr. M'Leod's language in his *Ecclesiastical Catechism*.

*congregations.* The learned BINGHAM,\* in his *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*,† observes, “The reader may find an *hundred* passages in Eusebius where he uses the word *παροικία*, (or *parish*,) when he speaks of those large and populous cities (*Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria*) which had *many particular churches* in them. The city of *Alexandria*, in the time (the fourth century) of ALEXANDER and ATHANASIUS, was divided into *several districts*, called *Laura*, in every one of which there was a *church*, with a *Presbyter* fixed upon it: and yet *all these* were but one *παροικία*, as ALEXANDER calls it in his circular Epistle against ARIUS.” Until it can be proved that the word *παροικία*, in the primitive church, was invariably applied only to a single congregation, the argument drawn from it against a Bishop’s charge extending beyond a single congregation, can have no weight. We dismiss the *name* of the Bishop’s charge as of no consequence, as no way affecting either the nature or extent of his Episcopal jurisdiction.

Whether the ministers or congregations subject to a Bishop be more or less numerous; or whether instead of one Bishop being fixed to a particular diocese, the Bishops of a certain district should govern the church in common as a college of Bishops, are matters of expediency, of human policy, of ecclesiastical regulation; and do not affect the essential point of the *superiority* of Bishops to Presbyters in the powers of ordination and government. Timothy and Titus were evidently superior to the Elders or Presbyters of Ephesus and Crete; for the powers of ordination and government were expressly vested in them, and not in the Elders or Presbyters. And yet when Timothy and Titus, in order to *spread the gospel* as Evangelists, left the cities of Ephesus and Crete, they surely did not forfeit their superior powers. To

\* I quote this learned Christian antiquarian with the more confidence, because I find you, in your “Letters on Frequent Communion,” (p. 27) relying with confidence on his “collection and elucidation” of “authorities” with respect to an important practice in the *primitive* church.

† Book ix. chap. ii. sect 1.

make the existence of these powers absolutely dependent on their having been exclusively fixed to a certain district, would be absurd indeed.\*

It was a rule in the primitive church, that the *office* and *characters* of Bishops and Presbyters extended over the whole church, and were not confined to any particular place. Wherever a Bishop or Presbyter travelled, he had a right to exercise his function on *just* and *proper* occasions. But it was also a rule, that the *ordinary exercise* of the office of a Bishop was confined to a particular district, and of an inferior minister to a particular congregation. No person will contend that a Minister ceases to be a Minister when he does not confine his functions to a particular congregation, but acts as a Missionary through various congregations and districts. And is it not strange that any person should contend that a Bishop ceases to be a Bishop, because the peculiar circumstances of the church may require his superintending distinct and distant churches? Who would think, for example, of seriously maintaining that the Roman Catholic Bishop in Maryland forfeits his distinctive Episcopal character, because the circumstance of there being no other Roman Catholic

\* On this subject the opinion of one who has not been considered a high Churchman should have weight—Bishop HOADLY, in his “Defence of Episcopal Ordination,” thus observes: (Chap. i.) “It is of *small importance* whether Timothy and Titus were *fixed Bishops*, properly so called, or not. Perhaps at the first plantation of churches there was no such necessity of *fixed Bishops* as was found afterwards; or perhaps at first the superintendency of such persons as Timothy and Titus was thought requisite in many different churches, as their several needs required. If so, their *office* certainly was the *same* in all churches to which they went; and *ordination* reserved to such as they were, persons superior to the settled Presbyters. But as to *Ephesus* and *Crete*, it is manifest that Timothy and Titus were to stay with the churches there as long as their presence was not more wanted at other places. And, besides, if they did leave these churches, there was as good reason that they *should return to them*, to perform the same office of *ordination*, when there was again occasion, as there was at first, why they should be sent by St. Paul to that purpose.”

Bishop in this country requires him frequently to leave his residence and church in Baltimore, and to exercise his Episcopal functions in Pennsylvania, in New-York, and Massachusetts? Did circumstances in like manner prevent there being only one Protestant Episcopal Bishop in the United States, who would contend that he could not be a Bishop, because, instead of confining his Episcopal functions to the clergy and congregations of a certain district, he extended his superintendence over distant churches or districts? Yet, manifestly absurd as such a conclusion would be, the opponents of Episcopacy have founded a serious argument against the *superiority* of Timothy and Titus, from the circumstance that they were not *exclusively* fixed to the churches of Ephesus and Crete. Admit this argument, and you strip of their ministerial powers the numerous Missionaries who, instead of being exclusively fixed to a particular congregation, itinerate through the country.

In like manner circumstances may render it expedient that the Bishops of a particular country, instead of appropriating to each Bishop a particular district, should exercise their powers in common over the whole church. In this situation were the Bishops in Scotland on the abolition of Episcopacy. Deprived of their dioceses by the civil authority, they formed themselves into a college of Bishops, and exercised in common their Episcopal functions among their scattered flocks and ministers. To maintain that, because the arm of civil power stripped them of their dioceses, they forfeited their Episcopal prerogatives, when they still exercised these prerogatives (whenever they could do it with safety) among their scattered Presbyters and flocks, is as absurd as it is ungenerous. Yet no less a man than Dr. *Campbell*, in his *Ecclesiastical Lectures*, seriously contends that the Scotch Bishops, when they lost their dioceses, lost their Episcopal character. His able opponent, Bishop Skinner, of Aberdeen, very properly inquires—Did Dr. Campbell lose his ministerial character when he gave up his pastoral charge, and be-

came principal of Marishal College? And the inquiry may also be made—If persecution should deprive Presbyterian ministers of their congregations, and in this situation they were to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, and without particular pastoral charges, to minister, in common, to the spiritual wants of their scattered flocks, would they cease to be Presbyterian ministers?

There is an evident distinction between the *powers of office*, and the *exercise* of them. This last is styled *jurisdiction*. They are not only distinct but independent. The arm of power may deprive a Bishop of his jurisdiction, yet he still retains his Episcopal functions. The ecclesiastical authority may regulate this jurisdiction, may determine its *extent*; the particular ministers and congregations which it may include; the *manner* in which it may be exercised, whether in a particular district or diocese, or over the church at large. All these matters of *jurisdiction* are different from the powers of *office*. The jurisdiction of a Bishop may, from some particular circumstances, be confined to a single congregation, or be extended over an extensive province or country; his seat may be a small village, or a large and populous city; the civil magistrate may sink him into obscurity, and crush him with the arm of persecution, or may surround him with the splendour of worldly honours; a Dioclesian may hunt him to the stake, or a Constantine exalt him to the palace. These varying circumstances do not affect the *essentials* of his office, the *power* of ordaining Presbyters and Deacons, and of ruling them and their congregations when they are placed over any. The true point of contest between Episcopalians and their adversaries, is as to the *inherent* and *exclusive right* of Bishops to ordain Presbyters and Deacons, and to rule over them and their congregations; and not as to the *extent* or the *manner* of the *exercise* of this right, which must depend upon circumstances, and be matters of ecclesiastical regulation. The powers of a *Presbyter* are the same, whatever be the *name* or the *extent* of his pastoral charge. In like manner, “whether

the place in which the people reside who are under the *Bishop's* charge, be called a *parish* or a *diocese*; or whether his charge be of *larger or smaller extent*, can make no difference in the nature of *Episcopacy*. It is the *pre-eminence of office*, or the *superior authority* annexed to the *Episcopal* character that gives the true criterion of *Prelacy*."\* According to St. Jerome, "Wherever a Bishop is, whether at Rome or at Eugubium, at Constantinople or at Rhegium, at Alexandria or at Tani, he has the same merit, and the same priesthood.† Neither the power of riches, nor the humility of poverty makes a Bishop higher or lower, but they are all *successors of the Apostles*." Diocesan Bishops, for such confessedly were the Bishops in the time of St. Jerome *are all successors of the Apostles*.

5. Nor do Churchmen by any means consider it essential to *Episcopacy*, that the BISHOP should exercise *sole and absolute* power in the church.

He alone indeed possesses the power of ordination; he only conveys, from the divine Head of the Church, the ministerial commission. But the *manner* and the *restrictions*, according to which this power is to be exercised, are subjects of ecclesiastical regulation. Accordingly, in the Church of England, as well in the Episcopal Church in this country, the Bishop does not ordain but with the concurrence of his Presbyters, and with their approbation, and that also of the Laity, to the religious and moral qualifications of the person ordained. In the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, "the *Bishops*, the *Clergy*, and the *Laity*" exercise jointly

\* Bishop Skinner, of Aberdeen. Primitive Truth and Order, in answer to Dr. Campbell.

† The term *priesthood* is here used as an *appellative* to denote ministerial function. No argument can be drawn from the use of the term to prove that a Bishop is no more than a Priest. Since, whatever may be St. Jerome's opinion of their being originally the *same*, in *his time* they were confessedly *distinct*, according to the unanimous concession of the opponents of *Episcopacy*; and the Bishops of Constantinople, and of Rhegium, and of the other places were *diocesan Bishops*.

the power of *making ecclesiastical laws*. And in the Church of England the ecclesiastical laws made by the *Bishops* and *Clergy* in *convocation*, are not binding until they have received the assent of the *Laity*, of the King, Lords, and Commons. The rule of ecclesiastical legislation is thus settled by that able defender of Episcopacy, the "judicious" HOOKER. "The most natural and religious course in making laws is, that the *matter* of them be taken from the judgment of the *wisest* in those *things* which they are to *concern*. In *matters of God*, to set down a form of prayer, a solemn confession of the articles of the Christian faith, and ceremonies meet for the exercise of religion, it were unnatural not to think the *Pastors* and *Bishops* of our souls a great deal *more fit*, than men of secular trades and callings: howbeit, when all, which the *wisdom of all sorts* can do, is done for the devising of laws in the church, it is the *general consent of all* that giveth them the form and vigour of laws."\* It is thought by some, that this joint association of the three orders, of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, in making laws, has the sanction of apostolic and primitive usage; since in the memorable council at Jerusalem, there were the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren. And St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in the third century, in all ecclesiastical matters acted with the advice of his Clergy and Laity. There may be others, on the contrary, among Episcopalians, who maintain that this mode of ecclesiastical legislation is not strictly apostolic and primitive. But the sense of the church is to be learnt from her acknowledged institutions and practice, and not from the opinions of individuals.

It is evident that the exercise of the power of ordination, with the approbation of the Presbyters and Laity, to the qualifications and character of the person ordained; the concurrent exercise of the powers of legislation by the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity; and the consultation of his Clergy

\* Hooker. Ecclesiastical Polity, book viii. chap. iii. p. 344, Oxford edition.

and people, even in the executive and judicial measures of the Bishop, do not violate the *essentials* of Episcopacy. These essentials are, that the Bishop should have the *exclusive power of ordination*, and the *supreme power of governing* the church. Neither the Clergy nor the Laity presume to claim the power of ordination, or the supreme power of governing in the church; both which are peculiar to the Bishop.

6. There is no *particular mode of electing or appointing* Bishops essential to Episcopacy.

The *election* or *appointment* of a Bishop, and his ordination, or his receiving his Episcopal commission, are entirely distinct. As it is a maxim that the greater cannot be ordained by the less, nor those confer the power of ordination who have never received it, the ordination of a Bishop, the conferring on him the Episcopal authority, can be performed by *Bishops only*. But the *electing* or appointing of the person who is to be ordained Bishop is a matter of expediency and ecclesiastical regulation. In the primitive ages the Bishop was *elected* by the Clergy and people. But after the empire became Christian, the Bishops were generally appointed by the Emperor. Their *ordination* was always a *distinct* thing, and was performed by Bishops. In the Church of England the Bishops are virtually appointed by the King. In this country they are elected by the Clergy, and by the Laity represented by their delegates in convention. This appointment or election does not make them Bishops. Their *ordination* only, which is performed by Bishops, vests them with the Episcopal office. Obvious as this distinction is, there are found opponents of Episcopacy who seriously maintain, that because Bishops are appointed by the civil magistrate, or by the Clergy and people, their authority is of secular origin. As well might they contend, that because *Presbyterian* congregations elect or appoint their ministers, this election or appointment, and not ordination by the Presbytery, confers the Ministerial authority.

7. Episcopalians do *not* contend that in an *extensive* and

*unqualified* sense there is any form of church government of *divine right*.

Church government is often applied by Episcopal writers, in a *confined* sense, to the *orders of the ministry*. And in this *confined* signification, Episcopal government is of *divine right*. But in a more *extensive* sense, church government includes the particular organization by which ecclesiastical *power* is exercised, and discipline administered; and the rites and ceremonies by which public worship is conducted. In this *extensive* signification, Episcopalians maintain, that there is no precise form of church government of *divine right*. The organization of ecclesiastical authority, the forms of discipline, the rites and ceremonies of public worship, they maintain, are not laid down in scripture; and, "therefore, by common consent and authority, may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended or otherwise disposed of, as may seem most convenient for the *edification of the people*."\* The *single* point for which they contend is, that *Episcopacy* was instituted by Christ and his Apostles; that the three grades of ministers, *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, with their appropriate powers, are of "*divine and apostolical institution*."

The *government* of the church, therefore, is evidently not to be identified with its *ministry*. The *former*, considered as including discipline, rites and ceremonies, may be altered by human authority: the *latter* can only be altered by that *divine* authority which originally instituted it. If we change the distinctive grades and powers of the ministry, and take the power of ordination from that grade of ministers with whom it was originally vested, we make the ministry of human instead of *divine* authority; we destroy the connection between the ministry and its *divine* Head, Jesus Christ, whose commission alone can give it validity. But while Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with the powers which they

\* Preface to the Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

respectively received from Christ and his Apostles, are preserved inviolate, the church possesses the right, according to Episcopalians, to create new officers; and to model discipline, rites and ceremonies, as may seem best for edification; provided there be no violation of any divine command or institution.

This principle, that in an extensive sense there is no form of church government in *all its parts* of divine right, is maintained by all Episcopalians. It is particularly vindicated by the celebrated HOOKER, in his learned "Ecclesiastical Polity." The Puritans maintained that "God hath delivered in scripture a complete, particular, immutable form of church polity." Of course they opposed the Church of England for including in her discipline and public services many things not expressly commanded by the word of God. In opposition to them, HOOKER contended, "to make *new* articles of faith and doctrine, no man thinketh it lawful; new laws of government, what commonwealth or church is there which maketh not either at one time or another?"\* He contends, that as "external rites and ceremonies" do not affect the substance of the faith, "in such things, discretion may teach the church what is convenient;" and that in regard to them, "the church is no further tied unto scripture, than that against scripture nothing be admitted in the church."† Some Episcopal churches have incorporated in their regimen many ecclesiastical officers not known in other Episcopal churches, nor deemed essential by any. In regard to them HOOKER observes, "As for Deans, Prebendaries, Parsons, Vicars, Curates, Archdeacons, Chancellors, Officials, Commissaries, and such other like names," (he might have added Archbishops) "which being not found in holy scripture, we have been thereby, through some men's error, thought to allow of ecclesiastical degrees not known, nor ever heard of in the better ages of former times; all these are, in truth, but *titles of office*, whereunto partly ecclesiasti-

\* Ecclesiastical Polity, book iii. sec. 10.

† Sec. 3.

cal persons, and partly others are in sundry forms and conditions admitted, as the state of the church doth need; degrees of order" (by which he means the grades or degrees of the ministry,) "still continuing the *same* they were from the *first beginning*."\* Whatsoever things the word of God hath neither commanded nor prohibited, the church possesses the right which every other *society* possesses, to prescribe and enjoin.

It is, therefore, a principle strictly Episcopal, received by all Churchmen, that the *particular organization of church government, matters of discipline, rites and ceremonies*, are not unalterably determined in scripture. In this *extensive* sense *there is no particular form of church government of divine right*. But it is unfair and uncandid to charge HOOKER, WHITGIFT, and other eminent divines who advocate and defend this principle, with giving up the claims of Episcopacy to divine institution. What are the *essentials of Episcopacy*? The "degrees of order"—*Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, and their appropriate powers. And these HOOKER explicitly traces back to the institution of Christ and his Apostles. Alluding to a certain passage of scripture which he thinks improperly applied to prove the degrees of ecclesiastical order, HOOKER observes, "What orders of ecclesiastical persons there ought to be in the Church of Christ—we are not to learn from thence, but out of other parts of *holy scripture*, WHEREBY it clearly appeareth, that churches *apostolic* did know but *three degrees* in the power of *ecclesiastical order*; at the first *Apostles, Presbyters, and Deacons*; afterwards, *instead of Apostles, BISHOPS*, concerning whose order we are to speak in the seventh book."† And in yet more decisive terms he speaks—"I may securely, therefore, conclude, that there are in this day in the Church of England, no other than the same *degrees* of ecclesiastical orders, *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons*, which had their *beginning from*

\* Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. sec. 78.

† Sec. 78.

*Christ and his blessed Apostles themselves.*”\* We find HOOKER further declaring—“It was the general received opinion of the ancient Christian world, that *Ecclesia est in episcopo*, the OUTWARD BEING of a CHURCH, consisted in the having of a BISHOP.” “That so the ancient Fathers did think of *Episcopal regiment*; that they held this order as a thing received from the *blessed Apostles themselves, and authorized even from Heaven*, we may, perhaps, more easily prove, than obtain that they all shall grant it who see it proved.” “And shall we think that James was made Bishop of Jerusalem, Evodius Bishop of the church of Antioch, the Angels in the churches of Asia Bishops; that Bishops every where were appointed to take away factions, contentions, and schisms, without some like direction and instigation of the Holy Ghost? Wherefore let us not fear to be herein bold and peremptory, that if any thing in the church’s government, surely the *first institution of Bishops* was from *Heaven*, was even of *God*; the *Holy Ghost was the author of it.*” †

\* These extracts are taken from the fifth book of HOOKER’S Ecclesiastical Polity, which was published before his death. Doubts have been raised by some, whether the three last books published after his death are genuine. The following statement appears in substance in the appendix to the Life of Hooker. Hooker wrote three books in addition to those published by himself. The rough draught of these books had been much defaced and dismembered by the persons into whose hands they had fallen. In this situation they were delivered by Archbishop Whitgift to Dr. Spencer, “to be made as perfect as they might be, by him, who both knew Mr. Hooker’s hand-writing, and was best acquainted with his intentions.” It appears improbable that there should be any material corruptions in these books, published by Dr. Spencer, “between whom and Hooker there was so friendly a friendship, that they *continually advised together* in all their studies, and *particularly in what concerned these books of Polity.*” The omissions and interpolations in some copies of these books do not respect Episcopacy, but some other matter. There could have been no inducement to interpolation on the subject of Episcopacy. For there is no sentiment advanced concerning it in his seventh book which is not contained in his fifth book, which is undoubtedly genuine; and in which he asserts, that “Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons had their beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles.”

† Hooker’s Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii. sect. 5.

In like manner, WHITGIFT, in confuting the principle of the Puritans, that there ought not to be any thing in the church's government or worship which is not prescribed in the word of God, maintained that "there is no certain kind of government or discipline prescribed to the church, but that the same may be altered as the profit of the churches require." Still he maintained all that is ESSENTIAL to Episcopacy, the *superiority of Bishops* to Presbyters and Deacons by *divine institution*. In a letter to *Beza*, Archbishop WHITGIFT observes—"We make no doubt but that the EPISCOPAL DEGREE which we bear, is an institution APOSTOLICAL and DIVINE; and so hath always been held by a continual course of times from the *Apostles'* to this very age of ours." "And what *Aaron* was to his *sons* and to the *Levites*, this the *Bishops* were to the *Priests* and *Deacons*; and so esteemed of the *Fathers* to be by DIVINE INSTITUTION."\*

It is evidently uncandid and unfair, therefore, to urge, that because HOOKER and other divines maintain what is, in fact, a *church principle*, that in an *extensive* sense there is no precise form of church government in all its parts prescribed in the word of God; they, therefore, give up Episcopacy as a divine institution. They expressly maintain, in the strongest language, all that is essential to Episcopacy, that Bishops are superior to Presbyters and Deacons by "*divine and apostolical institution*." It is equally uncandid and unfair to urge, from particular expressions of some of the Reformers at an early period of the Reformation, that the Church of England was not constituted upon the principle that Episcopacy was instituted by Christ and his Apostles. Such were the arbitrary pretensions of Henry VIII. and such, unhappily, for *some time*, the submission of some of the English Reformers to those pretensions, that they were led to submit to Erastian principles, which, viewing the church merely as a creature of the state, tended to subvert entirely her spiritual authority. Happily, however, the Church of England was not founded

\* *Strype's Life of Whitgift*, p. 460

on these principles, and those of the Reformers who once avowed, finally disclaimed, them. We want no stronger evidence of this, than the fact, that the Church of England, at the Reformation, preserved the Episcopal succession.\* She formed all her public offices on the principles that there are the three orders, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; that

\* The contemptible *story* of the *Nag's head ordination* is sometimes urged by the opponents of Episcopacy, to invalidate the Episcopal succession of the Church of England. According to this *story*, Archbishop Parker, in the reign of Elizabeth, was consecrated privately at the *Nag's head tavern*, by persons who were not Bishops. It ought, in justice, to be mentioned, that the candid opponents of Episcopacy disdain to press into their cause this story, entirely destitute of proof, and which was invented by the Papists to injure the Church of England. Its falsehood has been exposed by many writers, and especially by Bishop BURNET, who will not be accused of being unduly partial to the Episcopal cause. "This story was not thought of, Bishop Burnet observes, until forty years after" the period of Bishop Parker's consecration. It was then contradicted by "the old Earl of Nottingham, who had been at the consecration, declared it was at Lambeth, and described all the circumstances of it, and satisfied all reasonable men that it was according to the form of the Church of England. The *registers*, both of the See of Canterbury, and of the *Records of the Crown*, do all fully agree with his relation. And above all other testimonies, the *original instrument* of Archbishop Parker's consecration lies still among his other papers in the library of Corpus Christi College, at Cambridge, which I saw and read. It is as manifestly an original writing as any that I have ever had in my hands. I have put it in the collection for the more full discovery of the *impudence of the fiction*." Burnet's History of the Reformation, book ii. p. 402. It is indeed incredible, that so important, and at that period, so particularly interesting an event as the consecration of an Archbishop of Canterbury should have been privately and illegally performed, and yet that no discovery of it should be made until forty years after; and that in the mean time the ordination should be sanctioned as valid by all the public registers, and by various acts of Parliament. If, in opposition to these striking facts, we doubt the regularity of Archbishop Parker's ordination, how easy will it be to throw doubt on the best authenticated events!\*

\* The learned Dr. Lingard, the standard historian of the Romish church, admits in his Universal History the Nag's head story to be a fable; and subsequently, in four letters to a Romanist, defends this admission by the clearest and most incontestible proofs.—ED.

these "orders" were "constituted" by Almighty God, by "his divine providence," and by his "Holy Spirit;"\* and that the Bishops alone have the power of ordination.†

When, therefore, the opponents of Episcopacy urge that the *Reformers* of the Church of England, and many of her most eminent divines, did not maintain that Episcopacy was the institution of Christ and his Apostles, Episcopalians have only to reply—The sense of the Church of England, as to Episcopacy, is to be learnt from her public offices, and from her practice, and not from the sentiments of individuals. Will you allow that the Church of Scotland is anti-Calvinistic in her doctrines, because many of her most eminent divines are confessedly so. The Church of England receives no one as a minister who has not been Episcopally ordained. Some of the Reformers entertained, at a certain period, lax notions on the subject of Episcopacy. But they were, at the same time, equally erroneous in many of their opinions concerning some of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. If CRANMER'S sentiments were at one time favourable to the *equality* of Bishops and Priests, so were they also to transubstantiation. But he renounced his errors on both these points. You will not dispute Bishop Burnet's authority, who asserts, "In CRANMER'S paper some singular opinions of his about the nature of ecclesiastical offices will be found; but as they are delivered by him with all possible modesty, so *they were not established as the doctrine of the church*, but

\* The declarations of the prayers in the ordination offices.

† The conduct of Archbishop GRINDAL, who, in the reign of Elizabeth, granted a license to preach to *John Morrison* a *Presbyterian* divine, is often triumphantly adduced as a proof that the Church of England admits the validity of Presbyterian ordination. Is it possible that the irregular conduct of an Archbishop, "who was thought too gentle and remiss in his management, and to whom the privy council wrote to complain of the relaxation of discipline,"\* should be urged by men of sense and candour as evidence that the Church of England admits what all her public offices and her general practice disclaim!

\* Collier's Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 571.

*laid aside* as particular conceits of his own; and it seems that afterwards he changed his own opinion. For he subscribed the book which was soon after set out, which was directly contrary to those opinions.”\* He published also a Catechism, in which, according to Bishop Burnet, “he fully owns the divine institution of Bishops and Priests.”†

It is useless then (the Episcopalian may continue to address his opponents) to dispute, whether some of the divines of the English Church did not acknowledge that there is no precise form of government in all its parts of divine right. This is not bringing the matter to a point; “it is not taking the question by the proper handle.” The only essential question is, Were Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with their distinctive and subordinate powers, instituted by Christ and his Apostles? And on this question will you acknowledge with the Church of England, and the Episcopal Church in this country, that “it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy scriptures and ancient authors, that, from the Apostles’ times, there have been these orders of Ministers, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons?”‡ Will you maintain, with these

\* History of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 289.

† History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 71. An extract from this Catechism appears in Dr. Chandler’s “Appeal further defended,” (p. 63.) In this tract, and in his “Appeal defended,” will be found a full vindication of the Reformers from the charge of not maintaining the divine institutions of Episcopacy.

‡ The Church of England, and the Protestant Episcopal Church not only assert, that those now called Bishops and Presbyters are distinct, but, in fact, exalt a Bishop above a Presbyter by a *solemn ordination*. There can be no doubt then that in their judgment the offices are distinct. Why then, it may be asked, do they appoint to be read, in the ordering of Bishops, some portions of scripture which are considered as designating not those who are now strictly called Bishops, but the order of Presbyters, to whom in the New Testament the title Bishop is often given? The answer may be—These passages describe the general duties of pastors, as *overseers* of souls; and may, therefore, as an admonition to duty, be with propriety applied, either to the *Presbyter*, as the *overseer* of a particular congregation, or to the *Bishop* (strictly so called) as an *overseer* of the church at large.

churches, that "Almighty God, by his divine providence and Holy Spirit appointed *divers orders* of ministers in his church;" and that these orders are "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons?"\* Will you adopt the *practice* of those churches, and acknowledge none as "lawful ministers" among you "who have not had Episcopal consecration or ordination?"† Will you maintain, with CRANMER, who adopted those ordination services, the "divine institution of Bishops and Priests!" Will you assert, with WHITGIFT, "that the Episcopal degree is an institution apostolical and divine?" Will you allow, with HOOKER, that "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons had their beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles?"‡ And "that besides these *last times*, which, for insolency, pride, and egregious contempt of all good order are the worst, there are *none* wherein ye can truly affirm, that the *complete form* of your discipline, or the *substance* thereof, was practised?"§ Will you adopt the reasoning of CHILLINGWORTH in his celebrated tract, in which he demonstrates "the apostolical institution of Episcopacy?" Will you assert, with STILLINGFLEET, that "they who go about to *unbishop* Timothy and Titus, may as well *unscripture the Epistles* that were written to them, and make *them* only some *particular* and *occasional* writings, as make Timothy and Titus to have been only some *particular* and *occasional* officers;"|| and that "we have no greater assurance that these Epistles were written by St. Paul, than that there were Bishops to succeed the Apostles in the care and government of churches?" Will you maintain, with a Bishop of our own country, who has been unjustly considered as aiding your cause, that "there having been an *Episcopal power* originally lodged by *Jesus Christ* with his *Apostles*, and by them exercised

\* Preface to Ordination Service.

† Ibid.

‡ Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. sect. 79.

§ Hooker. Preface to Ecclesiastical Polity, sect. 4.

|| Stillingfleet's (the author of the Irenicum) Charge on the duties and Rights of the Clergy, p. 8.

generally in person, but sometimes by delegation (as in the instances of *Timothy* and *Titus*,) the same was conveyed by them before their decease to *one pastor* in each church, which generally comprehended all the Christians in a city and a convenient surrounding district? Thus were created the *apostolic* successors.”\* Will you maintain, with the same Bishop, that “it seemed good to the Apostles to appoint some of these with *super eminent* commission, of which there were instances in *Timothy* and *Titus*; and the persons so appointed have handed down their commission through the different ages of the church? This is the *originally constituted* order.”†

If the non-Episcopalian will make these concessions, and will hold this language, he fairly gives up his cause. He maintains all that the Episcopalian could wish. And we shall be glad to hear on what grounds he will justify his rejection of the “originally constituted order,” and of degrees of the ministry who had their “beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles.”

8. The difference of opinion among Episcopalians, with respect to *cases of necessity*, does not affect the *essentials* of Episcopacy.

These *essentials* are, that by the institution of Christ and his Apostles, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons have distinct powers; and that ordination, and the supreme power of government are peculiar to Bishops. But a question arises in respect to cases of necessity. Are Presbyters justified in ordaining, when *ordination by Bishops cannot be had*? Some

\* Case of the Episcopal churches considered, p. 23. The Episcopal opinion there stated “is to be understood as the author’s own.” Collection of Essays on Episcopacy, p. 175. In the first named pamphlet the author advocated a “*temporary departure*” from Episcopacy, *on the plea of necessity*, on the supposition that “ordination by Bishops could not be had.” Whatever may be thought of the *validity* of this plea, it has been asserted by many who have favoured the highest claims of Episcopacy.

† Bishop White’s Sermon before the General Convention.

advocates of Episcopacy have maintained, that no case of necessity can justify Presbyters in assuming a power which they never received from the divine Head of the Church.\* While others have maintained, that, provided the general obligation of Episcopacy be acknowledged, God will mercifully accept the ministrations of those Presbyterially ordained, where ordination by Bishops cannot be had.

However plausible the *plea of necessity* may have been in some places in the early stages of the Reformation, it would be difficult to find a place where such a plea could now be maintained. The question, therefore, is now more curious than useful. The validity of such a plea may, however, be admitted in perfect consistency with the highest Episcopal claims, on the ground, that as the public exercises of the ministry are essential to the preservation of religion, it may please God, where a duly authorized ministry cannot be had, to accept and bless the ministrations of those who have not received their commission by regular transmission from the divine Head of the Church, through the appointed channel. To assert that the admission of this plea is to give up the point that Episcopal ordination is prescribed by Christ and his Apostles, would be absurd. The plea of necessity essentially involves an acknowledgement of the *obligation* of the institution, which is neglected or violated. Reasons that might vindicate a *temporary departure*, would not justify a *final abrogation*. Some of the highest Churchmen, and ablest advocates of Episcopacy, who have maintained that "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons had their beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles;"† that "the *power of ordaining* hath always been *peculiar* unto Bishops;" that "it hath not been heard of that Presbyters were ever authorized to ordain;"‡ that "the *first institution* of *Bishops* was from heaven, was

\* The fallacy of this plea of necessity is very forcibly urged and maintained, by a writer with the signature of "Eusebius," in the Churchman's Magazine, for February, 1807, published in New-Haven, Connecticut.

† Hooker. Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. sec. 78. ‡ Book vii. sec. 6.

*even of God;*" have yet maintained that "where the church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath, nor *can have possibly* a Bishop to ordain; in case of such *necessity*, the ordinary *institution of God* hath given often times, and may give place."\* But these cases of *inevitable necessity* alone excepted, *none may ordain but only Bishops.*"†

On this subject, the remarks of a learned and judicious Commentator on the offices of ordination are well worthy of attention.‡

"But some will object that this" (the universally owned principle, that Bishops only could ordain) "will deprive divers foreign churches (where they have no Bishops) of a lawful ministry, because their Ministers have no ordinations but by Presbyters. To which I shall only say, that the first Presbyter who presumed to ordain had no such power given him, and *so could not rightly convey that which he never received.* There is no precedent in scripture of mere Presbyters ordaining alone: and such ordinations would have been declared *null* in the primitive ages; yea, for 1500 years together no such were allowed. But the fairest plea is, that some of these churches were forced, by dire necessity, to this irregularity, by the obstinate refusal of the Popish Bishops to ordain any that were for Reformation, so that they must either have such a Clergy as they could have, or have none to officiate in the Protestant way. To which I reply, that where this necessity was *real*, and *while* it was so (as, perhaps, it might be in some places at first) *it will go far to excuse them.*" "For those of the foreign reformed churches, who highly value the *Episcopal order*, wish for Bishops, but are, by persecution and violence, kept from that happiness; we pity them, and pray for them, and hope God will excuse this defect till they can remedy it.§ But we are thankful to that Providence which allows us to keep up the

\* Book vii. sec. 14.

† Sec. 14.

‡ Dean COMBER, in his Companion to the Temple, vol. ii. p. 190.

§ This was the prayer of the SYNOD OF DORT for themselves. See page 95 and 96.

*x What becomes of the Apostolical*

primitive orders in a due subordination, and to have a *right* and truly canonical ministry in this well constituted church, the exact transcript of the primitive, and the *glory* of the Reformation.”

9. The difference of opinion among Episcopalians, as to the necessity of repeating all baptisms performed by those who have not received Episcopal ordination, does not affect the *essentials* of Episcopacy.

It is a principle in which all Churchmen agree, that none have authority to baptize but those who are lawfully ordained; and the church receives none as lawfully ordained, but *those who have received Episcopal consecration or ordination*. Here then is an agreement in the *essentials* of Episcopacy. A difference of opinion, however, arises as to a *subordinate* point. The Church of Rome, on the principle that none can be saved who are not baptized, allows, and always has allowed of lay baptism. Are these baptisms, and those performed by ministers not Episcopally ordained, valid; or are they to be repeated as being totally invalid?

On this question Churchmen divide into two classes. Both classes agree that these baptisms are *irregular*, performed without *due authority*; and that both the administrators and recipients (except on the plea of “unavoidable ignorance or involuntary error”) incur *great guilt*. One class however contend that, as non-Episcopal baptisms, administered with water, in the name of the Trinity, are not deficient in *form* and in *matter*, but only in regular authority, this deficiency is supplied when the person thus baptized is received into communion with the authorized ministry by confirmation or the Lord’s Supper; and that, therefore, non-Episcopal baptisms are not to be repeated. *Fieri non debet—factum valet*. *It ought not to be done—when done, it is valid*. The general practice of the Church of England, it is believed, has been regulated by this opinion, which has been embraced by many of her most eminent divines, the ablest advocates of Episcopacy.

Another class of divines contend that the *form* the name of the Trinity, the *matter* water, and the *authority* a regular commission from the divine Head of the Church, are equally essential in the administration of baptism; and that, of course, where this regular commission is wanting in the administrator, the baptism is invalid. This opinion also has been embraced and defended by many distinguished divines and laymen of the Church of England, particularly by Lawrence, in his treatises, entitled, "Lay Baptism Invalid."\* The venerable Episcopal Church of Scotland, it is believed, has regulated her practice by this opinion.

The difference of opinion on this subject, it is evident, does not affect the *essentials* of Episcopacy. Both classes of divines agree that no person has regular *authority* to administer baptism but a *lawful* Minister, one who has received "Episcopal consecration or ordination." The difference of opinion arises on the question—How is the *deficiency of authority* in non-Episcopal baptisms to be supplied? The one contend that this deficiency is supplied when the person thus baptized receives Confirmation or the Lord's supper from the Bishop or a *lawful* Minister: and the other contend, that the person has never received the sacrament of baptism, which he must, therefore, receive from an administrator duly authorized.

But the assertion has been often triumphantly made, that according to the last of these opinions, there have been *Ministers*, and even *Bishops* in the Episcopal Church, who have never received Christian Baptism. There is an easy and obvious answer, which should instantly silence the triumphant ridicule with which this assertion has been generally advanced. The Episcopal Church, and the Church of England have never explicitly sanctioned the opinion on which this assertion is founded. On the contrary, both churches repeatedly have at least *admitted* the principle, that a non-Episcopal baptism, deficient only in the authority

\* Also Dr. Waterland in his masterly argument with Kelsal.—EDITOR.

of the administrator, and not in the *essence* of the sacrament, which is, *water in the name of the Trinity*, receives the seal of *authority*, and becomes *complete* and *valid*, when the person thus baptized receives Confirmation or the Lord's supper from those duly authorized. At the same time, these churches do not prevent their ministers and members from acting on the contrary opinion. But admitting this opinion to be well founded; admitting that a person non-Episcopally baptized has not received regular Christian baptism; he is not, therefore, absolutely disqualified from holding a ministerial commission.

The only thing *absolutely essential* in the office of a minister, is a *valid commission*. "He must be called of God as was Aaron." Literary, theological, religious and moral qualifications, though necessary to the correct, respectable and successful discharge of the ministry, are not *essential* to the *validity* of its acts. Judas was an Apostle, though he was "a traitor and had a devil." "Sacraments received by faith, and rightly, are effectual, because of Christ's *institution and promise*, although they be ministered by *evil men*."\* The contrary principle would throw the church into perpetual disorder, and agitate the breast of Christians with constant uncertainty and fears. No man can penetrate the heart. If genuine piety, therefore, be necessary to the validity of ministerial acts, Christians can never be *absolutely* certain that the sacraments they receive are valid. The acts of a wicked magistrate, the decisions of a corrupt judge are valid, *because of his commission*. The acts of an unholy minister of the church are valid, for the same reason, *because of his commission*—"because of Christ's institution and promise." If, therefore, the "unworthiness of a minister" does not nullify his ministerial acts, neither can his want of regular Christian baptism: for it will not surely be contended that regular Christian baptism is more necessary to the ministry than holiness of heart and life."†

\* Article twenty-sixth of the Church of England.

† Besides, a person may be *ex officio* member of a body into which he

Presbyterians are as much interested in maintaining this opinion as Episcopalians. Lay baptism, it is well known, has always been practised in the Church of Rome, and was allowed in the Church of England for some time after the Reformation. Is it not, therefore, highly probable that many of the Reformers, as well as those Presbyters of the Church of England whom the Presbyterian Church acknowledges as ministers, and from whom she derives her ministry, had only received lay baptism? But the Presbyterian Church declares, that "baptism may not be dispensed by any but a minister of the word lawfully ordained."\* She ranks the "*lawful calling*" of the minister, with *water* and the *name of the Trinity*, which are *essentials* of baptism.† Many persons, therefore, may have been ministers in Presbyterian churches who have never received regular Christian baptism.‡ Presbyterians are as much interested as Episcopalians in maintaining, that "a lawful calling," a *valid commission* is alone *absolutely essential* to the validity of ministerial acts.

Beware, therefore, sir, how you rashly aim against Episcopalians weapons which may be made to recoil upon yourself.

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## LETTER XI.

SIR,

I HAVE thus stripped Episcopacy of some of those appendages, in the demolition of which its opponents have exerted all their powers, through the vain hope that these demolished,

has not been introduced in the ordinary way; as in the case of the President of the Senate of the United States.—EDITOR.

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. sect. 4.

† Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxviii. sect. 2.

‡ And more than this, doubts have been suggested, whether CALVIN ever received ordination. It is said that Beza, in his life of Calvin, regards it as very doubtful. Here then is a knotty point worthy of the energies of the editor of the Christian's Magazine. Alas! if it should appear that the great founder of the Presbyterian churches was only a Layman!

Episcopacy itself would fall. The candid reader, however, will perceive that these are only appendages of Episcopacy, and that on some *subordinate points* Episcopalians may differ, while they agree in all the essentials.

What now, sir, becomes of the assertion that there are "material differences among Episcopalians on their favourite theme?"\* Do you suppose your readers weak enough to believe, that because differences subsist among Episcopalians on some subordinate points, they cannot agree in essential principles? Are there no common and essential principles of Calvinism, because many important differences subsist among the various sects of Calvinists; high Calvinists and moderate Calvinists, Supra-lapsarians and Sub-lapsarians, Baxterians, Hopkensians, Antinomians? Is Calvinism unfounded in scripture, because there are confusion and mutual contradictions among Calvinists "when they attempt to found their system on the scriptures?"† Never triumph that some Episcopalians rely, in support of their system, on irrelevant passages of scripture, when Mr. M'Leod, before your eyes, endeavours to prove the *divine appointment* of "Presbyterial order" from the text, Rev. iii. 22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."‡

The essential and characteristic principles of Episcopacy are—that there are *three* grades of ministers instituted by *Christ and his Apostles*; and that the *first grade*, in addition to the common ministerial powers, possess the sole power of *ordination*, with the right of exercising supreme authority over the *congregations and ministers* who may be subject to them.

Let us bring these principles to the test of SCRIPTURE. Let any candid man, throwing aside preconceived opinions, open the sacred writings. He finds that from the first, there have been *three grades* in the ministry. Under the Jewish dispensation there were the *High Priest, Priests, and Levites*.§

\* Christian's Magazine, p. 100.

† p. 101.

‡ Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 31.

§ Considerable ingenuity and learning has sometimes been displayed in

When CHRIST appeared to establish the gospel dispensation, there were subordinate to him the great *High Priest* of our profession, the *Apostles*,\* and the *seventy*.† After his ascension, we find the ministry constituted under the three grades of *Apostles*, *Elders*, or *Presbyters*‡ sometimes called *Bishops*, and *Deacons*.§ In the churches which the Apostles founded, we still discover *three grades*. In Ephesus and Crete there were *Timothy* and *Titus*, *Elders* or *Presbyters*|| sometimes also called *Bishops*, and *Deacons*.¶

That these grades were distinct and subordinate, and that the power of ordination and the supreme power of governing the church were vested in the *first grade*, are as plain as *scripture* facts can make them. It will be conceded that Christ, while on earth, and not the Apostles or the seventy, exercised supreme authority, and conferred the ministerial commission. It will also be conceded that the *Apostles*, and not the *Elders* or *Deacons*, exercised the powers of ordination and government. And the candid inquirer who opens the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, will not hesitate to pronounce that they were the *supreme governors* of those churches, and succeeded the Apostles, not in their miraculous and peculiar powers as Apostles, but in the ordinary powers of *ordination* and government. They are to “ordain elders in every

proving, that the Christian Church was formed on the model of the synagogue and not of the temple; and that, therefore, there being three orders in the Jewish ministry furnishes no presumption that there would be the same distinction and subordination in the Christian ministry. The chief support of this opinion is a fallacious argument founded on the identity of *names* between the ministers of the gospel and some officers of the synagogue. It is surely highly improbable that Christ would constitute the ministry of his gospel on the model of the synagogue, which was only of *human* institution, and not on that of the temple, which was of divine appointment—Episcopalians, however, lay no stress on arguments from this source. The constitution of the Christian ministry is to be determined by the evidence of the New Testament only.

\* Luke vi. 12, 13.

† Luke x. 1.

‡ Acts xiv. 23.

§ Acts vi. 1 Tim. iii. 8. || 1 Tim. v. 1, 19. Titus i. 5.

¶ 1 Tim. iii. 8.

city ;”\* they are “to lay hands suddenly on no man ;”† they are to “set in order the things that are wanting ;”‡ “against an Elder they are not to receive an accusation, but before two or three witnesses ;”§ “a heretic” they are to “reject after the first and second admonition.”|| Would not every person of candour and common sense conclude from this language, that *Timothy* and *Titus* succeeded the Apostles in the powers of ordaining and governing the church ? Would not common sense revolt at the supposition that they were on a level with the Elders or Presbyters, whom they were to *ordain*, whom they were to *rebuke*, whom they were to *judge* and *govern* ? There must have been Elders at Ephesus before Timothy was sent there. At least five years before St. Paul wrote his Epistles to Timothy, he sent from Miletus to Ephesus for “the elders of the church.”¶ Would not common sense then reject the supposition that these Elders possessed the power of ordination ? Why should Timothy be sent there vested with this power ; and the directions concerning the exercise of it, and of the power of governing addressed to him, and no mention made of the Elders or Presbyters possessing these powers ? If they had possessed the powers of ordination and government, what need could there have been that Timothy should be sent there to do what could as well have been done by the Elders themselves ? In like manner, on the supposition that there were Elders at Crete, possessed of the powers of ordination and government, why should Titus be sent there to exercise these powers ? And if there were no Elders before St. Paul left Titus there, why did he not ordain Elders, and vest them with the powers of ordination and government, instead of vesting them in Titus ?

While our Saviour was upon earth, there were subordinate to him the great High Priest of our profession, the Apostles, and the Seventy ; and he alone commissioned to the ministry.

\* Titus i. 5.

† 1 Tim. v. 22.

‡ Titus i. 5.

§ 1 Tim. v. 19.

|| Titus iii. 10.

¶ Acts xx. 17.

After his ascension three grades of the ministry still subsisted in the Apostles, the Elders or Presbyters, and the Deacons; and the Apostles alone ordained. These facts would sanction the presumption that three grades of the ministry would still continue, and that the first grade, as before, would exercise the power of ordination. And *scripture* testimony proves that in Ephesus and Crete there were *Timothy* and *Titus* the *superior officers* of those churches, the *Elders*, and *Deacons*; and that *Timothy* and *Titus* only were commissioned to *ordain*. *This is the Scriptural account!!*

Here then are palpable facts, level to the comprehension of every one, and on which every candid inquirer may securely rest. Ingenuity may obscure or pervert them; but what is there around which ingenuity cannot cast the shades of perplexity and doubt?

The cardinal principles on which Episcopacy rests are not only established by the sacred writings, but are acknowledged and received by the Standards of Doctrine of the Presbyterian churches. In the chain of reasoning that supports Episcopacy, the first principle is, that they who minister in Christ's Church must have an *external commission*. Christ, the divine Head of the Church, is the source of all power in it. The ministers of his Church, as stewards of the mysteries of God, as dispensers of his word and sacraments, as ambassadors of God, can act only from a divine commission. No human power can authorize a man to act in the name of God—"He must be called of God as was Aaron."\* The adorable Saviour of men, the "word made flesh," entered not on his priestly office until he was solemnly commissioned from above. If then the Son of God, in whom "dwelt the fulness of the Godhead;" if he who possessed "the Spirit without measure," "glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee;"† if he refrained from that priestly office to which he was from all eternity called, until

\* Heb. v. 4.

† Heb. v. 5.

Christ = Apostles = Bishops  
 Apostles = Bishops

the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and a voice from heaven conferred on him an *external commission*, how impious in a frail mortal presuming on internal gifts and graces to exercise the ministry, until authorized by an *external call*, by a divine commission! This principle of the necessity of an external commission to the ministry, you, sir, will not controvert. The Standards of the Presbyterian churches declare that *none but ministers of the word, LAWFULLY ORDAINED, have authority to dispense the sacraments.\** The necessity of an *external commission*, that a person must be *ordained* before he can be a lawful minister, is a principle maintained by all sound Presbyterians. And the text of scripture quoted in support of it is that relied on by Episcopalians—"No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron."

This external commission for the ministry must be conferred by those who have received authority, by *regular succession*, from Christ, the great Head of the Church. On this point there can be no dispute between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. Both agree that the power of ordination rests with those with whom Christ originally placed it. Christ evidently vested the power of ordination not in the community of Christians, but in the Apostles and their successors. "As my Father sent me, so send I you. Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." This promise of Christ evidently ensures a ministry continued by *succession* to the end of the world. The Apostles, and not the community of Christians, exercised the power of ordination. None ministered in the church as *ordinary officers* † but those who had been solemnly set apart by the laying on of hands. This power of *ordination*, of setting apart to the

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. sect. 4, and the scripture proofs.

† *Teaching* was in the Apostolic age a miraculous gift, and may have been exercised by those who never were ordained. But in the present day this will not justify any Christian in assuming the ministerial function, unless he can display miraculous gifts.

ministry, of conferring the ministerial commission, must be derived by *succession*, from the great head of the Church, the only source of authority. The man who claims, in any other way than by *succession*, this power of ordination, can make good his claim, and justify it from the charge of usurpation, only by exhibiting *miraculous* gifts, which alone are the proofs of an immediate commission from heaven.

This doctrine then, of a regular conveyance of the power of ordination by *uninterrupted succession* from Christ and his Apostles, is as necessary to the support of Presbyterian as of Episcopal principles. The real difference between Episcopalians and Presbyterians is, not as to the conveyance of the power of ordination by *succession*, but as to the particular *grade* of ministers through which the line of succession is to be traced; whether through Bishops or Presbyters. The doctrine of *succession* was maintained in England by the *Presbyterian* divines against the *Independents*; and is still asserted by all real and consistent *Presbyterians*.\*

Whatever ridicule may be cast on the doctrine of uninterrupted succession, Presbyterians as well as Episcopalians should cling to it as the sheet anchor that is to prevent the church from being overwhelmed by secular encroachment. It is the only rampart against those assaults of self-constituted teachers, which would strip the church of her divine authority, shake her from her foundation on the Rock of ages, and place her on the tottering basis of popular caprice, of human authority. Equally interested with myself, sir, in

\* It is ably vindicated by the ingenious Dr. LATHROP, of Springfield, (Massachusetts) in two discourses, entitled, "Christ's Warning to the Churches," &c. His reasoning on the subject appears in the "Collection of Essays on Episcopacy," (p. 95.) This doctrine of succession is maintained by Mr. M'LEOD, in his Ecclesiastical Catechism, (p. 28.) "Christ has promised his presence with his ministers, continued to the end of the world by *succession*." And Mr. M'LEOD deserves credit for quoting, in proof of this doctrine, a text which is strictly to the point—"Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20.

maintaining this doctrine, I trust you will peruse with satisfaction the pungent and irrefragable reasoning by which the celebrated LAW defends it in his "first letter to the Bishop of Bangor."\* "If there be not a succession of persons authorized from Christ to send others to act in his name, then both Episcopal and Presbyterian teachers are equally usurpers, and as mere laymen as any at all. For there cannot be any other difference between the clergy and laity, but as the one hath authority derived from Christ, to perform offices, which the other hath not. But this authority can be no otherwise had, than by an uninterrupted succession of men from Christ, empowered to qualify others. For if the succession be once broke, people must either go into the ministry of their own accord, or be sent by such as have no more power to send others than to go themselves. And, my Lord, can these be called ministers of Christ, or received as his ambassadors? Can they be thought to act in his name, who have no authority from him? If so, your lordship's servant might ordain and baptize to as much purpose as your lordship: for it could only be objected to such actions, that they had no authority from Christ. And if there be no succession of ordainers from him, every one is equally qualified to ordain. My Lord, I should think it might be granted me, that the administering of a sacrament is an action we have no right to perform, considered either as men, gentlemen, or scholars, or members of a civil society: who then can have any authority to interpose, but he that has it from Christ? and how that can be had from him without a succession of men from him, is not easily conceived.

\* LAW addressed "three letters" to the Bishop of Bangor, in defence of church authority, which are republished in the "Scholar Armed." There is not an objection which ingenuity can raise against church authority in general, and particularly against the various principles of Episcopacy, which is not refuted in these letters. As a specimen of keen, yet delicate satire, of perspicuous, forcible, and profound reasoning, they stand unrivalled.

“It is a plain and obvious truth, that no man, or number of men, considered as such, can any more make a priest, or commission a person to officiate in Christ’s name, as such, than he can enlarge the means of grace, or add a new sacrament for the conveyance of spiritual advantages. The ministers of Christ are as much positive ordinances as the sacraments; and we might as well think, that sacraments not instituted by him, might be means of grace, as those pass for his ministers who have no authority from him.

“Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Christ, or they are not: if they are, then every one may preach, baptize, ordain, &c. If all things are not thus common, but the administering of the sacraments and ordination, &c. are offices appropriated to particular persons; then I desire to know, how, in this present age, or any other since the Apostles, Christians can know their respective duties, or what they may or may not do, with respect to the several acts of church-communion, if there be no uninterrupted succession of authorized persons from Christ: for till authority from Christ appears, to make a difference between them, we are all alike, and any one may officiate as well as another. To make a jest therefore of the uninterrupted succession, is to make a jest of ordination, to destroy the sacred character, and make all pretenders to it as good as those that are sent by Christ.

“If there be no uninterrupted succession, then there are no authorized ministers from Christ; if no such ministers, then no Christian sacraments; if no Christian sacraments, then no Christian covenant, whereof the sacraments are the stated and visible seals.

“There is an absolute necessity of a strict succession of authorized ordainers from the apostolical times, in order to constitute a Christian priest. For since a commission from the Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of this office, no one now can receive it, but from those who have derived their authority in a true succession from the Apostles.

“The clergy have their commission from the Holy Ghost: the power of conferring this commission of the Holy Ghost was left with the Apostles: therefore the present clergy cannot have the same commission, or call, but from an order of men who have successively conveyed his power from the Apostles to the present time. So that, my lord, I shall beg leave to lay it down as a plain, undeniable, Christian truth, that the order of the clergy is an order of as necessary obligation as the sacraments, and as unalterable as the holy scriptures; the same Holy Ghost being as truly the author and founder of the priesthood, as the institutor of the sacraments, or the inspirer of those divine oracles.”

The doctrine then, of “the presence of Christ with his ministers, continued to the end of the world by succession;” of the *power of ordination* thus *successively* transmitted in the church to the end of the world, is a doctrine common to Presbyterians and Episcopalians, and essential to the existence of the Christian ministry.\* The point of difference is, whether all ministers are on a *level* and empowered by succession to ordain; or whether there is not a grade of ministers superior to Presbyters, and now called Bishops, who alone receive in *succession* the power of *ordination*, of conveying the ministerial commission. In other words—Is Episcopal or Presbyterian ordination valid? The validity of the former is not compatible with an acknowledgment of the validity of the latter. For it is evident that if a grade of ministers, now called Bishops, and superior to Presbyters, were constituted to convey in *succession* the ministerial commission, to exercise in *succession* the *power of ordination*, this power must remain exclusively with them, until they are deprived of it by the same divine authority whence they derived it. The people may with the same propriety wrest the power of ordination

\* In the second number of the Christian's Magazine you come forth, as I expected, a *consistent Presbyterian*; and maintain that the doctrine of *uninterrupted succession* is as essential to Presbyterians as Episcopalians. We differ on many points. I am happy to find that on some we agree.

from the Presbyters with whom you contend it is placed, as the Presbyters may from the Bishops, if originally vested in them.

With whomsoever then this power of ordination was deposited, with Presbyters, or with a superior grade of church officers, with them it must remain, until divine authority changes the deposit, and places it in other hands. That the power of ordination was in the first instance vested in the Apostles, is a position which can occasion no difference of opinion between us. With whom did the Apostles vest this power, is the fundamental point, the hinge on which the whole subject turns. Let us appeal to the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, whom the Apostle Paul placed in the churches at Ephesus and Crete. In these churches there were certainly both Elders or Presbyters, and Deacons. In Ephesus there were Elders before St. Paul sent Timothy to that city;\* and it is highly improbable that the gospel should have been preached in the extensive island of Crete, and no Elders left there by St. Paul to minister in the churches. Elders and Deacons are frequently named in these Epistles. Now, did these Elders and Deacons possess the power of ordination? We find not the shadow of evidence of their exercising this power, or of its being entrusted to them. On the contrary, Timothy and Titus were sent to the churches for the express purpose of exercising the power of ordination, of "ordaining Elders in every city."† No persons are spoken of as vested with this power but Timothy and Titus; and to them alone are directions given for the exercise of it. Would special messengers be sent to any place to exercise a power already in the hands of numbers adequate to the purpose?‡ If the

\* Acts xx. 17.

† Titus i. 5.

‡ That there were Elders in Ephesus before St. Paul sent Timothy there will not admit of doubt. It is possible there were not Elders in Crete when Titus was sent there. But then the difficulty is, Why did not St. Paul ordain Elders himself when he was in Crete, and vest them with the power of ordination? His not doing so, and his sending Titus vested with this power, without the most distant hints, that the Elders

second grade of the ministry, called in scripture Elders, or Presbyters, and sometimes Bishops, had possessed the power of ordination, is it not extraordinary that, in the enumeration of their powers and duties in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, this power should not have been enumerated? If Timothy and Titus were not superior to the Elders of Ephesus and Crete, is it not extraordinary that the Apostle should address them in language, and vest them with powers, evidently denoting a superiority; that he should give them such directions concerning the ordaining, governing, and judging of the Elders and Deacons, as would lead obviously to the conclusion that they alone were the depositories of these powers? Is it not extraordinary that he should expressly vest the power of ordination in Timothy and Titus, and never once hint at the association of the Elders with them in the exercise of it, never once allude to this power as one of the functions of Elders or Presbyters?

An attempt has been made to support the claim of Presbyters to ordain, from the address of St. Paul to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery*." And has then the right of Presbyters to ordain no other support than the contemptible *sophistry* of names? \* Who knows that the *Presbytery* referred to by the Apostle was a council of those whom we now call Presbyters? *Presbytery* † literally signifies an *assembly of old men*. In an possessed it, is conclusive evidence that it was a power peculiar to Titus as a superior officer.

\* I am lost in amazement at finding in the second number of the Christian's Magazine, that you adopt and defend this argument from names. This amazement is excited neither by the novelty nor ingenuity of your remarks, but by your temerity in thus hazarding your cause and your own reputation. I shall pay my respects to you on this subject before I conclude these letters; and feel myself perfectly secure in the assertion, that I shall be able to prove that even Dr. M. with all his caution, sometimes permits his "zeal to outstrip his prudence;" and with all his vigilance, sometimes "nods."

† *Πρεσβυτεριον*, from *πρεσβυς*, an old man.

ecclesiastical sense it denotes an *assembly of church officers*. It cannot, therefore, denote *exclusively* those whom we now call Presbyters; but may very properly be applied to a council of Apostles and church officers superior to Elders or Presbyters. It is undoubted that the Apostles, who certainly were superior to Presbyters, were sometimes denominated *Presbyters*. Peter called himself an *Elder* or Presbyter (1 Pet. v. 1.) And so does St. John (2 John i. 1. 3 John 1.)\* Why then may not the *Apostles*, collectively, be styled a Presbytery? This application of it is maintained by the principal ancient commentators. It is incredible that the *Presbytery* here meant should be a council of the grade of church officers, who are called in these epistles Elders or Presbyters. For then the absurdity results that Timothy was ordained by a council of the very men whom he was sent to ordain and to govern! It is undeniable, however, that whoever the Presbytery were, St. Paul was himself the chief agent, the actual ordainer of Timothy; he alone conveyed the ministerial authority.† For he expressly enjoins Timothy, “Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.” The Presbytery, whosoever they were, only associated with him as *concurring* in the work.‡

\* In the original *πρεσβυτερος*, Presbyter.

† This is CALVIN'S opinion. He maintains that Paul alone ordained Timothy, and quotes the text 2 Tim. i. 6. “Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.” Cal. Inst. lib. iv. cap. iii. 16.

‡ Where the Presbytery is named (1 Tim. iv. 14.,) the preposition of *concurrence*, *μετα*, is used. Where the imposition of the hands of St. Paul is mentioned (2 Tim. i. 6,) the preposition *δια*, denoting the *efficient* or *instrumental* cause, is used. This distinctive force of the two prepositions, *δια* and *μετα*, was denied by the author of Miscellanies. The *general* and appropriate signification of these prepositions is certainly the following. “*Δια*, with the genitive, signifies *per*, denoting a cause of almost any kind, particularly the *efficient* or *instrumental* cause.” “*Μετα*, with the genitive, denotes *with, together with*.” Now, be it remembered, that where the agency of St. Paul, in the ordination of Timothy, is mentioned, the preposition *δια* is used governing the geni-

When pressed hard with the evident facts that Timothy and Titus were superior officers vested with the powers of ordination and government, the opponents of Episcopacy urge—Timothy and Titus were Evangelists, they were extraordinary officers, and the superior powers vested in them were to cease in their persons! On this supposition then the power of ordination ceases in them, for there is not the shadow of evidence that the Elders or Presbyters of Ephesus and Crete possessed this power. The Independents, who maintained that there is no power of ordination conveyed by succession to any ministers, but that it is vested in the great body of Christians, availed themselves of this very argument against the Presbyterians. When the Presbyterians contended that Presbyters possessed the power of ordination, because Timothy and Titus, whom they considered as no more than Presbyters, exercised this power, the Independents replied, that Timothy and Titus were *Evangelists*, were *extraordinary officers*, and no arguments concerning the powers of Presbyters are to be drawn from their case. Let Presbyterians beware then, lest, in demolishing Episcopacy, they furnish the Independents with weapons to destroy Presbytery. Timothy and Titus were indeed Evangelists. But what inseparable connection was there between their duty as Evangelists to proclaim the gospel, and the power of ordination vested in them, so that when the former ceased, the latter ceased also? Their being Evangelists was an adventitious circumstance, no way necessary to the existence of their *ordinary* powers. Prove that the powers of Timothy and Titus were indeed *ordinary*. St. Paul, therefore, was the *efficient* or *instrumental* agent in the ordination. When the agency of the Presbytery is mentioned, the preposition *μετα* is used governing the genitive. Of course, the *Presbytery*, whether a council of Apostles or of *Presbyters*, properly so called, only concurred *with*, *together with*, St. Paul. He actually conveyed ministerial authority. They assented, concurred in this act. What now becomes of Mr. McLeod's assertion? "There is not an instance in the whole Bible, of imposition of hands as a token of assent." Eccl. Cat. p. 112.

Titus ceased, because they were Evangelists, and it will be easy to prove that there are no ministers in the Christian church; for Presbyters and Deacons were *Evangelists* as well as Timothy and Titus.

The book of Revelations affords additional proof that in every church there was a superior officer, corresponding to him whom we now call Bishop, who was vested with supreme power in the church.

St. John introduces our Lord addressing seven Epistles to the *seven Angels* of the *seven churches* of Asia. The Epistles could not have been addressed to the collective body of Christians in the churches; for they are designated by the *seven candlesticks*, which are distinguished from the *seven stars*, by which the *Angels* are denoted. The *Angels* were evidently *single* persons. They are uniformly addressed as such. The supposition that by way of *figure*, the whole body of the *ministry* of these churches is addressed under the denomination of an *Angel* is without foundation.\* It is predicated on what cannot be proved, that the *ministers* in those churches were united into one body, called a *Presbytery*. The titles of *Angels* and *stars* in the book of Revelations are never thus figuratively applied to a *collective* body of men, but always denote *single* persons.† And we are confirmed in the natural and obvious opinion that they were single persons by the concurring testimony of ecclesiastical writers, that Bishops were settled in these churches about the period that these Epistles were written. The *Angels* of these churches then were *single* persons. And it is beyond doubt that they were vested with superior and supreme power in those churches; for they are commended or reproved for the

\* This hypothesis of Mr. McLeod, advanced originally by some English Dissenters, called the "*Smectymnuan* Divines," is disclaimed by many of the most learned advocates of Presbytery, *Beza*, *Blondel*, and others, who agree with Dr. *Campbell*, that the *Angels* in the Revelations were *single persons*, vested with supremacy in those churches.

† Rev. ii. 28. xii. 1. xxi. 12, 14.

excellencies or the faults of these churches, for which, as *supreme governors*, they were responsible.

But, we are told, there is no express *precept* in scripture for *Episcopacy*. The distinction and subordination of the grades of the ministry, and the appropriation of the power of ordination to the first grade, are founded only on *Apostolic practice and institution*; and these are inferior in obligation to *divine authority*. Express precept alone can be admitted as evidence of *divine institution*.

But this argument operates with equal force against Presbytery and Episcopacy. The advocates of the divine institution of Presbytery can appeal only to *Apostolic practice or institution*. Viewing you as a genuine and consistent Presbyterian, I am persuaded you will candidly confess that Presbytery must be maintained by the same *species of evidence* which is urged in support of Episcopacy. All the advocates of the *divine right* of Presbytery argue from *Apostolic practice*; and maintain that on this point, Apostolic practice and institution is evidence of divine right.\*

If the *broad* principle be admitted, that express precept only, and not Apostolic practice is conclusive evidence of divine right, by what proof shall we establish the *divine institution* of the *first day Sabbath*, and the *divine authority* of *infant baptism*? The Apostles acted under *divine inspiration*. Those *institutions*, therefore, which they settled, and which are not obviously of a *local* and *temporary* nature, are authorized by that *divine Spirit* under which they acted, and are to be revered and obeyed as from *God*. The contrary

\* Mr. McLeod, in his Ecclesiastical Catechism (p. 102) expressly asserts—"That certain external model of government, which was *originally adopted* for the preservation of the evangelical doctrines and institutions, and for the careful transmission of them to after ages, is of *divine authority*." And again (p. 17,) "Whatever is supported by *approved examples*—is of *divine right*." In these principles he follows the Westminster Assembly of Divines, who maintained against the Independents the divine right of Presbytery, from *scripture* examples, from Apostolic practice.

principle cuts up by the roots evangelical doctrine, and shakes to its foundation the Christian church.

But are all *Apostolic practices* equally important and obligatory? Certainly not. How then do we distinguish those Apostolic practices which were intended to last and to be *unchangeable*, from those which were temporary and mutable? We can determine instantly, from the *nature* of those practices, whether they were local and temporary, or of general and permanent observance. The love-feasts, the kiss of charity, the Deaconesses who were to attend on women in baptism, were Apostolic *practices* evidently of inferior moment, proper and necessary only under peculiar circumstances of the church, and laid aside when those circumstances changed. But the *practice* of the Apostles in settling the *Christian ministry* is of the first importance, and of permanent obligation. The Christian ministry lies at the foundation of the Christian church. The Apostles were to institute a ministry which was to continue by *succession* "to the end of the world." We have the same right to change the sacraments, and to pretend that they are temporary and mutable, as we have to change the *constitution* of the Christian ministry as settled by *Apostolic practice*. Here the *institutions* of the Apostles must be gathered from their *practice*, from their authoritative *acts*. The ministry is of divine authority, and rests solely on a *divine commission*.\* This commission must be derived from Christ, the source of all power in the church, by a *succession* of persons authorized to transmit it. In no other way can it be derived. Admit that this succession has been interrupted; admit that the *mode* of transmitting the ministerial commission may be changed, may be placed in other hands than those in whom the Apostles placed it, and you render null the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." You suffer the gates of hell to prevail against the

\* "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Heb. v. 4.

church: for you wrest from it its divine character; you make its ministers and its sacraments human officers and human ordinances. Quenched its life-blood, the power of Christ, it becomes a lifeless trunk. You have severed it from its divine Head, from which it derives spiritual growth and nourishment. The connection between the *visible church* and the "LORD of all," can only be kept up by a visible *ministry*, administering visible *sacraments*; and this ministry can derive its authority from Christ only, in that mode and order originally constituted.

We contend not then that *Episcopacy* is unchangeable, merely because it is the original form of government settled by Apostolic practice. The most important ends of government, some persons maintain, may be answered nearly as well by one form as by another; and in this point of view they think there may be force in the observation,

"For forms of government let fools contest,  
That which is best administered is best."

But EPISCOPACY IS UNCHANGEABLE, because it is the originally constituted mode of conveying that *commission*, without which there can be no visible ministry, no visible sacraments, no visible church. The power of ordination must remain with the *first grade of the ministry*, now called Bishops, because with them it was placed by the Apostles divinely commissioned to found the church, to constitute its ministry, and to provide for the continuance of this ministry "to the end of the world." Change the ministry; place the power of ordination in other hands—the church is no longer founded "on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Its constitution and ministry have no power but what man gives them. It rests on the sandy foundation of *human authority*. When "the floods come, when the rains descend, when the winds blow and beat upon it," it will fall; for it is not founded on the ROCK OF AGES.

## LETTER XII.

SIR,

THE distinction and subordination of the grades of the ministry, and the appropriation of the power of ordination and the supreme government to the first grade, now called Bishops, rest upon *divine authority*, displayed in the *institution* and *practice* of the Apostles.

Apostolic institution and practice, thus satisfactorily proved from the writings of the New Testament, affords Episcopacy a support not to be shaken by your reasonings, however plausible, nor by your assertions, however bold and positive.

It is natural on this subject to inquire, what was the practice of the ages immediately succeeding that part of the Apostolic age, a record of which is given us in the New Testament? If the testimony of those ages prove the *fact* of the universal prevalence of Episcopacy, and assign no human origin to it, the conclusion is irresistible that it must have been instituted by the Apostles. It is incredible that the Apostles should have constituted a parity in the ministry, established Presbyterian government, and yet that the primitive Christians, before the Apostles were scarcely cold in their graves, should have permitted some ambitious prelates to subvert the Apostolic constitution of the ministry, and to exalt themselves as "lords in God's heritage." Such a change must have wanted motive; for the place of Bishops in the primitive ages was peculiarly the place of dangers and death. Such a change would have been opposed by every principle of human nature, by the reverence of the Presbyters and people for Apostolic institutions, by a laudable desire to maintain their own rights, and by that high "spirit of man," which rises up against oppression. Such a change, we may safely assert, would not have been affected without powerful opposition. The records of those ages would have marked it as an extraordinary event in the history of the

church; would have exhibited the agitations and collisions to which it must have given rise. The comparatively trifling controversy concerning the day on which the festival of Easter was to be observed, threw the primitive church into tumult, and occasioned a schism between the Eastern and Western churches. This controversy is a subject of particular record. Is it then credible that the Apostolic constitution of the ministry should have been totally changed soon after the death of the Apostles, and not the most remote hint of such a change to be met with in any ecclesiastical writings for near four hundred years?

If then the primitive Fathers are not only silent concerning this change, but bear explicit testimony to the universal prevalence of Episcopacy, and speak of it as universally received on the ground of Apostolic institution, the prejudice must be invincible which will still maintain that *Presbytery* was the original institution, and Episcopacy an usurpation. We use the Fathers merely as credible witnesses to matters of fact, in regard to which they could not have been deceived. We lay no stress on their *individual* testimony; we care not for their erroneous and contradictory *opinions*; it is only their *concurring testimony* to a *matter of fact*, to the universal prevalence of Episcopacy, on which we lay stress. He who rejects their *testimony* on this subject, strikes at the root of all historical evidence, and sweeps with the besom of darkness the history of past ages.\*

I mean not to intrude upon you the series of evidence from the writings of the Fathers, which demonstrates the distinction and subordination of the three grades of the ministry, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. This evidence is to be found in almost every book which has been written upon the subject. It has been exhibited, with admirable perspicuity

\* It should be remarked that he who impugns the testimony of the apostolic fathers to the divine institution of Episcopacy, does by that act destroy the only evidence for the canonical authority of the books of the New Testament.—Ed.

and force, by the eminent divines POTTER and LESLIE. You will pardon me if I think that whatever may be the pretensions of those who wish to swell themselves into importance, and to extort homage, by haughty airs and bold assertions, POTTER and LESLIE were at least *equal* to Dr MASON in extent and depth of erudition, in critical acumen, in strength of reasoning, and in the knowledge of the *primitive Fathers*.\* The weight of the *primitive* evidence in support of Episcopacy has been well tried; its accuracy and bearings have been thoroughly scrutinized. And whatever may be your affectation of originality, were you ten times more “*learned*” than you are, and the humble writer who addresses you as learned as yourself, (*incredibile dictu!*) we should neither of us be able to adduce one argument of any importance on this subject, which has not, in some shape or other, been advanced by others.†

There are, however, palpable and universally acknowledged facts which demonstrate that the Apostolic and primitive church must have been Episcopal. You cannot open an ecclesiastical writer, either of the present or primitive age, who does not stare you in the face with the facts that there were *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons* in the primitive church. Yes, sir, such Bishops as we have in modern days, with Presbyters subject to them. That IGNATIUS was Bishop of Antioch, that CYPRIAN was Bishop of Carthage, are facts just as well established as that these holy martyrs lived—

\* Archbishop POTTER was the author of the learned work on the “*Antiquities of Greece;*” and LESLIE of that admirable tract entitled, “*A Short and easy Method with the Deists.*” The tract of the latter in support of Episcopacy is republished in “*the Scholar Armed;*” and the work of the former is entitled, “*A Discourse on Church Government.*” I mention this for the sake of “*unlearned*” readers. To attempt to give any information on these points to Dr. Mason, I am aware would be the highest presumption.

† No person will be at a loss to justify this language, who considers the sneering contempt with which the Christian’s Magazine treats all who are so unfortunate as to incur its displeasure.

established by the testimony of the very same writers who are adduced to prove that the books of the Old and New Testament were received as inspired books. The most superficial reader of ecclesiastical history is familiar with the names of IGNATIUS, *Bishop of Antioch*, and CYPRIAN, *Bishop of Carthage*. The church in those cities he naturally concludes must have consisted of several congregations, in which there must have been Presbyters to officiate. And as Ignatius and Cyprian are styled by way of *eminence* and *exclusion*, Bishop of Antioch, Bishop of Carthage, he of course concludes that there were no other Bishops in those cities, but that Ignatius and Cyprian superintended the church in them, consisting of Presbyters and their congregations; in other words, that they were *diocesan Bishops*. These are the conclusions which every reader of ecclesiastical history, who is not biassed to some preconceived system, would naturally and immediately form.

It seems, however, that the sense of ecclesiastical history has been wholly misrepresented. The language of all ecclesiastical historians has been inaccurate. You threaten us that you will be able to prove that the testimony of the primitive Fathers has been misstated, that they give no support to Episcopacy! This *bold* language gives me no surprise. Nor should I be at all surprised, were you to go a little further, and assert that no one understands the primitive Fathers but yourself! Very modest indeed! Who can avoid being charmed with this unparalleled humility? The most learned men that ever adorned the Christian church, the HOOKERS, the BULLS, the PEARSONS, the BEVERIDGES, the WAKES, the POTTERS, the CHILLINGWORTHS, the LESLIES, and "a legion more," knew nothing of the primitive Fathers! The glory which has hitherto surrounded these luminaries of the church, is to fade away before the resistless lustre of those beams which the superior learning of the Editor of the *Christian's Magazine* is to shed on the darkness of the primitive age!

Over these feeble men, the HOOKERS, the BULLS, the PEARSONS, and their "compeers," perhaps you may triumph! But will you raise the arm of rebellion against your great master, CALVIN? Will you assert that he knew nothing of the primitive Fathers, that he has misunderstood or perverted their meaning? I have nothing to do here with CALVIN's form of church government, or with the arguments by which he attempts to support it from scripture. I merely adduce his judgment as to a *matter of fact*, to the constitution of the primitive church *as exhibited* by the Fathers. Now, CALVIN, in the fourth book of his institutions, expressly admits that the *primitive* church was Episcopal, that there were *three grades* of the ministry, and that the *first grade* possessed *superior powers*.

We find CALVIN asserting the superiority of Bishops to Priests. "Therefore, to whom the office of teaching was enjoined, all these they named Priests. In every city they chose out of their own number *one man*, to whom they specially gave the title of *Bishop*; that dissensions should not grow of equality, as it is wont to come to pass. Yet the Bishop was not so *above the rest* in honour and dignity, that he had a dominion above his fellows."\* I have nothing to do with CALVIN's *opinion*, that this superiority or precedence of a Bishop over Priests, was "by men's consent brought in for the necessity of the times;" or with his authority for this opinion. My object at present is, only to prove that he admits the fact that there was such a superiority in the primitive church. He distinguishes Bishops and Priests as two *distinct grades* of the ministry. "But so much as belongeth to the office whereof we now speak, as well the *Bishops* as the *Priests*, were bound to apply the distributing of the word and sacraments."† He notices this distinction again when he endeavours to prove that in the primitive church (as in the Episcopal Church in America) the clergy

\* Calvin's Institutes, lib. iv. cap. iv. 1.

† Calvin's Institutes, lib. iv. cap. iv. 3.

and people chose their Bishop. "Let *him* be chosen (Bishop) whom the *clergy* and the people, or the greater number shall require."\* Here he makes an evident distinction between the *Bishop* and the *clergy*. The person thus chosen *Bishop* by the *clergy* and the people, CALVIN asserts, was, in the primitive church, to be raised to this superior grade *by ordination*. "There remaineth of the Nicene Council, that the metropolitan (the chief Bishop of the province) should meet together with all the *Bishops* of the province, to *order* him who is chosen."† According to CALVIN the Bishops in the primitive church were *governors* of the clergy. "For this end to *every Bishop* was committed the *government of his own clergy*, that they should rule their clerks (their clergy) according to the canons, and hold them to their duty."‡ Nay, that according to the judgment of CALVIN there were in the primitive church the three *grades* of ministers, *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, and that the *Bishop* exercised the chief power in ordaining, is indisputable from the following passage: "In the solemn assembly the BISHOPS had a certain apparel whereby they might be distinctly known from other PRIESTS. They ordered all Priests and Deacons with only laying on of hands. But *every Bishop*, with the company of Priests, *ordained his own* PRIEST. But although they did all the same thing; yet because the Bishop went before, and it was all done as it were by his guiding, therefore the ordering was called his. Whereupon the *old writers* have oft this saying;—that a *Priest* differeth from a Bishop in no other thing, but because *he hath not the power of ordering*."§ CALVIN'S testimony in this passage to a *matter of fact*, that in the primitive church, "every Bishop, with his company of Priests, ordained his own Priest;" and that, according to the "old writers," "a Priest—hath not the power of ordering," is to be carefully distinguished from his *opinion* that "the ordering was called" the

\* Calvin's Institutes, lib. iv. cap. iv. 11. † Cap. iv. 14. ‡ Cap. xii. 22.

§ Calvin's Institutes, lib. iv. cap. iv. 15.

Bishop's merely because he "went before." This reason is a gloss of CALVIN's, for which he brings no authority. Let me appeal to the candid whether the above description of a *primitive ordination* does not answer exactly to the *ordinations* in the Episcopal churches of the present day; and whether it bears the same resemblance to Presbyterian ordinations.

But perhaps CALVIN has been describing the constitution of the church after it had become corrupted by the leaven of *Popery*. No, sir, the above passages are selected from a chapter of his *Institutes*, the title of which is, "Of the State of the *Old Church*, and of the Manner of governing that was in use *before the Papacy*." Nay, in introducing this account of the *primitive* government, he observes, "It shall be profitable in those things to consider the *form of the old church*, which shall represent to our minds a *certain image of God's institution*." And again, "The Bishops of those times—with such heedfulness *framed all their order* after the *only rule of God's holy word*, that a man may easily see that in this point they had in a manner *nothing disagreeing from the word of God*.\* To reconcile CALVIN's form of church government with the "form of the old church," as represented in the above extracts, may be a difficult task. My business is with his *testimony* as above stated, and not with his theories or reasonings.

Now, Sir, if you will undertake to prove that the primitive Fathers knew nothing of "the distinction of superior and inferior clergy;"† if you will undertake to prove that this "distinction, under whatever form or pretext adopted, is unscriptural and anti-Christian;"‡ if you will undertake to prove that in the *primitive* ages "the visible unity of the church was preserved by "*perfect equality* of rank among ministers,"§ I only say you will have serious difficulties to encounter—*Hic labor, hoc opus est*—Certainly not among the

\* Calvin's *Institutes*, lib. iv. cap. iv. 1.

† Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Christian's Magazine. Introduction.

least of these difficulties will be the authoritative judgment of the "great CALVIN." I submit to the serious consideration of those who embrace the Calvinistic opinions, whether the judgment of CALVIN, the great master of theology, or that of Dr. M. be most worthy of credit. I confess the dilemma in which they are placed is not a pleasant one. If they assert that the primitive church was not Episcopal; if they refuse to submit to a primitive "hierarchy," they oppose the judgment of CALVIN, they encounter his awful "anathema." And if they attempt to avoid this anathema, they will be met by the dread denunciations of the *Editor* of the *Christian's Magazine*! Scylla and Charybdis—"Alas! alas!"

But the triumph of Episcopalians is to be blasted by the bold assertion, that the *primitive constitution* of the church, as thus delineated by CALVIN, was an innovation on the Apostolic form, an innovation which took place soon after the Apostolic age.\* Now, to say nothing of the improbability of this fundamental change in the constitution of the Christian church; to say nothing of the impracticability of a few ambitious "prelates," thus sweeping away the institutions of the Apostles, and exalting themselves into the thrones of corrupt power on the ruins of Apostolic authority; to say nothing of the insuperable difficulties which they must have had to encounter in the reverence of the primitive Christians for Apostolic institutions, in the ardour with which the clergy and people would have maintained their rights and resisted unhal- lowed usurpation; to say nothing of the humble, holy, and celestial virtues of the primitive Bishops, the martyrs to the faith of Jesus, which forbid the imputing to them motives and objects so dishonourable and criminal, we may at least inquire, *Where* is the *record* of this fundamental change? Where the irrefragable proof of this unparalleled usurpation, which, stripping Presbyters of those powers which but a few years before they had received from the hands of the Apos-

\* The most learned opponents of Episcopacy, BLONDEL, SALMASIUS, CHAMIER, and others, fix it at this period.

tles as a sacred deposit, made them bow their necks under the feet of usurping "lords in God's heritage?" We are at once boldly answered, the record is at hand! In fearful anxiety we wait for it. It flashes upon us in "the famous testimony of JEROME."\*

And who was JEROME? Was he one of the early Fathers? Did he live during that period at which the usurpations of Episcopacy were effected? No, near three hundred years after. The alleged usurpation of Episcopacy took place, according to BLONDEL, about forty years after the death of the Apostles; and JEROME flourished near the close of the fourth century.† IGNATIUS, POLYCARP, JUSTIN MARTYR, TERTULLIAN, who lived in the second century, say nothing of this wonderful revolution. ORIGEN and CYPRIAN, who lived in the third century, had not found out that the superiority of *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, to which, with the preceding Fathers, they bear such ample testimony, was an usurpation, an innovation on Apostolic order. The learned historian EUSEBIUS, who, in the beginning of the fourth century, drew up his ecclesiastical history from all the writings of the preceding ages that could be procured, while he records many minute events and schisms in the church, is not only utterly silent as to this extraordinary usurpation of Episcopacy, but, on the contrary, gives a list of the Bishops in the principal cities up to the Apostles themselves!

Few as may be the ecclesiastical writings of the early ages now extant, in some of them surely we should expect to find a record of this alleged innovation. They narrate minute events. Would they have passed over one that must have entirely changed the features of the visible church? And on whom is reliance placed for proof, that in the beginning of the second century Bishops usurped authority over Presbyters? On JEROME, who lived at the close of the fourth century! "Alas! alas!" Desperate is thy cause,

\* Christian's Magazine, No. II. p. 215.

† He died A. D. 420.

See  
p. 188

Presbytery! The struggles of death must have siezed thee when thy advocates are thus compelled to outrage the common sense of mankind. What! we are to believe that a change in ecclesiastical government—an usurpation of ecclesiastical authority, the most extraordinary and fundamental that ever the world witnessed—a change and usurpation, in regard to which contemporary and succeeding writers are totally silent—we are to believe that they took place on the authority of a writer who lived near three hundred years after the period when they must have been effected! What should we think of a man who should start up and maintain, on the authority of Dr. M. that near three hundred years ago, when the government of the whole Christian church was *Presbyterian*, it was transformed into Episcopacy, into an usurping hierarchy; while not a single ecclesiastical writer, from that time to the present, lisps a syllable concerning this most extraordinary revolution! Really, really, I am apprehensive we should think such a person had thrown aside that common sense which is the surest guide of man, and should, with BEZA, exclaim, in the emotions of amazement and indignation, “God forbid that any man in his senses should assent to the *madness* of such a man!”

Utterly inadmissible, therefore, is the testimony of JEROME to an event which took place centuries before his time, and on which all preceding writers are not merely silent, but bear opposite testimony. But let us scrutinize this “famous testimony,” to which the Editor of the Christian’s Magazine triumphantly clings as the anchor of his cause. Let us examine the *character* of the witness, and the *nature* of his testimony.

Is the witness unbiassed and unprejudiced! No! Suspicions on this point attach to him, which powerfully tend to weaken the force of his opinion. It is very well known, that, distinguished as were the talents and learning of JEROME, his imagination was lively, and his disposition warm

and impetuous.\* He had been incensed against John, Bishop of Jerusalem, and some other Bishops, for what he considered undue claims of prerogative, and wrote some severe strictures upon them. He was also offended with the *Deacons* for their attempt to place themselves on a level with Presbyters. Under these impressions he endeavours, in different parts of his writings, to exalt *his own office* of PRESBYTER as much as possible, in order to check particularly the aspiring pretensions of the *Deacons*. We impeach not the veracity of JEROME. We might receive his testimony in regard to any important event which took place in his own day. But when he attempts to state the occurrences of a period prior to his own, and particularly when he founds his statements upon *reasoning*, and not upon positive testimony, it becomes a matter of *opinion*. It is then our duty not merely to test the soundness of his *reasoning*, but to inquire whether there were not circumstances which might give a false bias to his judgment. •

Are we then to receive implicitly the *opinion* of a warm and impetuous man as proof of an event which must have

\* The learned and impartial ecclesiastical historian, DUPIN, thus characterises JEROME. "His genius was *hot* and *vehement*; he fell upon his adversaries with fierceness, made them ridiculous by his jests, trampled on them with terms of contempt, and made them blush with reproaches. Though he was very learned, yet there is infinitely more liveliness and vehemency in his exhortations and polemical works than *exactness* and solidity. He knew a great deal; but he never argued upon principles, which made him sometimes *contradict himself*. He often carries *his subject too far*, being transported with his ordinary heat." "As he indulges his ordinary heat too much, so he falleth into those *extremes* for which he hath been often blamed." Dupin's Ecclesiastical History, book iii. p. 103, 104. But lest the testimony of Dupin should be impeached because he was an advocate of the hierarchy, let us hear what MOSHEIM says of ST. JEROME. "His complexion was excessively *warm* and *choleric*; his *bitterness* against those who differed from him extremely keen, and his thirst of glory insatiable. He was so prone to censure, that several persons, whose lives were not only irreproachable, but even exemplary, became the objects of his unjust accusations."—Mosheim. Eccl. Hist. Cent. iv. Part. ii. chap. 2.

taken place a considerable time before he was born, and in regard to which all preceding writers are silent? Are we to rest implicitly on the opinion of a man advanced under the influence of feelings of disgust and irritation, which must have tended to pervert his judgment; advanced with the evident aim of depreciating *Bishops* and *Deacons* who had offended him? Is a man considered as an impartial judge in cases in which his feelings, his rights, or his reputation are *peculiarly* interested? Yet in this very predicament was JEROME. At various times he was engaged in controversy with some Bishops and Deacons concerning the encroachments which he conceived they were disposed to make on his office of Presbyter. Personal and interested feelings must have thus been powerfully called forth. Under the influence of these feelings, JEROME advances an *opinion* concerning a supposed revolution in the church more than two centuries before his time. He gives not a most distant hint of its being a recent occurrence; but fixes it, according to the opinion of his most learned advocates, near the apostolic age!

And this is "the famous testimony of JEROME," a testimony "which cannot be shaken, we are told, by any art that sophistry possesses!" Suppose for a moment, that EUSEBIUS, the ecclesiastical historian at the commencement of the fourth century, and the writers who preceded him, had borne the same testimony to Presbytery which they do to Episcopacy! Suppose that EUSEBIUS, instead of tracing as he does the succession of Bishops in the principal cities, up to the Apostles themselves, had recorded that in all those cities from the time of the Apostles, *Presbyteries* had been organized; and that neither he, nor any writer who preceded him, had given the most distant hint of this Presbyterian government having been an innovation. What should we think of an Episcopalian who should attempt to prove this fact by the opinion of a subsequent Father of the Church, formed under circumstances that tended to give a false bias

to his judgment? Episcopacy! I should blush, I should tremble for thee, wast thou reduced to this miserable expedient.

We reject then the *testimony* of JEROME. We reject him as a *witness* on this subject. We reject him as a *reasoner*. He lived too long after the event to which he testifies is supposed to have occurred to be a *credible witness*. And there were too many personal considerations that called forth his natural irritability, and influenced his judgment, to permit his being, on this point, an *impartial reasoner*. But still we will meet his testimony on the ground of its naked merits. We will place it in the face of day. Wonderful! if the very testimony adduced to prove Episcopacy an usurpation, should favour its apostolic institution!

Behold then the testimony of a Father who lived at the close of the fourth century, and which is relied on to prove that "the supremacy of Bishops was a *human invention*." JEROME adduces instances from scripture, in which *Bishop* and *Presbyter* denote the same office, and then *reasons* from the identity of names, that there was originally a parity in the ministry, but "that afterwards it was enacted as a *remedy for schism*, that there should be one elected who should be placed over the rest, lest every man pulling to himself should rend asunder the Church of Christ. For at Alexandria, from Mark the Evangelist even unto the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the Presbyters always named Bishop one chosen from themselves, placed in a higher grade."\* JEROME more particularly states his opinion in his commentary on Titus. Arguing still from the identity of names, he concludes, that a Presbyter and Bishop were originally the same, "and before, through the instigation of the devil, contentions arose in religion, and it was said among the people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, churches were governed by a common council of Presbyters. But afterwards, when every one accounted those whom he had baptized as his own

\* Hieronym. Epist. 85. ad Evag.

disciples, and not Christ's, it was decreed in the whole world, that one chosen from among the Presbyters should be placed over the rest, to whom the care of the church should appertain, that hereby the seeds of schism might be taken away. As therefore Presbyters do know, that from the custom of the church they are subject to him who is set over them; so the Bishops should know that they are greater more by custom than by the truth of any ordinance of our Lord."

Now, admitting that these passages prove that, in the opinion of JEROME, Episcopacy was a "human invention," it would be sufficient, in order to destroy this testimony, to produce many other passages from his writings, in which he explicitly maintains that the supremacy of Bishops was an *institution of the Apostles*. A witness who contradicts himself destroys his credibility.

It is also of importance to observe, that this opinion of JEROME is not founded on any *record of the fact*, but on *reasoning* from the identity of names. And as this reasoning can be proved to be fallacious, his *opinion* (improperly styled *testimony*) falls to the ground.

I maintain, however, that "this famous testimony of JEROME" will fairly bear a construction in favour of the *apostolic institution* of Episcopacy; and such a construction only can render this testimony of JEROME consistent with his other declarations, and with common sense.

1. It is of importance to observe, that the opinion of JEROME is not explicit to the point in proof of which it is alleged. He does not positively deny that the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters was an *apostolic institution*. He does not positively assert that the change from Presbytery did *not* take place in the *times of the Apostles*, and that it was a *human invention*. To make these assertions he had every possible inducement. Warmly tenacious of his prerogatives as Presbyter, and irritated at what he conceived the encroachments of the other orders of the ministry, he sought on all occasions to exalt, as much as possible, the

office of Presbyters, and to depress the orders of Bishops and Deacons. This favourite object, to which the strongest personal considerations conspiring with the warmth and impetuosity of his temper urged him, would have been effectually accomplished by the express assertion that this alteration was made after the *death of the Apostles*. Under *such* circumstances we would naturally expect, not *ambiguous*, but *positive*, unequivocal language. But instead of the explicit assertion that Episcopacy was a "human invention," he only maintains, that originally there was a parity in the ministry, and that (for very substantial reasons) a change took place, and a Bishop was exalted over Presbyters; and this change, for any thing JEROME says to the contrary, may have been made by some of the Apostles themselves. It is true, he says, Bishops are superior to Presbyters principally by "the *custom* of the church." But still this *custom* may have been founded on the *practice of the Apostles*, who changed the original parity of the ministry when they found it injurious to the church. Let it be observed, that he does not deny that *apostolic practice* was the foundation of this custom, but is "contented only to deny that our *Lord himself made the distinction*." It may be said, indeed, that apostolic practice in settling the ministry is equivalent to divine institution; and why, therefore, should JEROME oppose them to each other? Because his object appears to be, to prove merely that by the *original* constitution of the ministry by our Lord and his Apostles, Bishops and Presbyters were equal, and that the supremacy of Bishops was a change soon found necessary for the welfare of the church.

Listen, sir, on this point, to the reasoning of one who certainly was not unduly partial to the Episcopal cause.\* "JEROME's design evidently was to say all that he thought true against the distinction between Bishops and Presbyters.

\* Bishop Hoadley, in his *Defence of Episcopal Ordination*, chap. i. p. 86, 87.

And yet in all his zeal against this distinction, he saith only that there was a time when this distinction was not in being; but never intimates *that it was not made and settled* in the days of the *Apostles* themselves; or that *Presbyters* of after ages *altered* the design of the *Apostles* after their deaths: which single thing, if he could have said with any truth, must have done his cause more service than all he hath alleged; and therefore I conclude, *he would certainly have said it, and endeavoured to prove it, if he had thought it true.*" "If his design had been to prove that this alteration was made some time after the death of the *Apostles*, his business must have been to show, not only that there was a time during the *lives of the Apostles*, but also that there was an *intermediate space* between Bishops and Presbyters; and this from *passages* of some *writers* or *records* of some churches, *in that intermediate space*. But this *he doth not so much as attempt to do*. And from hence I conclude, that it was *not* his design to *affirm* or to *intimate any such thing.*"

So far, therefore, from there being any thing in the language of JEROME which forbids the conclusion that this change took place before the death of the *Apostles*, his expressions rather sanction it. For,

2. The natural construction of the words of JEROME would lead us to conclude, that this change from Presbytery to Episcopacy took place during the *times of the Apostles*.

His argument is, that by the original constitution of the ministry, there was no superiority of Bishops, but "the churches were governed by a common council of Presbyters." But when "the seeds of schism were sown by the people, saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," &c. a Bishop was chosen and placed over Presbyters. Now, we know that this language of schism was used during the *Apostles' times*, and the declarations of JEROME lead us therefore to conclude, that during the *same* period the remedy was applied by exalting Bishops over Presbyters.

Nor is it a conclusive objection to this construction, that several of the apostolic Epistles on which JEROME founds his *reasoning* in favour of ministerial parity, were written *after* the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which Christians are represented as using this language of schism—"I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," &c. This was the commencement of those schisms, which, according to JEROME, were eventually the cause of the change in the Christian ministry. It is reasonable to conclude they continued till after those apostolic *epistles* were written on which he founds ministerial parity; and, therefore, the introduction of Episcopacy may have been by apostolic authority, since some of the Apostles lived after the epistles were written to which JEROME appeals. "It is not necessary to suppose that ST. JEROME thought, that *immediately upon this disorder in the church of Corinth* this alteration was made; but rather," that it was made "when it appeared that this humour was *not so checked by St. Paul's exhortations*, but that it crept into other churches likewise. What I would say, therefore, is this—That we are assured that these remarks agree to the *age of the Apostles*, and that it is extremely probable that they would not leave it to succeeding Presbyters to provide remedies for the evils which they knew to be in their own times; that we have no such marks belonging *peculiarly* to the *age after them*, and therefore have reason to think that the alteration (if at all) was made *before the death of the Apostles*."\* Those schisms, as a remedy for which Jerome supposes Episcopacy was introduced, prevailed in the time of the Apostles. It is absurd to suppose that these inspired rulers of the church would leave it thus rent by schism without prescribing a remedy.

There is nothing in the language of JEROME which forbids the supposition that this alleged revolution took place in the time of the Apostles. On the contrary, he speaks of this change from Presbytery to Episcopacy as the consequence of

\* Bishop Hoadley. Defence of Episcopal Ordination, chap. i. p. 93.

a decree made throughout the whole world—*Toto orbe decretum est*—It was decreed in the whole world. These words evidently convey the idea that the reception of Episcopacy was *universal, immediate, and without opposition*; that it was made by those who had authority over the Christian church in the *whole world*. To effect such an extraordinary revolution in the early ages, before any general council had met to regulate the government of the church, apostolic authority alone could be adequate.

Bishop STILLINGFLEET indeed, in his *Irenicum* (the armory whence many of the opponents of Episcopacy draw their weapons,) observes, "That the emphasis lies not in *decretum est*," not in the *decree*, "but in *toto orbe*; noting how suddenly this order met with *universal acceptance* when it was first brought up in the church after the Apostles' death." But this is mere hypothesis, contrary to the obvious meaning of JEROME'S language. Besides, this hypothesis of Bishop STILLINGFLEET is predicated on what JEROME nowhere asserts, that the supremacy of Bishops took place "after the Apostles' death." This is the very point to be proved. And the very circumstance that JEROME does not expressly make this assertion, when it would have been so much to his purpose, warrants the presumption that he did not believe it. Bishop STILLINGFLEET himself, in a performance published several years after his *Irenicum*, with the evident design of retracting his reasoning in that work, acknowledges—"It is hard to conceive how such an alteration should happen without the *Apostles' act*: for if they had left the Presbyters in full power of government, it is not to be imagined they would so universally part with it, without being obliged thereto by those who had authority over them."\* And this remark is founded on the strong trait in human nature, that they who have power are not willing to part with it. How is it possible too, that this fundamental alteration in the constitution of the Christian church, divinely established, should have obtained "*sudden*

\* Bishop Stillingfleet's Sermon at St. Paul's.

*universal* acceptance," if it rested only on human authority, if it were not enforced by a decree of the Apostles? The very words indeed of JEROME, are those of an *authoritative decree*. *Toto orbe decretum*,—it was decreed over all the world. As Bishop Hoadley observes, "These are not words of *voluntary compact* and consent among *Presbyters*; but agreeable to an *authority superior to those Presbyters* who were to be restrained, and whose abuses were to be reformed by this decree: and there being, according to the present hypothesis, no authority before this decree superior to *Presbyters*, unless that of the Apostles, or some particular extraordinary church officers appointed by the Apostles, this decree for the establishment of *Episcopacy* must be understood by ST. JEROME to have been in the age of the Apostles themselves."\*

The introduction of *Episcopacy* by the Apostles is supposed to be inconsistent with JEROME's language, that "by little and little (*paulatim*) the whole care was devolved upon one (that the seeds of dissention might be plucked up.)" Here, as Bishop STILLINGFLEET supposes in his "Irenicum," JEROME "notes the *gradual* obtaining of" *Episcopacy*. But how does this supposition accord with JEROME's language, that "it was decreed in the whole world;" which, according even to Bishop STILLINGFLEET's interpretation, "notes how *suddenly* this order met with *universal* acceptance?" The expression of JEROME, "*paulatim*," *by little and little*, must refer therefore to the progress of the conviction that parity in the ministry would produce schism; which conviction ultimately led to "devolving all care upon one." And all this might have taken place before the death of the Apostles. Nor does his assertion that "one chosen out of (or by) the *Presbyters* should be placed over the rest," prove that the Apostles could not have made this change. For this expression refers to the *mode* in which the Bishop is elected, and not to the "decree" by which this order was introduced.

\* Bishop Hoadley's Defence of Episcopal Ordination, chap. i. p. 91.

There is no contradiction in the assertions, that the Apostles decreed that Bishops should be exalted over Presbyters, and yet that the Presbyters elected one of their number to be their Bishop.

But it has been said again,\* “Is it imaginable that a man who had been proving all along the superiority of a Presbyter above a Deacon, because of his *identity with a Bishop* in the *Apostles’ times*, should, at the same time, say that a Bishop was above a Presbyter by the Apostles’ institution, and so directly *overthrow* all that he had been saying before?” Yes—it is not only imaginable, but consistent with JEROME’S design. All that he asserts, all that he aims to prove is, that *originally* Bishops and Presbyters were the same, and so constituted by the Apostles. But he no where maintains that the change which advanced a Bishop above a Presbyter was not made before the death of the Apostles. The reason he alleges for this change is, that schisms arose, in consequence of parity in the ministry; and Christians enlisted themselves under the banners of different ministers. Schisms of this kind we know arose during the times of the Apostles. And there is no absurdity, there is no incongruity with JEROME’S arguments or design, in supposing that as it gradually became evident that this parity in the ministry would produce schisms, it was decreed by apostolic authority that the order of Bishops should be placed over Presbyters. There was time enough for this change to be produced by apostolic authority. For the Apostle John lived several years after the Epistles were written on which JEROME founds his arguments for parity.†

I am aware it will be triumphantly urged, Where is the *record* from scripture that this supremacy of Bishops which JEROME alleges was a change in the original consti-

\* Stillingfleet’s *Irenicum*.

† St. John died A. D. 101. His Epistles are supposed to have been written about the year 90. Afterwards, A. D. 96, he wrote his Revelations, in which, under the denomination of the Angels of the churches, he distinguishes the seven Bishops of the seven churches of Asia.

tution of the church, was effected before the death of the Apostles? And, it may be asked, What *record* does JEROME produce from scripture or from antiquity that the supremacy of the *first grade* of the ministry was a change in the original constitution of the church? Where is his *record*, that this supremacy was an innovation, and not the original apostolic institution? We look for his record—and lo! it turns out to be an *argument* from identity of names—from the names Bishop and Presbyter being in scripture applied to the same grade of ministers!\* This is a mere fallacy. The real and important question is not whether the names Bishop and Presbyter do not designate in scripture the *same grade* of ministers; but whether there was not a grade superior to those called Presbyters and Bishops, in which grade were Timothy and Titus, to whom those afterwards called Bishops succeeded. Let it be remembered then, that as this alleged change is entirely a matter of opinion and reasoning, and as JEROME does not assert that it took place after the death of the Apostles, we are not bound to assign it to this period; particularly, when by so doing we shall make JEROME contradict his own express declarations, in other parts of his writings, that Episcopacy was an apostolic institution.

There may be some difficulty in making JEROME consistent with himself. But any inconsistency in which he involves himself destroys the weight of his judgment. We certainly cannot prove from the passages of his writings which have been above considered, that he *positively asserts* the *apostolic institution* of Episcopacy. On the contrary, there may be some parts of his statement which look a contrary way. All for which I would contend is, that he does not positively deny that his alleged change from Presbytery to Episcopacy did not take place before the death of some of the Apostles, and that his language will bear the construction that it was effected under apostolic authority. And I would contend for

\* See p. 179.

this construction, because it alone will make JEROME consistent in his statements.

3. For he makes many other declarations which import that he believed Episcopacy was an apostolic institution.

Some of these declarations occur in the passages which constitute what is called his testimony against Episcopacy. When he adduces the Church of Alexandria, he observes, "From *Mark the Evangelist*, to Heraclas and Dionysius, Bishops thereof, the Presbyters always named one chosen out of them, and placed in a higher degree, Bishop." Here we may infer that JEROME maintains the apostolic institution of Episcopacy. He asserts that it commenced in the Church at Alexandria "from Mark the Evangelist." Of course it commenced in the apostolic age. It cannot be said that this *change* was the act of the Presbyters merely. Their business indeed was to choose their Bishop. But as this *change in the ministry*, by which a Bishop was exalted above the Presbyters, commenced from "Mark the Evangelist," it must have had the sanction of apostolic authority. Nor does it follow from the Presbyters choosing their Bishop, that he received his authority from the Presbyters, and was not invested with it by *Episcopal* ordination. The *choice* of a Bishop, the persons by whom he is appointed, and his ordination and the persons by whom it is performed, may be, and commonly are, in all Episcopal churches, distinct. JEROME notes particularly the custom at Alexandria of the Presbyters choosing their Bishop, because in his time the choice was generally made by the Emperor, or by the Bishops of the province, by whom they were afterwards ordained.\* JEROME no where states any difference in respect to their ordination between the Bishops of his day, and those of Alexandria. We are at liberty to conclude that these last, though

\* It is astonishing that STILLINGFLEET and Dr. CAMPBELL after him, should quote Euty chius, a patriarch of Alexandria in the *tenth century*, to prove that the Presbyters of Alexandria themselves ordained the person whom they had chosen Bishop!

chosen by the Presbyters in like manner “as if an army should choose their general, or Deacons an Archdeacon,” were afterwards ordained. “These *Bishops* must, according to ST. JEROME, have been the *governors* of the *church*, and of the *Presbyters* themselves: for he makes all the *care* and *solicitude* concerning *ecclesiastical affairs* to be devolved upon them as soon as they were constituted. They must be the *ordainers* of other *Presbyters*, even according to BLONDEL himself, unless he deny to them what he grants to his *Prime-Presbyters* in each church. So that here are *Bishops* with distinct powers, after their *election*, from those of their *electors* (as distinct as the powers of a *general* from those of the *army* which chooses him, which is one of the *similitudes* by which he illustrates this matter) immediately succeeding *St. Mark* in the *church of Alexandria*: and consequently the like in other *churches*, according to ST. JEROME, who makes all *churches* uniform, and the reception of *Episcopacy*, whenever it was received, to be universal at the same time.”\*

After the instance of the church at Alexandria, JEROME uses this strong expression—“*Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, Episcopus, quod Presbyter non faciat*”—“For what does a Bishop, except ordination, which a Presbyter may not do?” Here is an acknowledgment that Presbyters had no original right to ordain. He could not have meant merely to assert that in his time Presbyters did not ordain. He could not have meant—“What does a Bishop which a Presbyter may not do,” by *ecclesiastical regulation*, “except ordination?” For in his day, by ecclesiastical law, Bishops had other powers, (as, for instance, the power of judging and governing the clergy,) to which the Presbyters did not pretend. On this construction the question would lose all its force. His aim is to level, as much as possible, *Bishops* with *Presbyters*; and yet he never vests Presbyters with the *power of ordination*. He ascribes to them originally the *power of government* only. “The churches were governed

\* Bishop Hoadley. Defence of Episcopal Ordination.

by common councils of Presbyters." The Apostles at this time exercised the power of *ordination*. His aim in leveling Bishops with Presbyters would have been more effectually answered by excluding them expressly from the power of *ordination* as well as *government*. On the contrary, as a writer\* (who hath never incurred the imputation of carrying very high the Episcopal claims) well observes, "he doth at the same time himself deny to them this *right of ordination*. *This right*, I say; for of that his words must be understood, when he asks, in order to carry their cause as high as he could, *Quid enim, excepta ordinatione, facit Episcopus, quod Presbyter non faciat?* A Bishop in his days had many other powers to which *Presbyters* did not pretend, besides that of *ordination*; and therefore the *question* was not at all to his purpose, unless he meant to signify by it, as his opinion, that the *Presbyters* were never entrusted with the affair of *ordination*, though they were with that of the *government* of the churches of Christ by their joint counsels; by which means he leaves an uninterrupted *succession* to church officers superior in *this* to *Presbyters*, and so destroys the supposition of BLONDEL and others, of their continuing in the *exercise* of this *right* near the middle of the *second century*." "And that this was his meaning is plain likewise from ST. CHRYSOSTOM, who follows him in his opinion of the *original rights of Presbyters*, and owns expressly, that *Bishops* are superior to *them* in point of *ordination*, though in that *only*: and this, when he is examining their *original rights*, and not the state they were in in *his* days, in which he knew that *Bishops* were, in other respects, superior to *Presbyters*."

In that very epistle to *Evagrius* in which JEROME is supposed to deny the apostolic institution of Bishops, we have the following passage: "And that we may know that the *apostolic traditions* are taken out of the Old Testament, what Aaron and his sons and the Levites were in the tem-

\* Bishop Hoadley. Defence of Episcopal Ordination, chap. 1.

ple, let Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons claim for themselves in the church." In this passage the superiority of Bishops to Presbyters is called an *Apostolic tradition*; the obvious meaning of which is, that this *superiority* was sanctioned by the *Apostles*. Against this construction it is alleged that JEROME elsewhere speaks of this superiority as an "*ecclesiastical custom*." But this objection has no force unless it can be proved, that an ecclesiastical custom cannot be also an apostolical tradition, that an ecclesiastical custom cannot be founded on apostolical tradition or authority. But it is said there is decisive proof that JEROME by "apostolical tradition" meant no more than ecclesiastical usage, from a passage in one of his epistles. "Let every province abound in its own sense, and account of the ordinances of their ancestors as of apostolical laws."\* But this is only an injunction to revere some customs confessedly of human institution, *as if* they were apostolical traditions, and does not prove that there were not other customs which were apostolical traditions. The superiority of Bishops is expressly styled *an apostolical tradition*.

And there is surely a wide difference between calling a custom an apostolical tradition, and commanding us to revere *as if it were* an apostolical tradition. "It is one thing for a writer to say, that for the sake of the peace and good of the church, people should look upon and observe good and innocent customs *as if they were apostolical traditions*; and another to call any thing absolutely an *apostolical tradition*. And again it is very just to call any matter of practice both an ecclesiastical custom, and an apostolical tradition, without meaning the *same thing* by both those terms."† These different modes of expression mark determinately and clearly a distinction between those customs which were founded on apostolical authority, and those which were of human origin.

\* Unaquæque provincia abundet in sensu suo, et precepta majorum leges apostolicas arbitretur. Hieron. Epist. 20. ad Lucinum.

† Bishop Hoadley. Defence of Episcopal Ordination, chap. i.

JEROME does not enjoin us to account of the superiority of Bishops as *if it were* an apostolic tradition. He expressly styles it one; and it is surely very strange that they who contend so strongly for the veracity of JEROME, should contend that he meant that it was not one.

The force of the above passage, therefore, is, that by apostolic authority there is the same distinction and subordination among Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons under the gospel, that there were between the High Priest, Priests, and Levites under the law. Aaron, the High Priest, was superior to the Priests; so is a Bishop to a Presbyter. An objection to this construction is, that it makes JEROME contradict himself; as it was his design to prove that Bishop and Presbyter were by apostolic institution the same. This objection vanishes when we consider that JEROME only reasons concerning the *original* constitution of the ministry, according to which he maintains the identity of Bishop and Presbyter. He admits that a change took place, and he nowhere asserts that it was not effected before the death of the Apostles, or that it rests only on human authority. On the contrary, as has been already stated, there are many reasons which favour the opposite opinion.

But it has been said by STILLINGFLEET, that JEROME, in this passage, "runs the comparison not between Aaron and his sons under the law, and Bishops and Presbyters under the gospel; but between *Aaron and his sons* as *one part* of the comparison under the law, and the *Levites* under them as the *other*; so under the gospel *Bishops and Presbyters* make *one part* of the comparison, answering to Aaron and his sons in that wherein they all agree, viz. the order of the priesthood; and the *other* part under the gospel is that of *Deacons*, answering to the *Levites* under the law."\* But it happens that ISIDORE, a Bishop of Seville, whom STILLINGFLEET quotes † as maintaining the same opinion with JEROME, runs a comparison between *Aaron* and his sons the *Priests*

\* Stillingfleet's Irenicum, part ii. chap. 6.

† Ibid.

under the law, and *Bishops* and *Presbyters* under the gospel. "To the Apostles after their death succeeded the Bishops ; who are appointed throughout the whole world to the *seats of the Apostles.*" "It ought to be noted, that what Aaron the High Priest was, the same was the Bishop ; his sons prefigured the Presbyters."\* And in that very chapter in which STILLINGFLEET represents him as adopting JEROME'S opinion, he says, when speaking of the Apostle's including Presbyters under the name Bishops, "The Apostle is silent concerning Presbyters, because he includes them in the name of Bishops ; for the *second grade* is united with the first."†

This opinion of ISIDORE proves that a writer whom Bishop STILLINGFLEET represents as advocating the sentiments of JEROME, may with JEROME assert the identity of names, and yet maintain that a Bishop was a superior *grade* of the same order as a Presbyter, and possessed superior powers ; and that this superiority answers to the superiority of the High Priest over the Priests in the legal dispensation. JEROME himself explicitly adopts the same opinion, and runs the comparison between Aaron and his sons under the law, and Bishops and Presbyters under the gospel. He admonishes the Presbyter *Nepotian*, "Be subject to your chief Priest," &c. and soon afterwards enforces it by this reason—"Because we ought to know that what *Aaron and his sons are*, the *same* is a *Bishop* and his *Presbyters.*"‡ If it be said, that in this passage JEROME means that Bishops were superior to Presbyters only by the *custom of his day*, with the same propriety it may be said, that in the former case, when he runs the comparison between Presbyters and Deacons, he meant to assert the superiority of the former to the latter only by the custom of the age ! This is a conclusion which the advocates of Presbytery will not admit.

The warmest advocate of Episcopacy would not wish to

\* Isidore, de offic. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 5.

† Cap. 7.

‡ Hieron. Epist. ad Nepotianum.

use stronger language concerning it than that which JEROME uses in the following passages.

In his fifty-fourth Epistle he distinguishes between the orthodox Christians and certain heretics, by saying, "With us the *Bishops* hold the *place of the Apostles*, with them the Bishop is the third degree." Here such Bishops as there were in JEROME's time, when confessedly they were superior to Presbyters, and vested with the power of ordination, "held the place of the Apostles."

More explicitly still in his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, he *records*, as a *matter of fact*, "JAMES, immediately after our Lord's ascension, having been ORDAINED BISHOP OF JERUSALEM, undertook the charge of the church at Jerusalem. TIMOTHY WAS ORDAINED BISHOP of the *Ephesians* by PAUL, TITUS of *Crete*. POLYCARP WAS BY JOHN ORDAINED BISHOP of Smyrna." Here then we have *Bishops* ordained in the churches by the Apostles themselves.

It is to no purpose to say that JEROME makes these assertions on the *authority of others*. He surely believed these assertions were supported by sufficient *historical evidence*, or he would not have made them. And he certainly was not inclined to give undue weight to testimonies that favoured the cause of Bishops. Ah! but JEROME testifying in *favour* of Episcopacy, and JEROME testifying *against* it, are two different persons! In the former case his testimony is triumphantly adduced as "a famous testimony not to be erased by any art that sophistry possesses." In the latter case we shall doubtless find much ingenuity exerted to prove that his testimony is "not worth a straw!" We shall doubtless be told that when JEROME speaks of *Bishops* as *successors to the Apostles*, and as *ordained by the Apostles*, he does not consider them as superior officers, but regards them only as *Presbyters*. What! were not Bishops superior to Presbyters in the time of JEROME? Confessedly so. And when he speaks of Bishops as ordained by the Apostles, and as being their successors, does he intimate that

he uses the term *Bishop* in any other than that *appropriate* sense in which it was applied in his day, when the Bishop was confessedly an officer superior to Presbyters, and vested with the power of ordination? No such intimation is given. And without such intimation we should be doing violence to language and to common sense to suppose, that in these cases he applied the term Bishop in any other than its appropriate sense. The language of JEROME is conformable to the language of ancient writers, particularly EUSEBIUS, who lived a short time before him, and who gives a list of Bishops as they were in his day (single persons in every church vested with the power of ordination) up to the Apostles themselves.

But we have JEROME's explicit testimony that by *Bishops being successors of the Apostles, and ordained by the Apostles*, he does not mean Presbyters, but such Bishops as were superior to Presbyters, and vested with the exclusive power of ordination.

In his commentary on the 45th Psalm, we find him asserting, "Now, because the Apostles are departed from the world, thou hast *instead* of them *Bishops*, their *sons*. They are thy fathers, because thou art governed by them." He is evidently speaking of the time present, of his own time (now,) when Bishops were superior to Presbyters, and vested with the power of ordination. These Bishops he represents as the "sons of the Apostles," as *succeeding to them* when they left the world.

In his Epistle to Heliodorus, "*of not undertaking the office of a Bishop*," he observes, "It is not easy to stand in the *place of Paul*, to hold the *degree of Peter*." In this Epistle he is undoubtedly considering the office of a Bishop as it was in his day; and therefore, in his judgment, the Bishop of his day, an officer distinct from and superior to Presbyters, and exercising the power of ordination, "*stood in the place of Paul*, and held the grade of Peter." Of the same purport is the passage which has been already adduced,\*

\* Page 187.

+ And are not Presbyters also Bishops

in which he advises the Presbyter Nepotian, "Be subject to thy chief Priest, and regard him as the parent of thy soul—What Aaron and his sons were, that we should know *Bishops* and *Presbyters* are." Here, without doubt, he refers to the Bishops and Presbyters of his day, when these officers were distinct and subordinate, and when Bishops were vested with all the powers which their advocates claim for them. These Bishops and Presbyters, according to JEROME, claim obedience by the same authority under the gospel that Aaron and his sons did under the law!

Is it credible that JEROME would have spoken of Bishops in these strong terms—such Bishops as there were in his age, when the opponents of Episcopacy acknowledge they possessed the exclusive power of ordination—is it credible that he would have spoken of them as the *successors of the Apostles*, as *ordained by the Apostles*, and as holding the *place of the Apostles*, if their "supremacy" had been of "human invention," if they had not been of apostolic authority? No! As Bishop STILLINGFLEET, not without pungency observes—"If they had come in by *usurpation*, he would have called them the successors of *Simon Magus*, of *Diotrephes*, of *Caiaphas*, and, according to his *warm manner* of expression, of *Lucifer* himself."\*

It may be said, then when JEROME maintains that *James*, *Timothy*, *Titus*, and others were ordained Bishops by the Apostles, and placed over Presbyters, he contradicts himself; because, at other times he argues from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, that Bishops and Presbyters were the same. Bishops and Presbyters were, indeed, originally names of the same office. But there was at the same time a superior grade of church officers (in which grade were Timothy and Titus,) first called Apostles, and afterwards Bishops. Still we shall be told, this could not be JEROME'S opinion, because he asserts that the church was governed at

\* Stillingfleet's sermon at an ordination at St. Paul's.

first by a common council of Presbyters. We cannot account for this extraordinary declaration of JEROME, but from the warmth, the impetuosity, and hastiness of his temper. Inflamed with resentment against the Bishops and Deacons, we see him at one time endeavouring to prove from the apostolic Epistles, that there was no supremacy of Bishops to Presbyters. At other times, attending only to the strong evidence of historical fact, we find him asserting, that the Apostles themselves ordained Bishops—such Bishops as existed in his own time, when their supremacy was certainly acknowledged. I am no ways interested in clearing up an inconsistency which destroys entirely “the famous testimony of JEROME.” No person would think of resting his cause on a witness whose declarations, to say the least, are dubious and perplexed, if not contradictory.

It is, however, of importance to observe, that when JEROME maintains the original parity of the ministry, he does not appeal to any *record*, to any satisfactory historical evidence, but *reasons* from the identity of the names of Bishop and Presbyter.\* The real question is, not whether these names are in scripture applied to the same grade of the ministry, which is granted; but whether there was not a superior grade to them to which, after the apostolic times, the term Bishop has been exclusively applied. If we discard an attention to “*names*, which are of little real value,”† and attend to “*things for which alone we should contend*,” it is evident beyond dispute, that Timothy and Titus were vested with the powers of ordination and government; were authorized to ordain and govern Presbyters (called also, as overseers of the flock, Bishops;) and of course were superior to them. We can thus get over the *reasoning* of JEROME; we can

\* Wherever he asserts the original parity of the ministry, or rather of Bishops and Presbyters, he argues from the identity of names, from the circumstance that in scripture the names, Bishop and Presbyter are applied to the same office.

† Mr. M'Leod's Ecclesiastical Catechism.

prove the fallacy of his opinion. His statement concerning the original parity of the ministry is a matter of *opinion* founded on reasoning which may be proved fallacious.

But the opponents of Episcopacy who confide in JEROME as a credible witness, cannot consistently reject his *testimony*. And he expressly asserts, as a *matter of fact*, that "Timothy was *ordained* Bishop of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, St. James of Jerusalem, and Polycarp of Smyrna, by the Apostles;" using the term Bishop in the appropriate sense of his own age, to denote a grade of ministers superior to Presbyters. It may be said, that these are facts prior to the time of JEROME, of which he could not have been an eye witness. So was the alleged change from Presbytery to Episcopacy. The opponents of Episcopacy receive JEROME'S *reasonings* as authority in favour of this change; they surely cannot reject his *testimony*, founded on historical evidence, in the former case. But, it is said, the two cases are contradictory! If, then, two statements of any witness are contradictory, and we wish to preserve his consistency, we must give up that statement which is a matter of *opinion and reasoning*, and receive that which he alleges as a *matter of fact*. Now, JEROME in some parts of his writings asserts that there was originally a parity in the ministry, and *reasons* in support of his assertion from the identity of the names of Bishop and Presbyter. His statement here, then, is a matter of *opinion*, entitled to no credit with those who believe the reasoning which supports it fallacious. But when he asserts, that St. JAMES was *ordained Bishop* of Jerusalem, TIMOTHY of Ephesus, TITUS of Crete, and POLYCARP of Smyrna, by the APOSTLES—here is his testimony to a matter of fact, founded on what must have been to him satisfactory *historical evidence*. This testimony ought to be conclusive with you, Sir, who rest on JEROME as a *credible witness*. The common rules of evidence, therefore, will compel you to give up JEROME'S *opinion*, founded on *reasoning* which may be fallacious, and to receive his *testimony* to a matter of fact, founded on satisfactory historical evidence,

+ And is it not also presumed that his other

that the Apostles ordained Bishops over Presbyters in the churches.\*

I have dwelt thus long on what you are pleased to term "the famous testimony of JEROME," in order to show to what a desperate expedient the advocates of Presbytery are driven to support their cause. The supremacy of Bishops in the fourth century is universally acknowledged. To prove this supremacy an innovation, they rely on a Father who lived at least two centuries after the time when, by their own confession, it must have taken place; while Fathers, and ecclesiastical writers who preceded him, and who narrate minute events and schisms in the church, are silent concerning this most improbable and extraordinary innovation. So far also from being a credible witness, the Father on whom they rely was urged, by personal motives and feelings of resentment, to lower as much as possible the authority of Bishops. His declaration that their supremacy was a change in the original order of the church, is unworthy of the name of testimony. It is a matter of *opinion*, founded on fallacious reasoning. His *testimony*, which is founded on *historical evidence*, is decisive, that Bishops, as superior to Presbyters, are successors of the Apostles, who themselves ordained Bishops in the churches. There is no way of rendering the statements of JEROME consistent, but by supposing that this change, which he fancies, was sanctioned by apostolic authority. If this mode of reconciling his declarations be not admitted, still he does not in the least degree favour the cause of parity. His declarations in favour of the apostolic supremacy of Bishops, are at least as

\* It may be said that JEROME rests principally on the historian EUSEBIUS, who acknowledges that it is difficult to determine the *particular* Bishops who succeeded the Apostles. EUSEBIUS, however, is explicit as to the fact that the *supremacy of Bishops* is an *apostolic institution*. And surely if this supremacy had been an innovation or usurpation, there would have been, in his day at least, some *tradition* of this extraordinary event. The dispute as to the *particular order* in which some of the apostolic Bishops succeeded each other, incontestibly proves the fact that there were Bishops in the apostolic age.

numerous and decisive as those against it. On the supposition most unfavorable to Episcopalians, Jerome contradicts himself; and thus his "famous testimony" is "not worth a straw."

But had the opinion of JEROME been direct and positive, had he asserted in the most explicit terms that Episcopacy was "a human invention," no candid Presbyterian should urge his testimony. He lived at too distant a period from the apostolic age. He was biassed by personal feelings and prejudices. It is incredible that so important and extraordinary a change as that from Presbytery to Episcopacy should have universally taken place in the church without the most full and positive testimony concerning it. It would not have been left to the *single* testimony of a Father who wrote at the close of the fourth century.

The opponents of Episcopacy gain nothing by relying on JEROME. They lose much. They admit the weakness of their cause, by resting on the judgment of a Father who lived so late as the fourth century, and who cannot be considered as a *credible witness*, or an *impartial reasoner*. They admit that long before his time (for he gives not the most distant hint of its being a recent event) the supremacy of Bishops over Presbyters was established. They thus concede to Episcopacy the venerable sanction of primitive and universal usage. They bring on themselves the burden of proving how Episcopacy could have universally prevailed within a few years of the apostolic age, if it had not been sanctioned by apostolic authority. But, most mortifying circumstance, they cast a blot black as midnight on their darling Presbytery; they pass the highest encomium on this hated Prelacy. In relying on JEROME, they admit that Episcopacy was brought in as "a remedy for schism;" they admit that Presbytery proved incompetent to preserving the unity of the church; that so lamentable were its defects and inconveniences, that the primitive Christians were obliged to throw it off, and to seek repose for their dis-

tracted church, so long tossed on the tempestuous billows of Presbytery, in the peaceful haven of Episcopacy.† Yes—as Dr. MAURICE shrewdly and keenly remarks,\* “If the Presbyterian parity had any place in the primitive times, as some do imagine, it must needs have been an *intolerable kind of government*, since all on a sudden it was universally abolished. It must have given strange occasion of offence when all the Christian churches in the world should conspire to abrogate this polity, and to *destroy all the memory and footsteps of it.*”

+ *Very, peaceful indeed! Very united!*

## LETTER XIII.

SIR,

So palpable is the evidence that the primitive church was Episcopal, that some of the opponents of Episcopacy in modern times have had recourse to a singular hypothesis to overthrow it. The hypothesis to which I allude is that of *Congregational Episcopacy*. The advocates of this plan allow that there were Bishops in the primitive church, but maintain that they were only Bishops of a single congregation. They allow that ST. JAMES was Bishop of Jerusalem, that IGNATIUS was Bishop of Antioch, that CYPRIAN was Bishop of Carthage. But they maintain that in those cities, and in all others in which a Bishop was placed for the three first centuries, there was only one congregation! This scheme carries on its face its refutation! It is incredible that, at a period when Christianity had spread itself throughout the world, the most large and populous cities should not have contained more Christians than could assemble in one place for worship. In the Apostles' times, the church of *Jerusalem* consisted at first of “*an hundred and twenty.*”† To these were

\* Vindication of the Government of the Primitive Church, in answer to BAXTER, p. 363, 369.

† Acts i. 15.

added "about *three thousand souls*,"\* and afterwards "men to the number of *five thousand*."† "Still the word of God increased, and the number of disciples *multiplied* greatly in Jerusalem,"‡ until at length the Elders addressed Paul, "Thou seest, brother, how *many thousands* (myriads) of Jews there are which believe."§ It is impossible that these could have assembled in one place for worship. At this period too Christians held their public service in private. The number of congregations must therefore have been very great. In each of these congregations there must have been a minister to conduct its worship. Here then was a church, over which ST. JAMES evidently presided, consisting of several congregations and ministers.

In like manner, at *Antioch*, we are told that a "great number believed and turned unto the Lord;"|| "much people were added unto the Lord."¶ It is incredible that in this large and populous city, the greatest city in the East, where the converts to the Gospel increased so much, that they were there first emboldened to throw off the reproachful names with which their adversaries had designated them, and to assume the name of *Christians*—it is incredible that in this city the number of Christians should not have amounted to more than could assemble in one place for worship! And yet considerable ingenuity has been exercised to prove, by affixing a literal meaning to some expressions in the Epistles of IGNATIUS, which ought to be understood figuratively, that IGNATIUS, who was the Bishop of this city, was only the Pastor of *one congregation*!

It is still more incredible that for three centuries the gospel should have made so little progress, that in the city of *Carthage* and its vicinity there should be but one congregation of Christians. And yet the advocates of Congregational Episcopacy have contended that the venerable CYPRIAN, the

\* Acts ii. 41. † Acts iv. 4. ‡ Acts vi. 7. § Acts xxi. 20.

|| Acts xi. 21.

¶ Acts xi. 24.

Bishop of Carthage in the third century, was only the Pastor of a single congregation!

To spend time in exposing these monstrous suppositions, which carry with them their own refutation, would be useless. To this form of government, indeed, neither the Presbyterian nor Congregational form in the present day bears resemblance. A Presbyterian and Congregational Bishop is the only Pastor in the congregation who has the ministry of the word and sacraments; whereas a primitive Bishop, who some opponents of Episcopacy contend was only the Pastor of one congregation, had several Presbyters under him, who were vested with all the ministerial powers! What need could CYPRIAN have had of several Presbyters? What need could CORNELIUS, his cotemporary Bishop of Rome, have had of forty-six Presbyters and several Deacons, if he were the Pastor of only a single congregation?

This scheme of Congregational Episcopacy, the invention of CARTWRIGHT, CLARKSON, and BAXTER, in the seventeenth century, is as hostile to Presbytery as it is to Diocesan Episcopacy. It makes every PASTOR and his congregation an independent church, subject to no higher church authority. It is, therefore, not only calculated to generate and to nourish heresy and schism, but it flies in the face of scripture testimony; according to which the churches were governed by a council of "Apostles and Elders."\* It is therefore opposed with as much zeal by genuine Presbyterians as by Episcopalians. It was opposed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines when it was first started, and has ever since been opposed by the advocates of Presbytery. Mr. M'LEOD, in his Ecclesiastical Catechism, disclaims it. He conclusively proves that the term Church is applied not **only** to a single Pastor and his congregation, but to a number of Pastors and their congregations united together in a common church judicatory; and that this church, in the large cities

\* Acts xv. 6.

of Jerusalem, Ephesus, &c. consisted of Pastors and congregations thus united. With him indeed the bond of union is a PRESBYTERY ; but with Churchmen, a superior officer, called after the apostolic age by the appropriate title of BISHOP. Such superior officers they contend were ST. JAMES at *Jerusalem*, and TIMOTHY and TITUS at *Ephesus* and *Crete*.

That the dioceses or seats of jurisdiction of the Bishops in the primitive church embraced several Presbyters and their congregations, has been incontestibly proved by Dr. MAURICE, in his treatises on Diocesan Episcopacy against CLARKSON and BAXTER, and by the learned BINGHAM, in his Ecclesiastical Antiquities. The former particularly gives an account of the seats of jurisdiction of the Bishops during the first three centuries, and proves from their geographical extent, their population and other circumstances, that they included several congregations with Presbyters over them.

Grant to the Episcopalian that the supremacy of Bishops prevailed throughout the primitive church in the third or beginning of the fourth century, and he contends that this is sufficient evidence of its being an apostolic institution : and for this obvious reason ; the Apostles certainly constituted a ministry in the church. This supremacy of Bishops therefore must have been either of apostolic institution, or it must have been an innovation or usurpation. If it had been an *innovation* or *usurpation* on apostolic order, it could not have received universal sanction at a period so near the apostolic age, without *opposition*, and without the most explicit and marked *record* of so extraordinary a change or usurpation. But no such record appears ; no tradition even of any such event is mentioned in any of the writers of the three first centuries. No such change or usurpation, therefore, could have taken place in the constitution of the primitive church. The supremacy of Bishops, therefore, which universally prevailed in the third or beginning of the fourth century, could not have been an *innovation* or *usurpation*. It must, therefore, have been an *apostolic institution*.

This reasoning is irrefragable. It is worthy of further developement and consideration.

The concessions of BLONDEL, CHAMIER, BOCHART, and other Presbyterian writers, would authorize me in assuming the second century as the era of the universal prevalence of the supremacy of Bishops in the church. But let the age of CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage, in the third century, be assumed as the era when Episcopacy universally prevailed in the church. There is, indeed, irrefragable proof of the distinction and subordination of the three grades of the ministry, and of the supremacy of Bishops, with the power of ordination, in the time of CYPRIAN. In the church of Carthage, of which CYPRIAN was Bishop, he enumerates at least eight Presbyters. It has been already stated, that CORNELIUS, the Bishop of Rome, who was cotemporary with CYPRIAN, had under him forty-six Presbyters, and seven Deacons. The Bishop in the age of CYPRIAN, was advanced from the degree of Presbyter by a *new ordination*.\* BLONDEL and SALMA-

\* The following proof of this fact is taken from Dr. BOWDEN's *first letter to Dr. STILES*: "ST. CYPRIAN was first a Presbyter, and then ordained Bishop of Carthage, according to his Deacon PONTIUS, EUSEBIUS, and ST. JEROME.† Thus, ST. CYPRIAN tells us, that 'CORNELIUS had advanced gradually through all the inferior stations before he was a Bishop; and when he was promoted to the See of Rome, sixteen Bishops attended his ordination. Ep. lv. p. 103-112.'" "Nay, the necessity of a *new ordination* for raising one to the Episcopal dignity was so notorious, that the schismatics themselves believed it indispensable, as appears from the story of NOVATIAN, who was a Presbyter. When he contended with CORNELIUS for the See of Rome, he got three simple country Bishops to come to the city, and having intoxicated them, forced them to give him the Episcopal mission by an imaginary and vain imposition of hands. (Euseb. l. 6. c. 43.) Thus also FORTUNATUS, one of the five Presbyters who joined with the schismatical FELICISSIMUS, and who set himself up as an anti-Bishop at Carthage, was ordained by five false Bishops. (Ep. lix. p. 113.)

"Now, if a Bishop in ST. CYPRIAN's time was no more than a Presbyter, what need was there of so much work about him? Why, for example, convene all the Bishops of the province for the ordination of a Pres-

† "Pontius in vita Cyp.—Euseb. Chron.—Hierome Catal."

sius, two of the most distinguished opponents of Episcopacy, acknowledge, that in the "time of CYPRIAN (and long before it, ever since the distinction was made between Bishops and Presbyters,) *Bishops and Presbyters were promoted by distinct ordinations, and made distinct colleges.*"\* It is, however, conceded on all hands, that the supremacy of Bishops universally prevailed in the church in the time of EUSEBIUS and JEROME, who lived in the next century after CYPRIAN. Had it not also prevailed in the time of CYPRIAN, we should find in them some record of the fact.

Take then the third century as the period when Episcopacy universally prevailed in the church. Its establishment must have been by *apostolic institution*, or by *innovation and* byter in Carthage, where there were eight Presbyters at least to have performed the business? Why was there a convention of sixteen Bishops to ordain the Presbyter CORNELIUS Bishop of Rome, when there were forty-six Presbyters in that city? Further, Were not CORNELIUS and NOVATIANUS Presbyters of Rome before the *former* was the *true*, and the *latter* the *false* Bishop of that city? If so, what need of a new election, and a new ordination of Presbyters of a church of which they were Presbyters already? How superlatively ridiculous must it have been, to have seen two eminent men, already Presbyters of Rome, making so much work about being made Presbyters of Rome? And all the clergy and the people of Rome, nay, sooner or later all the Christian world, engaged in the quarrel? What had this been but the very quintessence of folly and nonsense?"

\* Bishop SAGE, in proof of the above, quotes, in his *Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic Age*, the following passages from BLONDEL and SALMASIUS: "Formam a precedente (*n. forma, qua promovebantur Episcopi*) aliam, analogia eadem semper manente (ex quo distinctis cleri gradibus, *DIVERSA* Episcoporum et Presbyterorum COLLEGIA instituere per ecclesiam visum est) inducere necesse fuit." Apol. p. 162.

"Ubi distingui ordines et gradus cæpti sunt, atque Episcopus major extitit Presbytero, tum ordinatio non potuit esse utriusque communis: Ut enim major ordinat minorem, superior inferiorem, ita e contrario, minor ordinare majorem non potest, neque inferior superiorem: Inde igitur postquam minor Episcopo factus est Presbyter, ex ordinum discretione, non potuit minor ordinare majorem, hoc est, Presbyter Episcopum. Sic Episcopo ordinatio propria facta est, et ad Presbyterum desiit pertinere, quia Presbyter destitit esse Episcopus." Wal. Mess. p. 288, 299.

*usurpation.* The opponents of Episcopacy assert that Episcopacy is an innovation or usurpation which took place at some period within the three first centuries. This *innovation or usurpation is incredible*, for the following reasons.

The *piety* of the primitive church forbids the supposition. The Fathers of the three first centuries, whatever were their talents or their learning, were *good men*. They glorified their Saviour in the midst of flames and tortures; they laid down their life for the testimony of Jesus. Would these holy martyrs have permitted the ministry instituted by their Lord and his blessed Apostles to be fundamentally altered? Would they have basely violated the institutions of their Saviour?

There would have been no *possible motive* to this usurpation.

Allowing that the primitive Fathers were bad men; men swayed solely by inordinate ambition and lust of power. In the primitive church there was no food for these passions. During the first ages persecution stretched his bloody sceptre over the church. Christians served their Saviour with their tears and with their blood. The stations of authority afforded no attractions of wealth or honour. They were the sure paths to the dungeon, to the rack and to the stake. Those who filled them were marked as the first and most worthy objects of the rage of those tyrants who hoped to drown the church in the blood of her children. It would be the height of folly to suppose, that under such circumstances any Presbyters, however inordinate their ambition, would seek distinction on the rack and at the stake, would usurp stations where relentless persecution would inevitably assail them.

There were *insuperable difficulties* to the effecting of this alleged innovation or usurpation.

Admitting that there were Presbyters in the primitive church *wicked* enough to form a plan of usurpation, and *foolish* enough thus to court dangers and death, how was the usurpation to be effected? By intrigue? *Intrigue* requires

*concert* in planning, and *length of time* for operation. But this usurpation must have been universally effected at a time when Christianity had extended itself throughout the world. And could that *concert*, which is necessary to devising and successfully prosecuting any plan of difficult intrigue, have taken place among Presbyters scattered through distant regions, at a period too when there were no general councils which collected together the deputies of the churches? Was there *time* for devising and executing a plan of intrigue which subverted the apostolic ministry within a short period after the apostolic age?

Could the usurpation have been effected by *violence*, or by the force of authority? But the usurping Presbyters had neither the wealth nor the power of the world to aid them in their ambitious projects; nor were there any general councils to enforce this usurpation by an authoritative decree. Without any adequate means, these usurpers were to contend against the institutions of Christ and his Apostles, against a ministry endeared to the hearts of Christians as the divinely commissioned servants of their Master. Yes—whether *intrigue* or *authority* were the weapons of usurpation, these usurping Presbyters had to contend against the attachment of the great body of Christians to the form of a ministry bearing the sacred seal of apostolic authority. Say you the primitive Christians were careless about violating apostolic institutions! What! did not a difference of opinion concerning the apostolic tradition of the time of observing Easter throw them into the most serious disputes and schisms? Must they not have cherished with infinitely greater reverence that ministry which, instituted by the Apostles, had embodied itself with their religion, with every service and solemnity of the church, with their dearest hopes? These *usurping* Presbyters also had to contend against the love of power in their fellow Presbyters; against that sacred attachment to the authority which they possessed, founded on the conviction that it was a deposit intrusted to them by

their divine Master. Would not an usurpation effected under such circumstances, not in one particular province but throughout all nations, not advancing gradually in strength and extent through the lapse of several centuries, but rising into full maturity, and stretching its iniquitous sceptre over the whole world in less than two centuries after the apostolic age—would not such an usurpation be without a parallel, contrary to common sense, to every principle of human nature, to the voice of universal experience?

Nor could this change in the government of the church have been effected by *general consent*.

The supposition of the opponents of Episcopacy is, that the Apostles left the church, under Presbyterian government, subject to common councils of Presbyters, without any higher order. Is it credible then that a government instituted by the inspired Apostles should, in a short time, prove so defective or intolerable as to compel both Presbyters and Laity throughout the Christian world to change this government? What is the alleged reason of this change? The divisions among Christians—the people saying, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and every Presbyter ranking as his own disciples those whom he had baptized. Is it credible that the people and the Presbyters should *universally consent* to correct their own inflamed party zeal, and curb their own inordinate ambition? Is it credible “that the Presbyters, while they were thus fond of raising their own names, met together in order to remedy this which they themselves were fond of, and did unanimously agree upon a method to remedy it?” Is it credible “that the laity, while they were thus addicted to particular Presbyters, did quietly, and without any opposition acquiesce in what was prescribed for the remedying of an evil which they did not desire should be remedied? A matter too absurd, one would think, to be believed by any who know any thing about human nature.”\*

\* Bishop HOADLEY.

Some of the virtuous Presbyters may indeed have formed a plan for checking this ambitious and disorganizing spirit; and some of the most considerate among the laity may have been disposed to acquiesce in it. But how could this plan have been carried into effect *universally*, in distant and remote parts of the world? No general council having met, there could not have been any general concert in devising an uniform system, nor any general authority to enforce what must have been a most unpopular change. Is it credible that the ambitious Presbyters, and schismatic laity who must have been the *multitude*, inflamed as they must have been by pride and party zeal, would universally and peaceably acquiesce in measures to curb their power and abridge their liberties, would consent to exalt into a superior station a prime Presbyter, or Bishop, who, trampling on the equal rights of Presbyters, would appear on his unhallowed throne as a tyrant and usurper? What reasons, what persuasions, nay, what violence could reach over remote and distant nations, and silence the voice and the arm of Presbyters and people exerted in the defence of their power and privileges, exerted in defence of rights secured to them by apostolical institution? What voice mighty enough to say to the tempest of religious phrensy roused in defence of popular right sanctioned by apostolic authority—Peace, be still! Instances indeed there have been of the people, in *some one* nation long tossed on the billows of anarchy, at length quietly sinking into the calm of despotism. But here was an instance of a revolution peaceably acquiesced in throughout the world, by those whose ambition, whose pride, whose just rights it subverted—a revolution so complete and universal as to leave not a vestige of the apostolic institutions, the overthrow of which it had accomplished! Impossible—that Presbyters and people would part with rights and institutions bearing the seal of apostolic authority, and consecrated by the blood of martyrs! “Never was any matter of fact parallel to this known in history; unless it be that there are

many persons of later ages who can greedily believe such an improbable *conjecture* as certain truth, without one competent express testimony to support it. Let us put any of these persons themselves into the place of the *primitive Presbyters*, governing the churches by their common councils; knowing that they were left in this office, and directed how to perform it by the Apostles themselves; affecting to have disciples called by their own names—and we may make ourselves judges whether they would voluntarily and professedly have met together with a design of remedying their own vanity; whether they would have done this by divesting themselves of the exercise of powers to which they had been called by the Apostles themselves. Nay, whether if they had been outvoted in this matter, they would have silently yielded without so much as alleging for themselves the just plea which they would have had against this alteration,” that it was a violation of apostolic institutions. “That this great alteration should be contrived and effected, and universally submitted to, by the very persons whose designs and humours and vain affectation it was ordained to remedy, and put a stop to, is the strangest and most unaccountable thing imaginable.”\*

But the advocates of Episcopacy will concede all that can be required of them. They will concede that such a change was practicable; that it could have been effected by general consent, or by gradual usurpation.

Still it is incredible that this change or usurpation in the government and ministry of the church was actually effected, because there is no *explicit and satisfactory record* or account of it.

Whether effected by violence, by gradual usurpation, or by general consent, it would have been a fundamental change—a change that would have entirely altered the features of the church. It would have constituted a new and marked era in her history. We would surely expect to find

\* Bishop HOADLEY's Defence of Episcopal Ordination.

in cotemporary writers some notices of an event, one of the most extraordinary that could have occurred. But we search the ecclesiastical writers of the three first centuries. Not even any faint traces of this change or usurpation is to be found in them. The venerable IGNATIUS, the disciple of the Apostle ST. JOHN; IRENEUS, the disciple of POLYCARP, the cotemporary of IGNATIUS; CLEMENS of Alexandria; and the celebrated TERTULLIAN, all of whom flourished in the second century, afford us no light in tracing this change or usurpation, in ascertaining either its gradual advances or the bold and sudden assault by which it subverted apostolic order, and mounted to universal dominion. Equally silent as to this most momentous occurrence are ORIGEN and CYPRIAN, Fathers of the third century. But perhaps EUSEBIUS, the historian of the fourth century, affords irrefragable evidence of it. Alas! EUSEBIUS, to whom, even if every record of preceding times had been swept away, tradition would have handed down some account of this memorable innovation on apostolic order, is silent concerning it. He gives not the most distant hint that the supremacy of Bishops, which was universal in his day, had any other origin than apostolic institution. The "famous testimony of JEROME" is the "forlorn hope" of those who impeach Episcopacy as an innovation. And lo! when we open JEROME, we find his "famous testimony" is a matter of *opinion*, and that in many passages he expressly records the apostolic institution of the supremacy of Bishops. But were the testimony of JEROME clear as "the sun shining in his strength," it would not be worthy of a moment's credit, standing as it does single, and unsupported even by any faint hint of those writers who lived nearer to the period of this alleged change, and some of whom must have been cotemporary with it.

Suppose, sir, that the whole Christian world were now bending under the *gentle sway* of Presbytery—that the conviction was universal, that this "is the true and only government which God has prescribed in his word." By what in-

trigue, by what violence, by what magic could Presbyterians throughout the world be induced or compelled to exchange their divinely constituted government for the yoke of an usurping Prelacy? By what intrigue, by what violence, by what magic could the Moderators of Presbyteries wrest from these Presbyteries the power of ordination, and persuade Presbyterians throughout the world to admit, as valid, Episcopal ordination only? Still greater would be the prodigy that this unparalleled revolution should be effected, and yet find no place in the pages of cotemporary writers! Say not that we know little of the primitive ages of the church; that but few of the writings of those ages have survived the ravages of time. We do know all the leading events of the primitive church; we possess many of the writings of her early Fathers. They narrate comparatively trifling changes and schisms. Would they have been silent concerning one, compared with which all others are but as the petty contentions of an obscure village to a revolution that shakes empires, and changes the destiny of the world?\*

No, sir, the rise of the monster Prelacy would have been narrowly watched and minutely traced. Envy, jealousy, pride, and the love of power would have conspired to check

\* I am aware that it may be said, that the art of printing having facilitated the means of communication, Christians could in modern times be more speedily and effectually roused to oppose innovation; and the records of any extraordinary event would be greatly multiplied. But, on the contrary, printing being unknown in the primitive age, any change in apostolic order which took place in one part of the Christian world would be less likely to be speedily known or adopted in other parts distant and remote. There is, therefore, from this circumstance, more difficulty in accounting for the *uniformity* in this change, and for the *suddenness* of its accomplishment through every part of the Christian church. But the fact is, many of the writings of the primitive Fathers are still extant; and surely there could have been no event which they would have been more likely to record than a change in apostolic order, which, whether gradual or sudden, whether effected by general consent or usurpation, must have impressed them most forcibly, and in some way or other, insinuated itself into their writings.

his usurpations, and to proclaim them to the world. Piety would have raised a rampart to his unhallowed designs not easily to be surmounted. The period, however, when, arrived to full stature, he crushed under his giant arm apostolic Presbytery, would have been marked by every ecclesiastical writer as the most memorable era in the annals of the church.

Say not that *Popery* affords a parallel to this alleged usurpation of Episcopacy. The advances of the "man of sin" are scarcely discernible in the three first centuries. The papal pretensions were not established until long after this period. Secular wealth and power were the ladders by which he mounted to pre-eminence. His pretensions were promoted and enforced by general councils. His usurpations can be traced in the faithful page of history. The opposition to his unfounded pretensions is recorded. And it was only in the *Western Church* that his claims to supreme prerogative were respected. The numerous and extensive *Eastern or Greek Church* always spurned his authority.

But by the confession of its opponents, Episcopacy was universally established at the commencement of the fourth century. If the supremacy of Bishops were an innovation or usurpation, it must have been effected without the aid of secular wealth or power, without the authoritative influence of general councils. Episcopacy must have subverted Presbytery throughout the world, at a time when not more than two generations had passed away since the apostolic age; when some persons must have been living whose forefathers, at not more than two or three removes, must have witnessed the apostolic institution of Presbytery! What renders the difference between the encroachments of Popery and the alleged usurpations of Episcopacy more striking, the former are distinctly traced by cotemporary writers in every period of their gradual progress; and the pen of history has recorded the opposition made to them, and the struggles by which they finally triumphed. But of the innovations or usurpa-

tions of Episcopacy, cotemporary writers are silent. Even its adversaries are compelled to fix the period of its full growth in the third, or commencement of the fourth century; and preceding or cotemporary writers afford no light as to its progress, as to the opposition which it must have encountered, or the means by which it marched to universal dominion. Striking also is the difference in another respect. While the supremacy of the Pope, triumphing over opposition by intrigue, by secular influence, by authoritative decrees of councils, has been uniformly rejected by the extensive Eastern of Greek Church, *Episcopacy*, in three centuries after the Apostles, found its *apostolic* institution *universally acknowledged*. The heretics in their contests with the orthodox, never thought of returning to this supposed apostolic Presbytery, but deemed it essential to obtain Bishops. In the unhappy contests that often attended the election of Bishops, no one ever impeached their apostolic supremacy, or suggested, as a remedy for the convulsions which their election occasioned, that primitive Presbytery from which it is supposed Christians had departed. Not one church was to be found which preserved it. Scattered as Christians were through distant regions, they all bowed to the sway of EPISCOPACY. And an ambitious and disappointed Presbyter,\* who, about two hundred years after the times of the Apostles by whom it is supposed Presbyterian regimen was instituted, presumed to deny the apostolic supremacy of Bishops, was branded as a MADMAN!!

This then, sir, is a fact which, of itself, demonstrates the apostolic institution of Episcopacy. According to the unanimous concession of its opponents, it universally prevailed at the commencement of the fourth century.† It must either have originated in the *institution* of the Apostles who were

\* AERIUS, who, like his predecessor ARIUS, denied the divinity of Christ.

† This is the latest period. Many of the most learned Presbyterians acknowledge that Episcopacy prevailed in the second century.

divinely commissioned to constitute the church, or it must have been an *innovation* or *usurpation*. WHEN, HOW was this most extraordinary change in the apostolic constitution of the church effected? What were the wonderful causes that could lead Presbyters and people, throughout the Christian world, to renounce rights and prerogatives vested in them by the Apostles, and to submit to the supremacy of Bishops? What were the means by which a few ambitious Presbyters in different and distant regions, in an age when they commanded neither wealth, honour, nor power; when, persecuted by the secular arm, they lived only in the affections of the people—what were the means by which they usurped supreme prerogative and crushed opposition? How could this usurpation, even if effected in one province, have extended itself throughout the world, at a period when the secular power would not have enforced it, when there was no general council to establish it? Above all, where is the explicit and irrefragable RECORD in cotemporary writers of a change, which, if effected by *general consent*, must have given new features to the visible church, and constituted one of its most memorable eras? Where the record of a change, which, if effected by *usurpation*, must have rallied clergy and people around their just rights, consecrated by apostolic authority, and called forth at least from some one degraded Presbyter a solemn protest, which, sounding loud and deep, would have been heard through distant climes to distant ages? Where the “VOICE OF WARNING,” which, even in this degenerate day, poured forth the alarm in ZION when danger only remotely threatened her sacred cause? Alas! the inhabitants of Zion lay locked in deadly slumber. The sentinels on her sacred ramparts were sleeping at their posts. The enemy came. No blast from the gospel trumpet swept over Zion to rouse her members to defend her apostolic order. Presbytery, her revered pride and glory, vanished as “the baseless fabric of a vision.” A corrupt “Prelacy” raised its hideous form. Christians *throughout the world*,

who, but a century or two before, had received Presbytery as a sacred deposit from Christ and his Apostles, as if touched by the wand of enchantment, fell down and worshipped the image which the pride and ambition of usurping prelates had set up! And, more astonishing prodigy still! the pen of history was palsied, and left to future ages no traces of this memorable event! The man who believes that this astonishing change in apostolic order could have been universally effected within a short period of the apostolic age, without being fully and deeply recorded in the writings of that period which are now extant, is, I think, prepared to say, that all the Presbyteries now in the world may "lie down and sleep, and wake up" under the government of Bishops, and no record appear of the astonishing phenomenon!

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#### LETTER XIV.

SIR,

COMMON sense, then, indignantly rejects the supposition that Episcopacy is an *innovation* or *usurpation*; it must have been an *apostolic institution*.

Episcopacy being thus supported by SCRIPTURE and ANTIQUITY, every Christian is bound to submit to it as the institution of that divine and supreme Lawgiver who vested the Apostles with authority to institute a ministry to be continued by succession to the end of the world. Duty, gratitude, interest, all forbid the believer to violate any of the institutions of his blessed Lord and Master. The most solemn obligations, the most powerful motives, urge him to avoid that "gainsaying of Corah," that rejection of the authorized ministry of the church, in which crime the Apostle\* represents some Christians as "perishing." This crime the believer

\* Jude.

with certainty avoids while he communes with that ministry which even its opponents concede is *valid*; and which subsists in a church freed from papal usurpations, in which it is possible to be "valiant for the truth," and to "exemplify all the loveliness of the Christian character." In communion with this ministry he avoids all those perplexing doubts and apprehensions concerning the validity of those ministrations by which the blessings of the covenant are to be sealed to him, which no prudent man would choose to encounter, when it is in his power to avoid them. True believers, when their rejection of the authorized ministry is "unavoidable or involuntary," when they thus sin only through "ignorance or infirmity," will be accepted "in the name of the Lord Jesus," "who bought them with his blood." But as their obedience would be greater, may we not conclude their rewards in heaven, through the merits of their Saviour, will also be greater, when they receive the "seals of the covenant" from those who are "lawfully called" to administer them?\*

The guilt of *schism* and the duty of *Christian unity* are enforced in the strongest terms by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles. It was the prayer of our blessed Lord, that his church might be ONE.† There is but "one body," of which he is the "head." The Apostle Paul, by the most striking *similitudes*,‡ by the most affectionate *exhortations*,§ by the most impressive *warnings*,|| inculcates and urges the duty of preserving the UNITY of the church, and of avoiding the guilt of SCHISM. The *unity* of the church can be preserved, and the guilt of *schism* avoided, only by continuing in the "Apostles' fellowship,"¶ by communing with that ministry who derive their power by regular transmission from the Apostles. Such a ministry (even its adversaries

\* See pages 65, 66.

† John xvii. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27. Eph. iv. 3-6.

§ 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 1, 2. Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

|| 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4. Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

¶ Acts ii. 42.

being judges) is the Episcopal ministry. It is at least a *disputed point*, whether the claims of any other ministry be equally good. By communing then with the Episcopal ministry, the believer *certainly* avoids that *schism* so solemnly denounced, and maintains that *unity* so solemnly enjoyed, by Christ and his Apostles. He certainly avoids those *divisions* which often bring in "heresy" and "every evil work;" which tend to alienate from each other the followers of the same adorable Lord; which furnish the enemies of the gospel and of the Protestant faith with their most plausible and popular arguments; and which exhibit the spiritual Zion as rent and divided, the scorn of her enemies, instead of being ONE like her divine Head, at unity in herself and the joy of the whole earth.\*

The *churchman* is satisfied even from the concessions of his adversaries, that he enjoys a valid ministry and ordinances, that he maintains Christian unity, and avoids the sin of schism. The doctrines of his church, as contained in the articles and liturgy, even by the confessions of its opponents, are as evangelical as its ministry is apostolic. It is the obvious dictate of prudence to adhere inflexibly to a church which he is assured will be to him a "nursery for the church in heaven," provided he be "diligent in making his calling and election sure," in "adorning the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things."

Where, sir, is the proof of your boast,† that the "visible unity of the church" is preserved by Presbyterian regimen, by "perfect *equality of rank* among her ministers?" Is this proof to be found in the almost infinite number of sects

\* The above argument would not be good in the mouth of an advocate of Popery, because the Papal Church prescribes *sinful terms of communion*.\*

† Christian's Magazine, Introduction, p. 12, 13.

\* Besides Popery itself is a departure from the *commanded unity* of the *apostolic* church; and embodies in its corrupt system, as history shows, the most prolific elements of *schism*.—ED.

which sprung from Presbytery in the time of OLIVER CROMWELL;\* Or does this proof exist in the state of the Presbyterian churches in *Scotland* or in *this country*? In *Scotland* the SECEDERS are a numerous body, who separated from the *parent church*, charging her with being a corrupt church. We find there that Presbyterian government did not preserve the visible unity of the church. Was *unity* preserved among these Seceders, who carried with them Presbyterian government, "perfect equality of rank among ministers?" In the space of a few years after the Secession they split into the two sects of *Burghers* and *Anti-Burghers*; the former so called from their submitting to what is called the *Burgher oath*, which the latter refuses to take, as inconsistent with the principles of the Secession. Here then are three distinct Presbyterian churches, who formally excommunicated one another, and disclaim all church fellowship! Admirable specimen of the efficacy of Presbyterian government in preserving the visible unity of the church! But this is not all. In *Scotland* there is a fourth Presbyterian Church, called the *Relief Church*, so denominated from their having *relieved* themselves from the *patronage* by which livings are conferred in the established church: and, last, though not least of all, the *Reformed Presbyterian Church*, commonly called COVENANTERS, who boast that they alone maintain the genuine *Presbyterian* principles, and are the *purest church* on the face of the earth.

Perhaps these divisions among Presbyterians are merely *local*, and arise from some peculiar circumstances in *Scotland*, which do not operate in *America*. But nearly the same divisions are found among Presbyterians in this country as subsist in *Scotland*. In this country there are the *Presbyterian Church*, corresponding to the established Church of *Scotland*; the *Presbyterian Associate Church*, connected with the *Presbyterian Anti-Burgher Church* of

\* EDWARDS, a Presbyterian divine, gives an account of these sects in his *Gangræna*.

Scotland, and which claims at least the merit of consistency in adhering strictly to the original principles of the Secession; the Presbyterian *Associate-Reformed Church*,\* maintaining ecclesiastical correspondence with the *Burgher Church* of Scotland; and the *Reformed Presbyterian Church*, corresponding to the church of the same name in Scotland and Ireland.† There are also several Presbyterian

\* This church, of which you, sir, are a minister, sprung up in this country about thirty years ago, by the union of some of the ministers and congregations of the *Associate* and *Reformed churches*.

† Of this church, (whose members are commonly called COVENANTERS, it is presumed from their adhering literally to “the solemn league and COVENANT” by which Papacy and Prelacy were solemnly abjured in Scotland) Mr. M'LEOD is a distinguished minister and advocate. They profess to maintain, in greater purity than other sects, the Calvinistic doctrines, and the divinely instituted form of Presbyterian regimen. And they hold the singular opinion, on the subject of civil government, that only “*Christian* rulers, appointed to office according to a *righteous* civil constitution, have authority from God to rule in subserviency to the kingdom of Christ, and are to be conscientiously supported.”\* They solemnly declare in their standards, that “Presbyterian COVENANTERS perceiving *immorality interwoven with the general and states’* constitution of government in America, have uniformly dissented from the civil establishments.”† Again: “There are moral evils essential to the constitution of the United States, which render it necessary to *refuse allegiance to the whole system*. This constitution is, notwithstanding its numerous excellences, in many instances inconsistent, oppressive and *impious*.”‡ Persons who hold these sentiments, “if inconsistent with themselves doctrinally, would be justified in rebelling against every government on the face of the earth. In fact, in this country they go so far in what I have not the least doubt is a *conscientious* profession of these principles, as uniformly “to refuse to serve in any office which implies an *approbation of the constitution*—to abstain from giving their votes at elections for legislators or officers who must be qualified to act by an oath of allegiance to this *immoral system*. They cannot consistently swear allegiance to that government in the constitution of which there is so much *immorality*.”§ They are “absolutely prohibited from serving on juries,” and even from taking an oath in a court of justice, unless “the men in power” will admit that “this oath is performed voluntarily to the Supreme

\* Reformation Principles, Part ii. p. 106.

† Part i. p. 134.

‡ p. 136.

§ p. 137.

congregations in East-Jersey and New-York, associated under a Presbytery called the *Morris Presbytery*, and who are independent of the authority of the Presbyterian Church; as also are the numerous churches in *New-England*, who, though Congregational in their form of government, are at present *Presbyterian* in their mode of *ordination*. Here now are several denominations of *Presbyterians*, professing subjection to distinct ecclesiastical judicatories, and some of them refusing church fellowship with the others! When the *Secession* took place in Scotland, the Seceders were solemnly excommunicated by the Established Church; and when the Seceders split into the two sects of *Burghers* and *Anti-*

Being, and by no means a recognition of the magistrate's authority!"\* It is but justice, however, to observe, that, "for the sake of peace and good order—from a spirit of resignation to the divine providence, and in order to make legitimate provision for themselves or their relations," they acknowledge that "*so much conformity* to the prevailing system as is consistent with the oath of their allegiance to the Messiah, is a duty conscientiously to be practised, although *very distinct* from that obedience for *conscience sake* which they would render to the government of their choice, to the authority which has the sanction of the divine approbation."†

I mention all these particulars not for your information, sir, but for the sake of "unlearned" readers. And I am sorry to be compelled to observe, that a more unjust philippic against the civil governments, against all denominations of Christians, and particularly against Episcopalians, never came from the pen of an ignorant religious zealot in the most ignorant times, than that drawn up, it is presumed, by Mr. M'LEOD, a scholar and a gentleman, and a Christian clergyman "in the beginning of the nineteenth century," and published by the Presbytery of his church under the sacred title of an *Historical View*. The attacks made in that work, and in his Ecclesiastical Catechism, on the Episcopal Church in this country, and on the venerable Church of England, extolled by the Reformers as the bulwark of the Reformation, and now "standing between the dead and the living," and, through the grace of God, "staying the plague" of infidelity which threatened to sweep the earth, warrant and invite an unrestrained examination of his own principles.

\* Reformation Principles, Part ii. p. 135, 136

† Mr. M'LEOD's sermon, entitled, "Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth," p. 43

*Burghers*, they excommunicated each other. In like manner, when, in this country, some of the ministers of the *Associate Presbytery*, consisting chiefly of Anti-Burghers, seceded from that Presbytery, and, in conjunction with some of the ministers of the *Reformed Presbytery*, formed a new church under the denomination of the *Associate-Reformed Church* (of which you are a minister,) sentences of excommunication were formerly passed. The ministers of the Reformed Presbytery who joined (what for the sake of conciseness I may be suffered to call) *your church*, were considered by those whom they left, by Mr. M'LEOD and his brethren, as "guilty of apostacy;"\* as having "under pretence of repairing a breach which they had no hand in making, in spite of their profession and their vows, made a *new schism* by their own voluntary act."† And your church is accused by Mr. M'LEOD and his brethren with having "*forsaken the secession testimony* in very important principles." Of the constitution of the very respectable body commonly called the "Presbyterian Church" in this country, Mr. M'LEOD and his brethren thus speak: "In this constitution were laid those seeds of *discordant principles* and *general debility* which have since characterized the *Presbyterian Church* in this country, under the direction of a *General Assembly*."‡ Alas, Sir, the *Associate Church*, your own church called the *Associate-Reformed Church*, Mr. M'LEOD's church styled the *Reformed Presbyterian Church* or *Covenanters*, though all good Presbyterians, do not hold fellowship with one another in "sealing ordinances," nor with the *Presbyterian Church* commonly so called. Far be it from me to dispute your *right* of dissent. God forbid that it should be wrested from you, or that I should doubt your being conscientious in the exercise of it. But let me ask, am I to find in these schisms proof that Presbyterian government preserves church unity?

\* Reformation Principles, Part i. p. 119.

† Reformation Principles, Part i. p. 119.

‡ Reformation Principles, Part i. p. 103.

Or do they afford evidence that this "ecclesiastical government combines the *visible unity* of the church Catholic with *perfect equality of rank* among her ministers?"\*

Are such divisions to be found among Episcopalians? Is this detested "Prelacy" the parent of such endless schisms? When any Episcopal Presbyters are desirous to erect a new communion, they cease to be Episcopalians when they become schismatics, and unless they can get a Bishop to head their schism, necessarily have recourse to Presbyterian ordination. With Episcopal schismatics, the difficulty will be to perpetuate the Episcopal succession. I do not pretend that Episcopacy is an infallible security against schism; that it would be impracticable for schismatic Episcopal Presbyters to procure a Bishop and to devise means of perpetuating the Episcopal succession. But I contend that there would be greater obstacles in their way than under the Presbyterian regimen. For when three or four Presbyterian ministers deem it proper to establish a new church, they have only to constitute themselves a Presbytery, and they instantly become as good Presbyterians as those they leave, perhaps even more pure, more refined, more zealous. Candidly, Sir, I am at a loss to see in what way Presbyterian government tends to preserve "the visible unity of the church Catholic;" and why, on the contrary, it is not perfectly compatible "with rending the body of Christ at pleasure," with schisms and divisions without end.†

Episcopacy then, as the instituted mode by which the ministerial commission is conveyed from the great Head of the church, and as the bond of Christian unity, claims the obedience of all Christians. Considered as a *form of government*, it has at least equal claims with Presbytery. The essentials

\* Christian's Magazine, Introduction, p. 12, 13.

† After this view of *Presbyterian unity*, we must surely be amused to hear Mr. M'LEOD seriously declaring that "the universal prevalence of real *Presbyterianism* can alone render Jerusalem a *QUIET habitation*."\*

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 129.

of Episcopacy being only the preservation of the three grades of the ministry with their appropriate powers, it admits in the structure of its government of such modifications as may adapt it to the different circumstances of the church, and to the varying forms of civil policy. The insinuation sometimes made, that there is a peculiar connection between *Episcopacy* and *monarchy*, is as false as its design is uncandid and ungenerous. In Great-Britain, Episcopacy and Presbytery are both established by law in different parts of the nation; and I never heard that the *Presbyterians* of *Scotland* were less loyal than the *Episcopalians* of *England*.

In this country there is a striking resemblance between the structure of Episcopal government and that of the civil polity. In every diocese the *Bishop* presiding over it corresponds to the *Governor* or supreme executive officer of each state. Though he receives his Episcopal commission from the Bishops who ordained him, he is elected by the clergy and laity, who thus possess the security that no person shall be exalted over them as Bishop who is obnoxious to them. In the discharge of his executive functions, and in the administration of discipline, the Presbyters are considered as his *Council*; corresponding to the *Councils* in some of the states, or to the *Senate* in the general government, who are associated with the chief magistrate in the exercise of the executive authority. Though he alone confers the ministerial commission, yet he can ordain no one who has not been previously approved and recommended by some of the clergy and laity. The convention, (consisting of the clergy and delegates from each congregation) in which the Bishop presides, and in which the local concerns of each diocese are regulated, answers to the legislative body of each state. The general convention, or supreme ecclesiastical authority of the church, has been organized upon that judicious principle of *dividing power*, and placing it in different *houses*, upon which the civil constitutions are founded. In this convention there are two houses, the Bishops composing one, and the clerical

and lay deputies the other; answering to the two houses in the civil legislatures. And the Bishops, and the clerical and lay deputies have a reciprocal check upon each other in the enacting of laws. Thus, the power of making laws in the Episcopal Church in America, is regulated by that sound principle of ecclesiastical polity laid down by the judicious HOOKER—"In *matters of God*—it were unnatural not to think the *Pastors* and *Bishops* of our souls a great deal *more fit* than men of secular trades and callings: howbeit, when all which the *wisdom of all sorts* can do, is done for the devising laws in the church, it is the *general consent of all* that giveth them the *form* and *vigour* of laws."\*

\* This passage of HOOKER is quoted at p. 128 of these letters. The same principle is thus stated by a Bishop who has always taken a leading part in the concerns of the American Episcopal Church.\* "Reason and propriety require that those persons are to have a pre-eminence in the business" of regulating ecclesiastical affairs, "whose stations in the church invest them with the greatest share of responsibility"—for to the Bishops and clergy "the oversight of the flock" is committed by authority transmitted from the divine Head of the church, and to him they are to "give an account of their stewardship." "But yet (as the Bishop goes on to observe) the more fully the things determined carry with them the sanction of *all the orders* to be governed by them," the laity as well as the Bishops and clergy, "the nearer they conform to the true principles of legislation, whether it be ecclesiastical or civil; and the more likely they are to be wisely done, and to be peaceably and profitably executed. In all this, however, there is room for considerable variety, according as human prudence shall direct." Obvious and indispensable is the principle which the Bishop further states: "Regulations thus made, are *binding on persons of all orders in the church*; and on the contrary supposition, there can be no order or social government, but every one is left to his own humour or opinion."

Order, social government, Christian unity so sacredly enjoined by Christ and his Apostles, would be subverted, if any individual or inferior judicatory of the church were at liberty to resist the acts of the supreme ecclesiastical authority. Dissensions and schisms without number would rend and subvert the church. The injunction of Christ is express, that we are to *hear the church* in all things not contrary to the law of God.

\* Bishop WHITE, in a Consecration Sermon preached before the General Convention, 1804.

Mr. M'LEOD is pleased to observe, that the general convention of the Episcopal Church is a mere "human contrivance."\* What! is it a human invention that the Bishops and clergy, who are the divinely commissioned governors of the church, should meet to legislate for it? But it seems "they share their *power* with *unauthorized laymen*."† And what power do they thus share? Not the ministry of the *word* and *sacraments*; for these none can exercise but they "If any man refuse to *hear the church*, let him be unto you as a heathen-man and a publican." The command too is explicit, "*obey them* that have the *rule over* you, and submit yourselves: for they *watch for your souls*, as they that must give account:"\* and the sentence of the *council* at Jerusalem † was definitive and binding on all the churches. The exercise of the supreme authority in the Episcopal Church is carefully guarded from abuse. The concurrence of the three orders being necessary to any act of the general convention, no one order can encroach upon the other. The clergy and laity are represented by their delegates: and the Bishops are not only liable to impeachment, but hold stations of such great responsibility, and so conspicuous in the church, that there is no danger of their erring through excess of authority. Abuses of Episcopal prerogative took place either in the ages of darkness or superstition, or when the Bishops were independent, and armed with secular authority "Power becomes dangerous, not from the *precedency* of one man, but from his being independent. Had Rome been governed by a Presbytery instead of a Bishop; and had that Presbytery been invested with the independent riches of the Papal See; it is easy to conceive of their acquiring as much power over the Christian world as was ever known in a Gregory or a Paul."

The only case "in which *private conscience* and not *public law* becomes the rule of conduct," is when the ecclesiastical authority attempts to "*change* the revealed will of God." When any ecclesiastical acts are deemed unjust or impolitic, common sense and propriety obviously suggest the obtaining, by remonstrance or by the exercise of those numerous *checks* possessed by the church at large, of a change in those obnoxious measures, rather than by *resistance* to violate the first principles of order and government, and church unity, and thus throw the church into disorder and endanger her existence.

The above principles are essential to the preservation of all government; of Presbyterian as well as Episcopal.

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 129.

† Ibid.

\* Heb. xiii. 17.

† Acts xv.  
19\*

who are "called of God, as was Aaron." Not the power of *ordination*; for this is necessarily *exclusive*, and must flow "to the end of the world," in the channel in which it was at first placed. While *this power* and the *ministry of the word and sacraments* are preserved *inviolate*, every thing else in the constitution of the church is a matter of *human regulation* and *expediency*. There is nothing in scripture forbidding the associating of the *laity* with the *clergy* in making ecclesiastical *laws*. It is a principle of sound legislation, sanctioned by reason and good policy, to obtain, as far as may be practicable and consistent with the order and strength of government, the consent of all those to the laws who are to be governed by them. The requiring of *every thing* in the church's government to be of *divine institution*, is an error of *puritanism*. It never has been, and it never can be carried completely into effect. In the church many things must be regulated by the dictates of reason and common sense, and by the principles of sound policy. This error of puritanism is admirably exposed by HOOKER, in his Ecclesiastical Polity. Let Mr. M'LEOD take up HOOKER and answer him. He will do what has never yet been done, and will gain infinitely more honour than by torturing texts of scripture to support principles most remote from their obvious meaning.

The superintending influence and authority of the BISHOP, increased as it generally is by age and experience, will tend to give *unity* of design and *promptness* of execution to ecclesiastical measures. By his *charges* and admonitions to his clergy, he may successfully excite them to prudent animation and firmness in defending the holy faith and authority of the church; to tender faithfulness and zeal in proclaiming the truths of salvation; and to diligence and perseverance in the discharge of all their sacred functions. By his instructions, his counsels, his affectionate sympathy, he may direct, inspirit and console them under the pressure of the difficulties and trials to which they are exposed. By his frequent and faithful administration of the rite of *confirmation*, he may

impress on the young the awful importance of their spiritual interests, place them under the guidance of divine grace, and lead them in that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation. By his *visitations* to his churches, by his *pastoral letters* and admonitions, he may contribute to arrest the baneful spirit of infidelity, and the insidious advances of heretical opinions, to prevent and heal divisions and schisms, to strengthen the ties of harmony, to excite and promote primitive piety, lively and sober zeal for the interests of the kingdom of the Redeemer.

But, Sir, you have found out a compendious way of demolishing all the arguments in favour of Episcopacy and the Episcopal Church. Her members are corrupt—her clergy are unfaithful—in regard to *practical religion*, and what you deem the essentials of a church of Christ, she is not worthy to be compared with the non-Episcopal churches. The following very modest challenge decorates the pages of the Christian's Magazine.

“For assuredly, if there is not within this church much more of ‘power and love, and of a sound mind;’ much more of the fear of God; of ‘receiving Christ Jesus the Lord’ and ‘walking in him;’ of *reverential* attendance upon his worship; of domestic and personal godliness; in one word, much more of the spiritual life, and of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord; if much more of these things be not found *within* his church than *without* it, ‘what doth it profit?’ Will Mr. H. meet the ordeal? Will he accompany us from temple to temple, from pulpit to pulpit, from house to house, from closet to closet, and agree, that in proportion as there is little or much of ‘pure and undefiled religion’ in them, their grade in the Christian churches shall be low or high? Is it, then, a fact, that in the church which boasts of the only valid ministrations, and the exclusive prerogative of being in covenant with God, there is more evangelical preaching; more of Christ crucified; more plain, close, decisive dealing with the consciences of men, upon the things which belong

Unfair representation of the question

to their peace, than in many of the churches which she affects to despise? Is it a fact, that her 'authorized priesthood' are more scrupulous about the preservation of pure communion; that they object more strongly to the admission of mere men of the world; and are more active in excluding from their fellowship the openly irreligious, than are others? Is it a fact, that they adopt more prompt and vigorous measures to expel from their pulpits doctrine which flies in the face of their avowed principles, and is acknowledged by themselves to be subversive of the Christian system? Is it a fact, that in this 'primitive apostolic' church, the sheep of Christ and his lambs are more plentifully fed with 'the bread of God which came down from heaven?' Or that she has less to attract the thoughtless gay, and more to allure those who become seriously concerned about their eternal salvation, than is to be found in hundreds of churches which she virtually delivers unto Satan? Are these facts? We appeal to them who have eyes to see and ears to hear; especially to them who 'have tasted that the Lord is gracious.'

Now, sir, had I taken up one of the musty chronicles of the "true church militant" of the seventeenth century, when "godly zeal for reformation"

"—Made all cries about the town  
Join throats to cry the Bishops down"—

and found in it this violent declamation against the Episcopal Church, this display of superior holiness and zeal, it would have occasioned me no surprise. I should instantly have ascribed it to some fiery religious zealot, some

"—Fierce inquisitor who has chief  
Dominion over men's belief  
And manners; can pronounce a saint  
Idolatrous or ignorant,  
When superciliously he sifts  
Through coarsest boulder others' gifts;  
For all men live and judge amiss  
Whose talents jump not just with his."

But I can scarcely believe that I have found it in the

*Christian's Magazine*, and that it comes from the pen of Dr. MASON.

And yet, Sir, I might have expected all this, and more. Your precursor, Mr. M'LEOD, had spoken of the Episcopal Church in his *Ecclesiastical Catechism*," in a style and spirit that ought to have prevented my being surprised at any thing that came from the same quarter. What admirable specimens of humility and Christian candour are the following! The highest commendation I can pass upon them is, that they will not yield the palm to the foregoing extract from the *Christian's Magazine*.

"Those who do not 'like to retain God in their knowledge,' are given over to 'strong delusions.' Such also as *invent* forms of worship, not satisfied with the simplicity of the scripture modes, are often, by the judgment of a just God, given over to their own idols."\* Mark this Episcopalians. You have *invented a form of worship*, and the *judgment of a just God has given you over to your own idols*; that is, you know "little of" the true God or his worship! Is there any doubt that this is Mr. M'LEOD's meaning? Read what he immediately subjoins to the foregoing: "Let any man of piety consider the state of religion in the *Popish* and *Episcopal Churches*—Let a man of spiritual discernment inquire into the state of *vital godliness* in them, and he will find that *little of it is left*. *They groan under a load of superstition which has been accumulating for ages*. Let their experience warn others to abstain from every act of will worship."†

Again: "As the spirit of prayer departs from men the practice of prayer will be relinquished, or *mere forms* adopted."‡ So then, we cannot have the *spirit of prayer* when we use the prayer indited by our blessed Lord himself, and which to us is a *mere form*. "The superstition of Rome, and the tyranny of Henry the Eighth is the true foundation of the *Episcopal Liturgy*."§ What! is Mr. M'L. ignorant that

\* *Ecclesiastical Catechism* by Mr. M'LEOD, p. 125. † p. 125. ‡ p. 126.

§ *Ecclesiastical Catechism*, by Mr. M'LEOD, p. 126.

many parts of the Liturgy are taken from the liturgies of the primitive church ; that the whole of it was compiled by venerable Reformers, who consecrated it with their blood ; and that it has since been improved by men whose fame for piety will ever be in the churches?—"Obliged to conform to this measure, attempts have been made to justify it. Arguments which at first tended to palliate an evil which the Bishops had not power to remedy, are at last thought sufficient to establish a divine right. Such are the gradations of HUMAN FOLLY."\* Thank you, Mr. M'LEOD. Long may Episcopalians glory in that FOLLY which prizes the Liturgy as the finest, purest, and most elevated strain of devotion that ever fell from uninspired lips. Recollect, the gospel itself was "foolishness" to the self-righteous Pharisee, and to the "vain disputer," puffed up with false *philosophy*.

Mark again : "Preaching is the meanest service in the *Po-pish* and *Episcopal* Churches. It is merely subservient to the government of Bishops and Popes. The Bishops exalt the mean above the end. *Government* is with them the principal part of religion. To be in power is more dignified than to edify."† "The Evangelists have been transformed into prelates by the Churches of Rome and England. These churches can canonize Saints and consecrate Bishops at pleasure. It is remarkable that they are always for increasing the power, but never for appreciating the labour of the teacher."‡ What ! does Mr. M'L. mean to advance *preaching* above the duties of prayer and praise ? Let him profit by the very just admonition of the "Presbyterian Church." She declares, "As one primary design of public ordinances is to pay social acts of homage to the Most High God, ministers ought to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with, or exclude the *more important duties of prayer and praise*."§ Would to God that this principle of regarding "prayer and praise as the *more important duties*," was impressed on the heart of every

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism by Mr. M'LEOD, p. 126. † p. 106. ‡ p. 107.

§ Directory for Worship, chap. vi. sect. 4.

Christian. The prevailing rage to make religion consist in *hearing sermons*, and in running "from Dan to Beersheba" after *popular preachers*, threatens serious injury to the interests of enlightened and substantial piety and devotion. This is the more inexcusable in Episcopalians, because they possess a service in which they may always worship God in spirit and in truth. Whatever may be the defects of the *preacher*, they can find in the liturgy the "bread of life" to nourish, and to comfort the soul.\* Just are the remarks, that "Christians are united to God by being brought into covenant with him by baptism; and are united to one another by being members of his church. This union, which has been cemented by the blood of Christ, is to be preserved by the ordinances of the church; and consequently *joint prayers*, or social worship and *communion in the sacraments*, are as necessary to eternal life as hearing the word of God *preached*: and, it may be added, much more so than hearing the word of God preached without them."

But, do the Episcopal Churches account "preaching a *mean service*," or "make government the principal part of religion?" Is not *preaching* a part of the public service not merely on the Lord's day, but on all the greater festivals and fasts consecrated to the commemoration of the leading events in the history of Christ, and of the great truths of Redemption? Are not the principal churches in England opened *daily*, and in this country several times a week, for the purpose of offering prayer and praises to God, and hearing his holy word? Does all this look as if they did not "appreciate the *labour* of the teacher"—as if to "edify" were a subordinate object in Episcopal Churches; unless indeed Mr. M'L. supposes that "prayer and praise, and hearing the

\* Thus observes the celebrated Calvinistic divine, TOPLADY, "Let a parish minister be ever so spiritually blind and dead, the *liturgy remains the same*. Blessed be God, the clergy are forced to read it, and to administer the Lord's supper and other offices according to its *admirable and animating form of sound words*." Toplady's Works, vol. vi. p. 295.

word of God," do not tend to "edify" when not connected with *preaching*? Does not Mr. M'L. know that the sermons of English Bishops that have been published compose numerous volumes; and that the sermons of Bishop ANDREWS, Bishop SANDERSON, Bishop TAYLOR, Bishop BULL, Bishop BEVERIDGE, and in later times of the Bishops SECKER, WILSON, HORNE, HURD, and PORTEUS, and "a legion more," will bear a comparison with any sermons extant, for depth of erudition, critical research, just and impressive elucidation of divine truth, apostolic simplicity, and pious fervour? Exempted as some of the English Bishops are from the duty of *constant parochial* preaching, the sermons that they have published are proofs that, though on them lies "the care of the churches," they have not neglected this duty. And when we also consider that some of the most profound and able works in defence of Christianity and its doctrines have come from the bench of English Bishops, we shall be able to appreciate the *justice* of the charge, that with Bishops, "to be in *power* is more dignified than to *edify*." When Mr. M'L. talks of the *power* of Bishops, let him try to recollect whether there are not historical facts which prove that "the *little finger* of *Presbytery* can be thicker than the *loins* of *Prelacy*."

"Bishops and Popes"—"Popish and Episcopal Churches"—These are the ungenerous arts constantly used to excite vulgar prejudices against Episcopal Churches, that have been the most determined opponents of the corruptions of the Church of Rome.

Further still: "The *convocations* and *conventions* of the Episcopalians are no more than very *disorderly Presbyterian Synods*."\* Sorry, very sorry that Episcopalians have got into bad company, and have had their good manners corrupted by evil examples. Again: "The boast of Episcopacy—the number of her sons—is proof of her own connection with Antichrist—all the world wondered after the

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 129.

beast.”\* So then, when all the nations of the earth become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, the reign of Antichrist will be at its height! Really, sir, you ought not to thank Mr. M'L. for this remark; for, according to it, Presbyterians in this country, as they are the most *numerous*, are connecting themselves with Antichrist, beginning to court the “mystical Babylon,” and to “be drunk with the cup of her abominations.” But here comes the climax of this highly wrought description of Episcopal corruption. “Some Episcopalians consider baptism as synonymous with regeneration. This is more absurd than the Anabaptist conceit. There are, however, *masters in Israel who know as little about the NEW BIRTH as Nicodemus did.*”†

Episcopalians! all this is from the pen of persons who apply to themselves the exclusive title of evangelical, and brand you and your ministers with having “little of vital godliness!” And yet we are to be silent, hear our venerable church and her apostolic worship abused, our title even to the “power of godliness” questioned, without defending ourselves—for *fear of giving offence!* And do the opponents of the church act on this principle? No, I commend them for a more *manly* policy, for a determined resistance to what they deem error and corruption, unawed by any “human regards.”

“*Masters in Israel,*” says Mr. M'LEOD, “*who know as little about the new birth as Nicodemus did.*” Here, Episcopalians, allusion is particularly made to one of your Bishops, who has ably vindicated the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*. “Who art thou, O man, that thus judgest another?” Who gave thee the right and power to sit in judgment on the heart, and to pronounce a venerable Clergyman, and an exemplary Christian, a stranger to that “new birth,” without which no man can enter the kingdom of God?

That the Bishop of the Episcopal Church in New-York was here particularly aimed at, is evident from the circum-

\* Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 129.

† p. 127.

stance that he published a defence of baptismal regeneration: and Mr. M'L. a few sentences after the one above quoted, observes concerning this doctrine, "Miserable Episcopalians! if this be all your regeneration! But I reject the ungenerous, the infamous thought. No, I would not believe it on the authority of *one of your own Bishops*." Grant, however, that there is no particular allusion. So much the worse. For then all the Episcopal clergy who believe this doctrine of their church are involved in this charge. "There are *masters in Israel* who know as little about the *new birth* as Nicodemus did!"

The opponents of the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration* either do not, or will not know that there is a distinction made in the language of the Episcopal Church as well as of scripture, between REGENERATION and RENOVATION. "He saved us," saith the Apostle,\* "by the *washing of regeneration*, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*"—the former expression evidently denoting *baptism*. The same distinction is observed by the church in her baptismal service, and particularly in one of her Collects.† "Grant that we, being *regenerate*, may daily be *renewed* by thy Holy Spirit." Episcopalians maintain *baptismal regeneration* in this sense, that the *baptized* person is *born again*, not in the affections of his soul, but into a *new state*, in which he receives conditionally a title to the blessings of the gospel covenant. But do Episcopalians, therefore, deny the necessity of the "renewing of the mind?" God forbid! No; they maintain, that unless in the baptized person, by the power of that Holy Spirit a title to which is conferred in baptism, the "old man be buried and the new man raised up;" unless "all sinful affections die in him, and all things belonging to the *Spirit* do live and grow in him;" unless the "old man be crucified, and the whole body of sin abolished;" unless he "*die* from sin, and *rise* again unto righteousness,"‡ unless he thus be "*renewed* by the Holy Ghost," his baptismal *regeneration* will only

\* Titus iii. 5.

† For Christmas day.

‡ Baptismal Service.

aggravate his guilt and increase his condemnation. The advocate of baptismal regeneration may, therefore, consistently maintain the necessity of the *new birth* in its strongest spiritual sense.

To vindicate the institutions of the Episcopal Church from all these charges, I might appeal to the testimony of the divines of the Reformed churches, some of whom I have already adduced. I might urge a long list of Calvinistic divines of the Church of England, the "HERVEYS, the ROMAINES, the NEWTONS, the SCOTTS," all of whom gloried in their being sons of that church which Mr. M'L. says is "connected with ANTICHRIST," and "groans under a load of superstition;" all of whom offered up the devotions of the congregation in those "*mere forms*" which Mr. M'L. says are only "adopted" "as the spirit of prayer departs from men."

The celebrated TOPLADY, who stands high in the estimation of Calvinists, forbids any person's forsaking the Church of England (as reasonably he might) through "love for the gospel of grace." "It should rather bind him more closely and firmly to a church whose doctrines and sacraments are holy, harmless, undefiled; and alike remote from error, *superstition*, and licentiousness."\* In consistency with this principle, TOPLADY "constantly and strictly *communicated in the church only*," (and he enjoins the same conduct on others) even though "the clergymen from whom he received the memorials of Christ's dying love knew no more of the gospel" (strange assertion for a *humble Christian*) "than so many stocks or stones."†

I take some pride, however, in a testimony in favour of the Church of England from a different quarter, from one whose panegyric is thus drawn by a periodical writer, who, I am told, stands high in your esteem. "As a poet, a scholar, as one endowed with wit and genius, a philosopher, and a good moral man" (and the public voice will add also,

\* Toplady's Works, vol. vi. p. 294.

† Ibid. vol. vi. p. 295.

as a good Christian) "neither Britain nor any other country can boast of such a bright example as Dr. BEATTIE." The following is from the pen of his biographer: "Although Dr. BEATTIE had been brought up a member of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and regularly attended her worship and ordinances when at Aberdeen, he yet gave the most decided preference to the Church of England, generally attending the service of that church when any where from home, and constantly when at Peterhead. He spoke with enthusiasm of the *beauty, simplicity, and energy* of the English Liturgy, especially of the *litany*, which he declared to be the finest piece of uninspired composition in any language."\* This celebrated philosopher and amiable man entertained the same opinion of the Church of England with a distinguished prelate, (Dr. DRUMMOND, Archbishop of York) who was his friend and correspondent. "The Church of England is the most agreeable to Christian discipline; equally distant from wild conceit and implicit faith; free, manly, and benevolent; conducive to the cause of truth and virtue, to the happiness of society, and of every individual in it. And it is the establishment that seems to carry the fairest aspect with it towards promoting pure Christianity and civil order, without *overbearing, or artful, or abject* means."† Great as may be my respect for the talents and piety of Dr. M. and Mr. M'L. I certainly should not be disposed, as far as *opinion* goes, to rely more on theirs than on that of Dr. DRUMMOND and Dr. BEATTIE.

But, sir, it seems the Episcopal Church is deficient in "vital godliness," and in "pure and undefiled religion." You will not find me the apologist of the lukewarmness or defects of Christians because they are of my "own house-

\* Life of Beattie, by Sir William Forbes, American edition, p. 4, 98. There are some reviewers and writers who affect to depreciate Dr. Beattie and his biographer. The cause of this is apparent: Dr. Beattie gave "a decided preference to the Church of England."

† Life of Beattie, p. 165, American edition.

hold." In common with my clerical brethren, it is a source of bitter regret to me, and the painful subject on which I trust we often pour out our hearts before the Father of mercies, that an inordinate attachment to the world and its pleasures seems to have eaten up the piety and zeal of too many who call themselves Churchmen. And perhaps, sir, we are not disposed to boast that we are entirely "guiltless in this matter;" or that our zeal, faithfulness and diligence in inculcating those DOCTRINES OF THE CROSS which have ever proved the "power of God unto salvation," could not have been greater. "Our trust, O Lord, is not in our own merits, but in thy manifold and great mercies."

But you surely are sensible that *spiritual pride*, *arrogance*, and *ensoriousness*, are vices as hateful in the sight of God, and as inconsistent with the "power of godliness" and the Christian temper, as are indifference, lukewarmness and attachment to worldly pleasure. You surely are sufficiently acquainted with human nature to know, that spiritual pride, arrogance, and censoriousness often exist in those who are loudest in their calls for *evangelical preaching*, and who have "the Lord Jesus" most frequently on their lips.\* It is much more easy and pleasant with bold faith to call the Redeemer *Lord, Lord*, and to listen to *glowing* descriptions of his GRACE (and if they be sober, I am far from insinuating that they can be too glowing) than it is faithfully and constantly to apply this grace to "crucifying the flesh" with its evil tempers, to bringing down the "*high and lofty* imaginations" of the heart. The Christian, like his divine master, is *meek* and *lowly*, not merely in *profession*. Alas! professions are easily supported by those cant phrases that are often transmitted from one religionist to another, and

\* The perversity of human nature, and the deceitfulness of the human heart, are in nothing more apparent than in the disposition of men to make a commutation of vices.

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,  
By damning those they have no mind to."

repeated by rote, as the school-boy would con over his lesson. But the Christian is "meek and lowly in heart;" in a life uniformly gentle, in a deportment habitually unassuming, kind, humble and peaceable. "Meekness, gentleness, and humility" are among the principal "fruits of the spirit." And perhaps if you take these as the standard of the "power of godliness," you may be induced to abate somewhat of your censures of Episcopalians, and somewhat of your high commendations of those whom you triumphantly contrast with them. Far be it from me proudly to seat myself in the throne of judgment, and to wield the bolts of censure. Many, it gratifies me to say, very many are there among non-Episcopal Christians, who, by their meek, their humble, and holy virtues, evidence that they "have been with Jesus," and are "taught by his spirit." But sure I am, sir, that in the "Right Rev. Prelates,"\* to whom I am sorry to say you allude in your wonted contemptuous manner, there appear the graces of humility, meekness, and unaffected piety, shining with a lustre that would not have disgraced the apostolic age, and which, really sir, it will be happy for us both if we can display. But I dismiss an odious comparison, on which I deeply regret you have thought it necessary to enlarge.

But in your triumphant enumeration of the Christian graces of non-Episcopalians, you have forgotten to inquire whether they possess that most important one—*Christian unity*, "the keeping of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Whether this unity be compatible with those divisions which, since their departure from Episcopacy, they are multiplying without end, is surely worthy of their serious consideration.†

In my judgment the comparison was unnecessary and

\* Bishop MOORE of New-York, and Bishop WHITE of Pennsylvania.

† The Roman Catholics reproach the Protestant Episcopal Churches with a breach of Christian unity. The answer is at hand—The Church of Rome prescribes *sinful terms of communion*. This plea for separation from Protestant Episcopal Churches cannot be urged.

and can't be urged for separation

irrelevant. The defects and corruptions in the Episcopal Church, were they as great as you represent them, do not arise from her doctrines or institutions, both of which are pure and spiritual, and calculated to nurse men for the church triumphant in heaven. By what rule of justice are doctrines or institutions to be made accountable for the misconduct of those who *neglect* or *pervert* them? Was not the Jewish Church of divine origin? And yet there was a time when there were only "seven thousand" among the people of God "who had not bowed the knee to Baal." Your reasoning would justify us in considering the idolatry and corruptions of the Jews as proofs that the Church of God was not among them, that "the statutes and ordinances of the Most High" were unnecessary, because they were ineffectual. Causes, for which neither her doctrines nor institutions are accountable, there have been, in abundance, to produce whatever laxity or faults may be discoverable in the American Episcopal Church. For a long, long period she was a depressed church. Destitute of Bishops, which those in power, listening to the representations of her opponents; refused to allow her to enjoy, the orders of her ministry were incomplete, and her "candidates were forced to seek for ordination in another hemisphere, at a great expense; which many of them were but ill able to bear. From the same defect she was without union, without government. But her unhappy situation in this respect was, by the late revolutionary war, much aggravated. Many of her clergy were attached on principle to the church and monarchy of Britain; and not caring to concur in the measures which were taking to effect a separation from her, abandoned their cures, and returned for refuge to what had till then been termed the mother country. Death removed others. Great numbers of parishes became vacant; and the service of the church therein utterly suspended." Even the smiles of the civil power in the Southern States proved the bane of the church. The civil authority "secured to the clergy their salaries during life,

independently of *good behaviour*." There were no Bishops to advise, to admonish the clergy, or to exercise discipline over them. The dangers and difficulties attending the obtaining of a foreign ordination discouraged natives from entering into the ministry. And thus the independent salaries of the clergy were only a lure to foreign clergymen, who, with some *honourable exceptions*, were generally adventurers destitute of talents, of piety, or of zeal.\*

Flourishing as other denominations were under discipline completely organized, the Episcopal Church, at the close of the American war, stripped of some of her best clergy, of numbers of her laity, of the accustomed means of support, without government, without discipline, was left a depressed, and, alas! from various causes, a *divided* church. It is a matter of astonishment and gratitude that she did not sink under the difficulties, the distractions and divisions which assailed her. But she was that "vine which the right hand of the Lord had planted," which he beheld with compassion, and resolved to "visit." Adversity had not extinguished that evangelical liturgy which, like a sacred fire, kindled at the altar of heaven, shed the light of truth amidst the dark night of error, and diffused warmth amidst the chilling damps of lukewarmness. Yes! to this liturgy, under the blessing of God upon the exertions of those who in her adversity did not forsake her, she in a great measure owes her preservation. May the daughter of Zion shake herself from the dust, and shine forth in the garments of "glory and beauty!"

Your arguments against the Episcopal Church from the supposed defects of her ministers and members, are founded on a principle contrary to daily, universal, and uniform experience, that the *profession of truth is always* connected with corresponding *fruits of holiness and virtue*. This principle furnishes the infidel with a weapon with which, at one blow, he

\* The above statement is taken in substance from an ordination sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. ANDREWS, of Philadelphia, whom I revere as one of my earliest and most affectionate guides and preceptors.

may demolish the Christian system. He has only to prove that the lives of many Christian professors are disgraced by numerous follies and vices ; and, according to your reasoning, it follows, that the system of Christianity cannot be true. A system of divine origin and power would produce in its professors more holy fruits ! This reasoning overlooks the obvious and universally admitted distinction between a *cause* and its *advocates*, between *principles* and the *conduct* of those who profess them, between the *theory* and *institutions* of a church and the *practice* of its members. To contend from the defects and vices of the *latter*, that the pretensions of the *former* are unfounded, outrages common sense and justice ; and is a mode of reasoning which, when wielded by the infidel, proves that Christianity itself is founded in error.

Consider the tendency of your reasoning in the mouth of one of the society of Friends or Quakers. Whatever may be the failings of individuals of this sect, yet as a society they certainly exhibit, in no ordinary degree, the fruits of love to God and benevolence to man. And what ! may the Quakers exclaim, are all these in the estimation of an arrogant Priest to pass for nothing, and are we to be accused of “laying the axe at the root of entire Christianity,” because we “set aside the distinctive character and authentic call of the gospel ministry ?” \* Can this ministry and the sacraments administered by them be so essential in the Christian church, that the rejection of them “lays the axe at the root of entire Christianity,” when we who discard them, evidence among us as much of *pure and undefiled religion*, as they do who connect the ministry and sacraments with the system of “entire Christianity ?” Can these sacraments and ministry be indeed of God ? Would then he who is the “Author of every good and perfect gift,” and “without whom we can do nothing,” enable us who reject his institutions, to exhibit any of “the fruits of the spirit.” No, says the Quaker, we put these “champions” of a *hireling priesthood* “upon

\* Christian’s Magazine, Introduction, p. 5.

their trial before the bar of scripture, of conscience, and of public criticism. We demand the evidence of the superiority of their practical religion, both in quantity and quality. If they cannot nor will not answer, no rational man will be at a loss for the reason."\* Truly, Sir, I must insist on your settling this important point with the Quaker, before I can allow you to assail Episcopalians with the weapons which he successfully wields against yourself.

Again, Sir: Place your reasoning against Episcopalians in the mouth of the Methodist, or lay preacher. Then you denounce,† not only for "endeavouring to set aside the distinctive character, and the authentic call of the gospel ministry," but for "proscribing from the ministry all talents"—and "for drawing many after their pernicious ways," by addressing themselves to the avarice of one class, to the conceit of another, to the credulity of a third, and to the ignorance of all." What! may the Methodist and *lay preacher* exclaim, does this arrogant "lettered gownsman" pretend that "learning" or an external commission is necessary to "divine teaching?" We put him on "his trial before the bar of scripture, of conscience, and of public criticism." Let him produce the "seals of his ministry;" and let us see whether his *learned* labours have been more blessed to the conversion of souls than have been the labours of hundreds who, destitute of what he considers an "authentic call," destitute of "human learning," have relied only on the *call of the spirit*, on *divine teaching*.

Alas, sir! alas, sir! Your reasoning against the principles of Episcopalians from the deficiency of *vital godliness* among them, is a two-edged sword as destructive to your own cause as to theirs! In the hands of the infidel, the Quaker, and the Methodist, or lay preacher, it may be wielded to prostrate Christianity, to subvert all positive institutions, and to

\* This is the language of your boastful challenge to Episcopalians. *Christian's Magazine*, p. 103.

† *Christian's Magazine*, p. 4.

cut up by the roots the Christian ministry and the visible church.

Every thing good in man proceeds from the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit. We shall, therefore, be compelled to acknowledge, that this Holy Spirit, evidenced by some of its fruits, dwells with many who maintain great and fundamental errors ; nay, with many who by “endeavouring to set aside the distinctive character and the authentic call of the gospel ministry,” “lay their axe at the root of entire Christianity.”\* Do we, therefore, make void the positive institutions of the Almighty ? God forbid ! He who “worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,” may dispense with his own institutions, and depart from the settled order of the economy of grace. It may please him to bless the *sincere* and even the *hypocritical* exertions and labours of those who reject the *positive institutions* and laws of his house. “He giveth not to man an account of his doings.” The inefficacy of these institutions on the lives of many, and the piety and holiness which others exhibit who reject them, may be trials of our *humility* and *submission* ; tests whether under these inauspicious appearances we may not arrogantly exclaim, “To what purpose are these positive ordinances ? We may be pious and virtuous without them !” Ah ! let not the humble believer be seduced by this specious but arrogant reasoning from the “ways of God’s appointment.” It was this proud spirit which urged our first parents to violate a *positive institution* of the Almighty ; which lost them paradise, and the fallen angels the glory of their “first estate.”

\* Introduction, p. 5.

## LETTER XV.

SIR,

THE second number of the Christian's Magazine displays the same arrogant ostentation of superior learning, the same contempt of the talents of the advocates of Episcopacy, the same confident assertion on which the first number relied for success. It seems it was unpardonable arrogance for Mr. H. to assert that the "Author of Miscellanies has with great industry collected together *all* the arguments against Episcopacy." What! to pretend to be acquainted with *all* the arguments "on either side of a question," without having perused the profound and luminous elucidations of the Editor of the Christian's Magazine! Verily—this was a presumption which merited chastisement. Now, sir, I still am disposed to suspect, that you will not have adduced a single argument to which the Author of Miscellanies has not directly or indirectly alluded—so that I shall be justified in saying in a loose and general sense (and really I did not expect the Editor of the Christian's Magazine would condescend to quibbling on words) that he had "collected together all the arguments against Episcopacy." That he has traced them in all their bearings on the subject, and placed them in their most formidable array, I have no where asserted. And yet, sir, at present there is no prospect that your attack will obtain for you greater honours than those which he has merited.

"Mr. H. has taken some pains to invite an examination of his scholarship"\*—"We entirely acquit Cyprian of the charge of sinning against knowledge."† Mr. H. the Layman, and Cyprian are the "*unlearned* advocates of the hierarchy."‡ Presumptuous men! luckless was the hour when ye provoked the wrath of the *learned Dr. M.* that paragon of talents, who, glowing with intuitive knowledge,

\* Christian's Magazine, No. II. p. 188.

† p. 203.

‡ p. 205.

can exhaust any subject without reading a page or consulting an author!

But, sir, (I am almost afraid to expostulate with you lest I should provoke your heavier vengeance) it was not quite *fair*, it was not quite *generous* and *manly* (*modesty* I know is an unfashionable virtue) to overwhelm by your dazzling talents three humble individuals who have reached only the first steps of the temple of science, whose vestibule you have long since passed, whose sacred recesses you have already explored. At our period of life, eight or ten years may make an important difference in the sum of attainments. And, through the good providence of God, we can look forward to at least as many years before we shall equal the present age of our giant censor. When as many suns have rolled over our heads as have shed their collected glories upon him, perhaps (alas! is not the hope presumptuous?)—perhaps (despair almost arrests my pen)—perhaps we may equal in erudition the *profoundly learned* Dr. M. At present we lay claim to sufficient learning and talents to defend the Episcopal Church against any adversary. Even the sneers, and frowns, and haughty airs of the Editor of the *Christian's Magazine*, we can summon resolution to smile at, and to disregard.

Is it then come to this? Is the cause of Presbytery to rest on "mere *names* which are of little real value?"\* What is the Episcopal argument from scripture? Episcopalians contend that from the first there have been three grades of the ministry. Christ, the Apostles, and the seventy; then the Apostles, Bishops Presbyters or Elders, and Deacons; then Timothy and Titus, and others who succeeded the Apostles in the powers of ordination and government, Presbyters and Elders called also Bishops, and Deacons. Your assertion is manifestly incorrect, that there are in scripture only two grades. But how does the Episcopalian prove that there was a grade of the ministry superior to those called in scrip-

\* Mr. M'LEOD'S Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 30.

ture Presbyters or Bishops? By a simple and unerring rule. The *powers* vested in them and their acts of *jurisdiction*. Timothy and Titus had the powers of ordaining and governing the clergy vested in them; they had jurisdiction over Presbyters. There is no proof that the Presbyters possessed these powers or exercised this jurisdiction. To a man who contends "for the *thing* and not for the name,"\* "who has no turn to serve,"† one would think that when we prove that certain ministers, by apostolic institution, possessed powers and exercised a jurisdiction which we have no proof that another set of ministers possessed or exercised, there is the most satisfactory evidence that these last have no claim to these powers.

To this first grade of the ministry, ecclesiastical usage has applied the title of Bishops. And hence it is contended by the opponents of Episcopacy, that the grade of ministers now called Bishops, cannot be superior to Presbyters, because in scripture these titles are applied to the same office! Episcopalians prove that there is a grade of ministers superior to those styled Presbyters or Bishops in scripture; and because to this superior grade a title was afterwards applied usually given in scripture to the second grade, it is contended by the opponents of Episcopacy, that these two grades are the same! Are not Episcopalians justifiable in styling this "miserable sophistry?" Do you not admit the justice of this appellation, when, after a laboured argument of several pages to prove the identity of those *now* called Bishops and Presbyters, from the indiscriminate application of these titles in scripture, you acknowledge that "if the Episcopalian establish his claim" of a superior grade "by scriptural *facts*," "the choice between victory or defeat" "in the contest about scriptural titles," "would not be worth a straw to either party?"‡ You applied your ingenuity and your learning through several pages, to prove that there could not be a

\* Mr. M'LEOD'S Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 18.

† Christian's Magazine, p. 191.

‡ p. 106, 107.

superior grade to Presbyters, because the title bestowed by Episcopalians on this grade is used in scripture indiscriminately with Presbyter. And yet you concede, "abstractly considered, there is no inconsistency between our doctrine of the identity of Bishops and Presbyters, and the Episcopal doctrine of a superior grade."\* What is this then but acknowledging that you have been insulting the understandings of your readers, by endeavouring to blind them with "miserable sophistry?" You demolish by the above concession your own superstructure. You give up as untenable an argument which you tell us "men of singular learning, candour, penetration, and force of mind, have considered as altogether unanswerable."† And so have men of singular learning, candour, penetration and force of mind, considered as altogether unanswerable the arguments in favour of transubstantiation and the supremacy of the Pope.

I might scorn, therefore, to notice any further an argument which you have yourself laid in the dust. But "some amusement may be derived from remarking" how just and lucid are your views of it.

The Layman and his colleagues never contended that the titles *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were not generally applied in scripture to denote the second grade of the ministry. But they contended, what is plain as "the sun shining in his strength," that these words, whether considered as terms denoting authority, or titles affixed to particular officers, were capable of general application, and were not *inseparably* and *immutably* fixed to any particular officer; and that hence we could not infer, merely from their *application*, that the persons to whom they were applied, either at the same period or at different periods, were the *same officers*. For example—The title *Bishop*, as denoting an *overseer*, is applied both as a term of authority and a title of office to "Jesus Christ the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls," denoting his *authority* and *office* as spiritual *overseer* of the souls of his people.

\* Christian's Magazine, No. II. p. 207.

† p. 189.

But it would surely be madness to conclude that Jesus Christ was on a level with *overseers*, or Bishops of churches. In like manner the term *Presbyter*, in its general and official signification as a *ruler*, may be and has been applied to the Apostles, who were divinely inspired governors of the church, as well as to inferior officers. The term *Deacon*, in its signification as a *minister*, may be and has been applied to Jesus Christ and his Apostles as well as to inferior ministers.

“But when have these terms a *particular* and when a *general* signification?” They have a *particular* signification when they are applied to officers vested with peculiar and distinct powers and jurisdiction. The distinction of officers is to be known with certainty not from their names, but from their *powers* and *jurisdiction*. This was the position of the Layman and his associates; a position which all your ingenuity cannot subvert. It is not true, as you assert, that objects are correctly distinguished from one another by their *names*. The *titles* of officers alone will not accurately distinguish them. The distinction can be ascertained only by determining their *powers* and *jurisdiction*. For example—A man may hear the people at New-Haven and Princeton talk of *the President*. But from the name, from the official *title* only, he would be at a loss to know whether they meant a civil or a literary officer. Nor would his doubt be wholly removed (were he a stranger in our country) if they should name President JEFFERSON, President DWIGHT, or President SMITH; for the official *titles* only would not determine the precise nature of their offices. He must be informed of their respective *powers* and *jurisdiction* before he can understand precisely the difference between them.

Let us take one of your own words. “*The Assembly*,” according to you, is an *official title*. But the title alone, applied to any body of people, would not accurately distinguish them. *The Assembly* may be applied to a collection of persons at Albany, from the different counties; to a collection of Presbyterian ministers at Philadelphia, from the different

Presbyteries; or to a collection of people at any place for the purpose of enjoying the amusement of dancing. Now, had a stranger to your sacred character been told last winter that Dr. MASON had gone to "the ASSEMBLY," he might as well have concluded, from the *name alone*, that you had gone to "the Assembly" in the city of New-York, to partake of the amusement of dancing, as that you had gone to "the Assembly" at Albany, to obtain an act of incorporation for the Associate-Reformed Church. I make this remark on one of your examples, merely for the sake of illustration. The application of the official term, "the Assembly," to different collections of people; would not enable a stranger to form an accurate idea of their nature. This he cannot know until he is informed of their respective *powers, jurisdiction* and *objects*.

In like manner "the Bishop" is an *official title*; but when applied to ministers it will not designate them accurately and precisely. For example—We have Dr. MOORE, *the Bishop*, and Dr. MASON, *the Bishop*. Now, a stranger would conclude you were both the same officer. But I presume you would be soon anxious to satisfy him that your *powers* and *jurisdiction* were very different; that you were the scriptural Bishop of a single *congregation*, and he was the "unscriptural and anti-Christian" Bishop of a *diocese*. In like manner, the titles *Elders* and *Deacons*, applied to officers in the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches, would not accurately designate them. For in the *Episcopal* Church an *Elder* has the ministry of the word and sacraments; but in the *Presbyterian* he is only a help to the minister in the administration of discipline. A *Deacon* in the Episcopal Church, like the Deacons in scripture, both preaches and baptizes;\* but in the Presbyterian his *sole* business is to look after the poor. "The sum of the whole is," that we are to ascertain the distinction and

\* Philip the Deacon, converted and baptized the Samaritans (Acts viii. 6.) And the Deacons were set apart to this office by a solemn ordination.

precise nature of officers not by their official titles, but by their *powers* and *jurisdiction*. Applying this plain proposition to the officers of the Christian church, we find that there is one grade of officers, in which were *Timothy* and *Titus*, who possessed the powers of ordination; and another grade of officers who did not possess these powers, but only the ministry of the word and sacraments. We concede that this second grade are commonly called Elders, Presbyters, or Bishops:\* yet we contend that from comparing their *powers* and *jurisdiction* with those of *Timothy* and *Titus*, it is apparent that they were of an inferior grade, and did not possess the powers of ordaining and governing church officers. We contend that the title *Bishop*, applied to them as *overseers* of their respective flocks, is not so incommunicably and inseparably fixed to them, as that it cannot be applied, as it has been, by ecclesiastical usage, to the superior grade who succeeded *Timothy* and *Titus* in their powers of ordination and government, and who are *overseers* over the clergy and congregations. As Mr. M'LEOD very justly observes, "names are of little real value." "It is for the *thing*, not the name we contend." We prove from their respective *powers* and *jurisdiction*, that there is a grade of ministers with the powers of ordination and government superior to ordinary ministers of the word. To contend that, because a *title* of general application is transferred from the second grade, to whom it is usually applied in scripture, to the first, they must originally have been the same office, is too absurd, one would think, to be advanced by any man of common sense. Suppose it

\* On this point you avail yourself very liberally of Dr. HAMMOND'S singular opinions. Dr. H. was confessedly a very *learned* and distinguished divine. But great learning is no security against hypothetical systems. Dr. H. it is well known, maintained some singular opinions on other subjects besides that of Episcopacy. No cause or system is responsible for every defence which its advocates may choose to set up. Remember, you chide (and astonishing too that you should *gently* chide) Mr. M'LEOD *for not selecting his proofs from scripture with equal care.*\*

\* Christian's Magazine, No. I. p. 108, 109.

should be found expedient, without altering the powers of those now called Bishops in Episcopal Churches, to alter their titles, and to call them *superintendents*, and to give the term Bishop to the second order as *overseers* of congregations; would any man in his senses contend, contrary to fact, that because Presbyters are called Bishops, they originally possessed the powers which those formerly called Bishops in Episcopal Churches possessed? This possible case proves the fallacy of your position, that "change of *names* presupposes change of *things*."\* This is not necessarily true in theory; nor is it so in fact. Various circumstances may render expedient a change of names while the things themselves remain the same. There are now three grades of ministers in Episcopal churches, with appropriate powers, called Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. Might not the church change the *names* of these officers without in any degree changing their powers?

"Change of *names* presupposes change of things!" This is not true *in fact*. The original name of the second order of the ministry was *Elder* or *Presbyter*. Yet these names in the Church of England, and in the Episcopal Church in America, have grown into disuse, and the official title of those originally called Presbyter is now *Priests*. Here is a change of name without any change in the office.† As the names of things are often changed while the things remain the same, so, on the contrary, *things* are often changed and not their names. Of this one single familiar instance shall suffice. The supreme legislative assembly of the United States bears now the same name, *Congress*, which it did before the adoption of the present constitution. And yet under the old confederation, the *Congress* consisted of but

\* Christian's Magazine, No. II. p. 211.

† A familiar instance of *change* of names without change of things may be given which will strike every person. The names of certain streets in the city of New-York have been changed since the Revolution, while the streets have remained the same.

one house of delegates elected by the legislatures of the States, and possessed but few general powers. Under the new form of government, the Congress consists of two houses, one of them chosen by the legislatures and the other by the people of the several States, and their powers are much enlarged. Here was a material change of the *thing* and no change of the name. Before you indulge in positive and dogmatic assertions, it will be well for you to reflect whether they are supported by facts. Your laboured reasoning about names is almost entirely fallacious.

There was an adequate reason for the change of the titles of the first grade of the ministry. They succeeded the *Apostles* in their *ordinary* apostolic powers of ordination and government; but in order that the name Apostles might be applied by way of pre-eminence to the twelve, it was natural and proper that the first grade of the ministry should assume some other title. And the title Bishop is applied with as much propriety to them who are overseers of the clergy and congregations, as to Presbyters who were overseers of a smaller portion of the flock.

Yes, sir, you grant all that Episcopalians can wish when you concede that, "there is no inconsistency between the doctrine of the identity of Bishops and Presbyters, and the Episcopal doctrine of a superior grade." And how are we to determine whether there is a superior grade to those called Bishops and Presbyters in scripture? Surely, by ascertaining that there is a distinct grade of officers with superior *powers* and *jurisdiction*. But you assert that there could be no such superior grade, because there is no official title determinately applied to them in scripture. Strange indeed! We prove that Timothy and Titus and others possessed the power of ordination, which we do not find the other ministers possessed, and the power of jurisdiction over the ministers and people; and yet we are not to believe these palpable *facts* because we do not find any names determinately applied to these officers. What! could not the

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Apostles institute officers and leave their title to be fixed by ecclesiastical usage? It is not improbable (as many of the Fathers assert, your favourite JEROME among the number) that this first grade of the ministry were called *Apostles*, as succeeding to the *ordinary* powers of the apostolic office. As the chosen companions of our Lord, and witnesses of his resurrection, the Apostles were *extraordinary* officers, and could have no successors. But in their ordinary powers of *ordination* and *government* (powers necessary in all periods of the church,) they were to have successors even, according to the promise of their Lord, "to the end of the world." Your sneers at *Cyprian* for considering *Epaphroditus* as an *Apostle*, might have been spared, had you considered that your favourite and learned JEROME considers him as one of the superior grade of ministers, afterwards called Bishops, and founds his assertion on the text to the Philippians, in which he is called their "Apostle."\*

It is not necessary, however, for the advocates of Episcopacy to prove that the title *Apostles* was given to the first grade of the ministry. For your argument that there can be no grade of ministers in scripture answering to those now called Bishops in Episcopal Churches, because there is no title annexed to them in scripture, like many of your other arguments, may be made to recoil upon yourself. You assert "that Presbyterian government is the true and only one which the Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed in his word."† "Congregational Assemblies or Sessions," and "particular and general Synods," are constituent parts of Presbyterian government, and of course prescribed by God in his word. But on searching the scriptures we cannot find in them any such titles of ecclesiastical bodies as "Sessions," or "general or particular Synods;" and indeed

\* Jerome observes (Com. Gal. i. 19,) "By degrees, in process of time, others were ordained Apostles by those whom our Lord had chosen, as that passage to the Philippians shows, "I supposed it necessary to send you Epaphroditus your Apostle."

† Constitution of the Associate-Reformed Church, p. 475.

there are no titles whatever annexed to ecclesiastical bodies supposed to correspond with the *Sessions* and *Synods* of Presbyterians. Of course, according to your argument, there can be no such bodies of divine institution—and, therefore, the constituent parts of Presbyterian government must be of human invention. Really, sir, (to use the language you apply to us) I am afraid “drowsiness” is not peculiar to the advocates of Episcopacy, and that even the vigorous Dr. MASON sometimes claims “the indulgence of a nap.”

But further, sir, that fundamental doctrine of the Christian church, the existence of three persons in one God, has no name applied to it in scripture. Therefore, according to your reasoning, it cannot be revealed in the word of God; it is of human invention. Here you side with “those great luminaries of wisdom, Dr. PRIESTLEY and his compeers.” They urge exactly the same reasoning against the doctrine of the Trinity that you do against Bishops. That such a fundamental doctrine should have no name affixed to it in scripture (they contend,) “so far surpasses all the powers of belief, that the proof of its existence is almost if not altogether impossible.” No, sir, we prove the doctrine of the Trinity in the same way that we prove the existence of the first grade of the ministry. From the *acts* and the *powers* of the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost*, we are justifiable in concluding that they are equal with God the Father; and to this doctrine of three persons in one God, we give the name of *Trinity*, which is no where found in scripture. From the *acts* and *powers* of Timothy and Titus we conclude, that they are a superior grade of the ministry, and to them and their successors we give the title of Bishops.

The truth is—the distinction and the nature of scripture officers are to be known certainly from their *powers* and *jurisdiction*, and not from their *names* merely. And for these obvious reasons, which Mr. M'LEOD has assigned with equal justice and candour: “Names are of little real value.” “It is for the thing, not the name we should contend.”

“Truly, sir, should you go on as you have commenced, I do not think that the Christian’s Magazine is “likely to fill the” advocates of Episcopacy “with any very great alarm.”

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## LETTER XVI.

SIR,

To disprove bold charges requires many more words than to make them. On the score of conciseness, therefore, you certainly have the advantage over me. It has been my object minutely to expose the injustice of your charges, and to exhibit a general view of the principles of Episcopacy, and of the arguments in favour of it.

The obnoxious colours in which you represented my principles in the first number of the Christian’s Magazine, justify me in contrasting your religious system with my own, that the public may judge whether your principles or mine most merit the charge of being “arrogant” and of “deep-toned horror.”

You observe, “Whether a man shall go to heaven or to hell, will be decided by another inquiry than whether he was an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, or an Independent.” On your principles the inquiry is fixed to this point, “whether he is one of the elect.” On your principles the decree of God sends some to heaven, and others to hell. Take the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death;”\* and this predestination, having no respect to their use or abuse of the means of grace, is absolute and unconditional. On your principles *guilt* is brought on all mankind, not merely (as anti-Calvinists main-

\* Confession of Faith, chap. iii. sect. 3. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the standard of doctrine of all the Presbyterian Churches.

tain) by those sins which, through divine grace, it was in their power to avoid, but for a sin which they never committed, for the sin of their forefather Adam; and for this sin they are doomed to everlasting woe.\* From this everlasting woe none are, none can be saved, but a certain portion, selected in a sovereign manner, from this condemned mass of mankind. While all mankind in their fallen state must have been the objects of the compassion of the Father of mercies, yet (according to your system) for a select number only did he provide a Saviour. For them, and for them only, did his eternal Son sojourn in the veil of flesh, travail in agony of spirit, and pour out his soul unto death. They only in God's sovereign time are seized by irresistible grace, justified, sanctified, saved, without the possibility by any misconduct of forfeiting a salvation which a divine decree ensures to them, to which irresistible grace infallibly conducts them.† The "hinging point" on which their salvation turns, is the everlasting decree of God.

As for the rest of mankind, the "many" who go "the broad way to destruction," according to the Calvinistic system, they remain for ever under the curse of Adam's sin. Equally helpless, equally related, as the creatures of his hand, to the Father of mercies, with the elect objects of his favour, yet on them the Redeemer never cast one look of compassion; for them he never shed one drop of blood; to them he never dispenses one spark of effectual grace.‡ And

\* Confession of Faith, chap. vi. sect. 6.

† "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto." Confession of Faith, chap. iii. 6. "Those whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." Confession of Faith, chap. xvii. 1.

‡ "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." Confession of Faith, chap. iii. 6.

yet in this state, without a Redeemer, without any interest in his atonement, any participation of his grace, of course without the possibility of being saved, they are to receive the offers of salvation! Mockery of their wretchedness!! According to this system, thousands, millions, myriads of hapless mortals will clank the chains of everlasting torment, will roll in the fires that never will be quenched, and will be gnawed by the worm that never dies, for the sin of another, for the sin of Adam; from the imputed guilt of which, left as they were by the decree of God, without the atonement, without the grace of the Redeemer, they possessed no means of escape.\* According to this system, the sinner dies, the anticipated torments of hell racking his soul, and its groans bursting from his lips, because God, for the “manifestation of his glory,” shut him out, by a decree of reprobation, from the number of the elect.† According to your sys-

\* “The guilt of this sin” (the sin of Adam) “was imputed—to all their posterity.” Confession of Faith, chap. vi. 3 and 6. From this guilt of Adam’s sin, from this *eternal death* to which all mankind are doomed in consequence of it, “none are redeemed by Christ, &c. but the elect only.” Confession of Faith, chap. iii. 6. For “the rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to *pass by*, and to ordain them to *dishonour and wrath* for their *sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice.” Confession of Faith, chap. iii. 7. “Every sin, both *original* and actual, doth in its mere nature bring *guilt* upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, &c. and so made subject to death with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and *eternal*.” Confession of Faith, chap. vi. 6. For the sin of Adam then those whom God “passed by” were ordained to dishonour and wrath.

† “Quos Deus *preterit*, reprobat”—says CALVIN. Institutes, lib. iii. xxiii. 1. “Whom God *passes by*, he *reprobates*.” And CALVIN further says, “But those whom he appointeth to damnation, to them we say by his just and irreprehensible, but also incomprehensible judgment, the entry of life is blocked up.” Calvin’s Institutes, lib. iii. xxi. 7. CALVIN styles the decree of God, by which “the fall of Adam did wrap up in eternal death so many nations with their *children* being *infants*, without remedy”—*horribile decretum*, *horrible* decree. And well he might. Any school-boy who can turn over his dictionary knows that *horribilis*

tem, "*elect* infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved;"\* and as "none are saved but the elect only,"† those infants dying in infancy who are not of the elect, are not saved.‡ Alas! then, even those endearing infants, blessed by our Lord himself as the emblems of innocence, are perhaps destined to be torn from the cherishing bosom of their mothers, and to be sent to people the regions of the damned! Ye mothers! does not the bare possibility that the engaging prattlings of your lovely babes, may tomorrow be changed into the groans of fiends, plant a dagger in your bosoms more agonizing than the vengeful dart that drinks up the current of life!—My heart shudders! Righteous God! who ever delightest in mercy! shall man transform thee into a demon like an insatiate Moloch, delighting in the perdition of the creatures of thy hand? No, thou holy, thou just, thou merciful Parent of the universe! the system

has the signification of *awful* as well as *horrible*, and as I understand that it is your intention to take me to task for translating it *horrible*, and to overwhelm your readers with a flood of learning to prove that this is not its most common acceptation, I think it proper to state that TOPLADY has anticipated you on this subject. He adduces many examples in which *horribilis* is used in the acceptation, *awful*, *mysterious*, *wonderful*, and contends that CALVIN used it in this acceptation in the sentence referred to. I take the liberty, however, of contending, that the plain, fair construction of the whole passage implies, that CALVIN deemed this decree *horrible*, abhorrent to the reason and feelings of man: but this is very different from believing that the decree was so *in itself*, to the *divine mind*. However horrible the decree might appear to human reason, CALVIN, believing it to be from God, would also believe it to be just and good. In a translation of the Institutes of CALVIN, made and published under the sanction of Presbyterian divines at Glasgow (1762,) I find the words *horribile decretum*, translated *terrible decree*. I have no objection that my translation should be so corrected, and instead of calling this decree a *horrible decree*, let it be styled a TERRIBLE DECREE!

\* Confession of Faith, chap. x. 3.

† Chap. iii. 6.

‡ Had it been the intention of the Confession of Faith to include all infants dying in infancy among the number of the elect, the section would have run in some such form as the following: "All infants dying in infancy, as they are of the number of the elect, are regenerated and saved," &c.

which clothes thee with these terrors is disclaimed by reason and by thy holy word.

I am no more compelled to account for many pious and learned persons having embraced this system, among whom, it is not to be denied, have ranked some eminent divines of the Church of England, than to account for many pious and learned persons having embraced the doctrine of transubstantiation. Many doctrines may be, must be incomprehensible: but the divine Author of our senses and our reason will never require us to believe what palpably contradicts them. I pretend not to judge for others, or to measure, by my own, the capacity of their minds. But for myself I must confess, that I could more readily be brought to believe that a being of infinite power could change bread and wine into the body and blood of a man, and their properties and sensible qualities still remain the same; than that an infinitely just and merciful God would bring men into existence, and without any regard to the use or abuse of the talents and means of grace entrusted to them, doom them by an absolute decree to everlasting perdition. With respect to the moral aspect of these doctrines on the attributes and character of God, there is no kind of comparison. Transubstantiation violates none of the moral attributes of the Deity; absolute predestination strips him of every attribute that can render him the object of admiration and love.

View now, sir, the system of religious truth embraced by those whom you denounce for holding positions of "deep-toned horror." The sin of Adam has entailed on his posterity a corrupt and depraved nature. Though this corruption or original sin in "every man," "deserves God's wrath and damnation,"\* yet none will be condemned for it but those who refuse the means of redemption from its dominion, and from the guilt of their actual sins. For the adorable Son of God has made an atonement for the "sins of the world," "has tasted death for every man."† "He came to

\* Art. IX. of the Church.

† Heb. ii. 9.

be a lamb without spot, who should take away the *sins of the world.*"\* "He made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."† Thus all men, redeemed by Christ, are placed in a state of salvation, in which their eternal destiny will depend only on "the things done in the body." The grace of God alone begins, carries on, and perfects the spiritual life. God's *preventing* "grace is given to every man to profit withal" ‡—given to every man in sufficient degree to enable him to work out his salvation. But the scripture has told us that we may "resist this grace," "do despite unto it," "quench it," and provoke God to take "it from us." While, therefore, we believe that God worketh in us by his spirit, that "we may have a good will, and worketh with us when we have that good will,"§ we are also to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." The condemnation, therefore, of the impenitent will be, that they "resisted and grieved God's holy spirit," that they "would not come unto him and receive life."|| Where the name of Christ is not proclaimed, his atonement extends, his grace operates, and leads to his everlasting favour those "who having not the law, yet do the things contained in the law." Where the glad tidings of salvation are proclaimed, men must be

\* Art. XV. of the Church.

† Communion Service.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 7.

§ Art. X. of the Church.

|| From the above view it appears that the Articles of the Church do not maintain the peculiarities of Calvinism; that they do not maintain that *all but the elect will be damned for Adam's sin, as well as their actual sins*; and that *Christ died for the elect only*. They do not maintain that the *grace of God works irresistibly, that man is passive in conversion, and that the elect can never finally fall away from grace*. The article concerning predestination merely decrees the determination of God to bring "those whom he hath chosen in Christ" "to everlasting salvation." But it does not assert, as the Calvinistic Confessions of Faith do, that this choice was made without any "foreknowledge" of the use which they would make of the means of grace and salvation. It is also entirely silent on that important article of Calvinism, that God *passed by the rest of mankind, and ordained them to dishonour and wrath*.

united to him by a lively and holy faith. The blessings of his salvation are visibly sealed to believers by the ordinances of the church; and these ordinances are to be administered only by those who are "called of God, as was Aaron," by a valid external commission. On these principles all are saved through the power of the Redeemer's blood, who, through his grace, seek to know and to do the will of their heavenly Master. Can a system more charitable be required of me? Let the public judge. Let candour and justice look on your system and on mine, and pronounce sentence. Let them say which of us holds positions of "deep-toned horror."

It may be said that there is the same difficulty in the anti-Calvinistic as in the Calvinistic system: that, on the anti-Calvinistic system, as the Almighty *foresaw* that numbers of the human race would finally perish, with this foreknowledge creating them, he decreed their perdition. But, on the Calvinistic scheme, he decreed this perdition, not because he *foresaw* they would *incur* or *deserve* it; he decreed it without any respect to his foreknowledge of the use which they would make of the means of grace.\* He provided for them no Saviour, no atonement, no effectual grace, without which they could not be saved. On the anti-Calvinistic scheme, he provided for them a Saviour, an atonement, and the influences of divine grace; and, therefore, the ground of their perdition is, that with the most powerful motives and adequate means they freely "chose darkness rather than light." On the Calvinistic system, as no atonement was made for them, and no grace given to them, they could not be saved. It is the *decree*, and consequently the will of God, that they should not be saved. On the anti-Calvinistic system, as both an atonement and means of grace were provided, they would have been saved if they had not resisted this grace and contemned this atonement. The difficulties in the anti-Calvinistic system arise only when we attempt to investi-

\* Confession of Faith, chap. iii. 5.

gate the incomprehensible subject of the divine foreknowledge. It is of importance to observe, that they do not arise from the system itself. Every thing in it is luminous, lovely and benevolent—the Deity providing a Saviour for all his fallen creatures, conferring his grace on them all, so that if they perish, it is because they “would not come unto him, that they might have life.” But the difficulties in the Calvinistic scheme are essential to the system itself. For in it we find no Saviour, no mercy, no grace provided for any but the *elect*, absolutely, unconditionally elected.

The temple of Calvinism, dark and dismaying, rears its gloomy spire amidst perpetual clouds, rolling in blackness. From their lowering bosom burst forth, with frightful glare, the awful peals—UNCONDITIONAL SALVATION TO THE ELECT—PERDITION TO THE REST OF MANKIND. From its dreary courts, traversed with fearful step by crowds of hapless sinners, is excluded the light of hope. Only the elect are admitted into its *holy place*; where reigns, not the Father of mercies, the *God of love*, whose throne is goodness, whose sceptre is mercy; but an ARBITRARY SOVEREIGN, whose throne is power, whose sceptre is vengeance, and the arm that wields it, caprice. For while a few select favourites are exalted to his favour, the great mass of mortals, “not more sinful than they,” are consigned to perdition. Ah! how appalling the “confused noises” that burst from this frightful dome. The proud triumphs of the favourites of a resistless sovereign, who are made, in spite of themselves, the subjects of his favour, mingling with the groans of the *reprobate*—groans embittered by the reflection that the Saviour died not for them, that the grace “without which they could do nothing” was never extended to them—O my soul, into the secret of this council come thou not; unto this assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.

I state the views under which Calvinism appears to my mind. I mean no injurious reflections on those who maintain its peculiar doctrines, and who of course do not view

them in the same light with myself. Many persons who profess the peculiar tenets of Calvinism, are my particular friends; endeared to me by their piety, their worth and talents. But of these doctrines, by whomsoever maintained, I must say—LET THEM PERISH. In my humble judgment, they are hostile to the spirit of the Christian system, to reason, and every amiable feeling of the heart. They cherish the prejudices of the infidel against a religion which contains doctrines so gloomy and terrible. They often sweep with the tempests of despair, the bosom of the timid and humble Christian; while they buoy up with presumptuous triumph many who, above all others, ought not to “be high-minded, but to fear.” Do they ascribe all the work of man’s salvation to God? “Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the praise,” should indeed be the language of every Christian before his Creator and Saviour, from whom alone he derives his being, the means of grace and forgiveness, and the hope of glory. But God cannot be honoured by the service of those whom, by an irresistible decree, he compels into his service. Man, through divine grace, is free to accept or to reject the mercy offered to him. And, therefore, he is commanded to “work out his salvation, for it is God who worketh in him to will and to do.” By a *voluntary* service through grace, he glorifies God; and not by a service to which a *sovereign* decree devotes him, to which irresistible grace impels him.

An imperious principle of self-defence has called forth these letters. I had hoped to have been permitted to enforce on Episcopalians the principles of their church without provoking the censure of others; while I left to them the same right which I claimed to myself. In confining originally my remarks on Episcopal principles to books addressed to Episcopalians and calculated for their use, I surely observed the dictates of prudence and decorum. The errors which you and others conceived to be contained in these books, might have been sufficiently counteracted by private conversation,

by instructions from the pulpit, by manuals of faith and order published for your own people, of which, if there had been no personal reference to me, I should not have felt myself compelled to take notice. But another course has been chosen. My principles have been attacked in the newspapers. My name has been bandied on the tongues of the thoughtless, in disgraceful alliance with *fool* and *bigot*. And to sink me yet lower in the pit of infamy, you represent me as holding principles which consign to perdition the brightest saints that ever adorned the church on earth, or will chant forth the hallelujahs of heaven. I am denounced, condemned, and stretched on the rack of proud and overbearing criticism, in a periodical publication, from the privilege of defending myself in which I am proscribed; for the circulation of which unexampled pains have been taken; and which hundreds will peruse who will never see my vindication, or who will turn with horror from any production of one who makes the only alternative "Episcopacy or Perdition."

But all this and more will not intimidate me from defending the principles of my church. I mean not indeed to disdain the opinion of the world. I boast not of that insensibility which never glows at the soothing voice of merited commendation, nor sinks under the frown of just censure. Precious to my soul have ever been the friendship and the love of the virtuous. I view the chief happiness of this world as consisting, next to the joys of religion, in the delightful intercourse of friendship and affection. My feelings are particularly wounded by your system of denunciation, because it tends to close against me the bosoms of many in whose hearts I should wish to find a place. But there are principles which I should ever desire to be paramount in my soul—the *love of truth*, the *love of duty*. God grant that I may ever feel that sacred independence which will never sacrifice these principles to considerations of personal interest or feeling. I strike out into no new paths. I advocate no new principles. I arrogate no new discoveries. THE GOOD OLD PATH

in which the Fathers of the primitive church followed their blessed Master to martyrdom and glory; in which the venerable Fathers of the Church of England found rest to their souls—is the path in which I would wish to lead, to a “rest eternal in the heavens,” myself and those that hear me.

In the remarks which I have addressed to you, I have considered you only as the *Editor* of the *Christian's Magazine*. And in this character only, my principles compel me to be hostile to you. I should despise myself did I not cherish the sentiments of sincere respect for a Scholar of distinguished attainments, for a Divine eloquent, zealous and exemplary in the discharge of his high functions. Contest like that to which the *Christian's Magazine* calls me, suits not the temper of my soul. I think it should have been “made of sterner stuff.” Were I not supported by that consciousness of rectitude; above all, by that sacred zeal for the cause of truth, which case the soul as with adamant, I would lament the hour, when, in the innocence of my heart, I ushered to the world a performance, concerning which I only indulged the humble hope that it might tend to revive in some degree, among Episcopalians, the spirit of primitive piety, truth and order. That performance, though addressed to Episcopalians, and designed for them, has excited in others an ire which no explanations can moderate or appease. It has excited an ire which repels with disdain, that charity which embraces in her wide-extended arms the sincere inquirers after truth, by whatever name distinguished. Until that performance brought me forward, a mark for the arrows of the vengeful polemic, I had passed the “noiseless tenour of my way.” The seats of a college, from which I had but a few years emerged, had cherished in my soul a love of science, an ardent thirst for truth, but had not furnished me with that breast-plate of apathy which defends the bosom from those keen darts of scorn, invective and denunciation, that are hurled on the combatant in the field of controversy. The bosom of friendship on which I had there reclined;

“the sweet converse of friends,” among whom it is my pride to number the writers who, under the signatures of a Layman and Cyprian,\* defended the Episcopal cause, among whom it is my pride to rank one who bears a Christian name different from my own,† had not prepared me to smother that sensibility which, leaping over every dissonance of opinion, fixes with ardour and tenderness on the virtuous and kindred spirit. But my feelings have beguiled me into a strain which some persons may deem idle, at which others will perhaps raise the sneer of scorn. I stop. It were folly, as the conscientious advocate for truth, it were disgraceful to mourn, that her holy interests have urged me into the field of controversy. My banner is, EVANGELICAL TRUTH, APOSTOLIC ORDER. Firm and undaunted, though the spear raised against me be tremendous as that with which Goliath of Gath threatened to crush the stripling David, I must summon to the defence of my sacred cause whatever powers nature (alas! as yet indeed too little cultivated by the laborious hand of study) has bestowed upon me; whatever ardour, whatever zeal nature has enkindled in my bosom. It were vain to rest here. I must arm myself by imploring the grace of him whose glory it is to make often the humblest instrument the victorious champion of his truth.

*Pro ecclesiâ Dei, pro ecclesiâ Dei.* Like the venerable prelate ‡ who chose these words as the standard of his wishes, his duties, his labours, his dying prayers, every minister should be supremely devoted to the CHURCH OF GOD. When you, Sir, survey the heresies that deform the fair face of the Zion of the Lord, the schisms that distract and rend asunder her members, I feel confident that from the heart you will join with me in the following prayer of one § who, having sung in the church on earth its sweetest strains, now rests in hope of chaunting forth from the highest

\* T. Y. H. Esq. and the Rev. Mr. B.

† Rev. Dr. K.

‡ Archbishop WHITGIFT.

§ Bishop HORNE.

seats of the church triumphant “the praises of God and of the Lamb.”

“Come, O thou divine Spirit of peace and love, who didst reside in the soul of the holy Jesus, descend into his mystical body; and fill us, who compose it, with all his heavenly tempers; put an end to heresies, heal all schisms, cause bitter contention to cease, abolish every enmity, and make us to be of one mind in thy holy city; that so, ‘peace being within her walls,’ her citizens may give themselves to every profitable employment, and ‘plenteousness’ of grace, wisdom and truth, as well as of earthly blessings, may be in all her ‘palaces.’ Thus will she become a lively portrait of that place which is prepared for them that love one another, where, with one heart, and one voice, they shall ascribe ‘salvation and glory to God and to the Lamb.”

In offering this prayer, I trust we can meet at the footstool of the throne of grace; and in the spirit of peace and amity which it inspires, I subscribe myself

Your obedient servant,

J. H. HOBART.

*June, 1807.*



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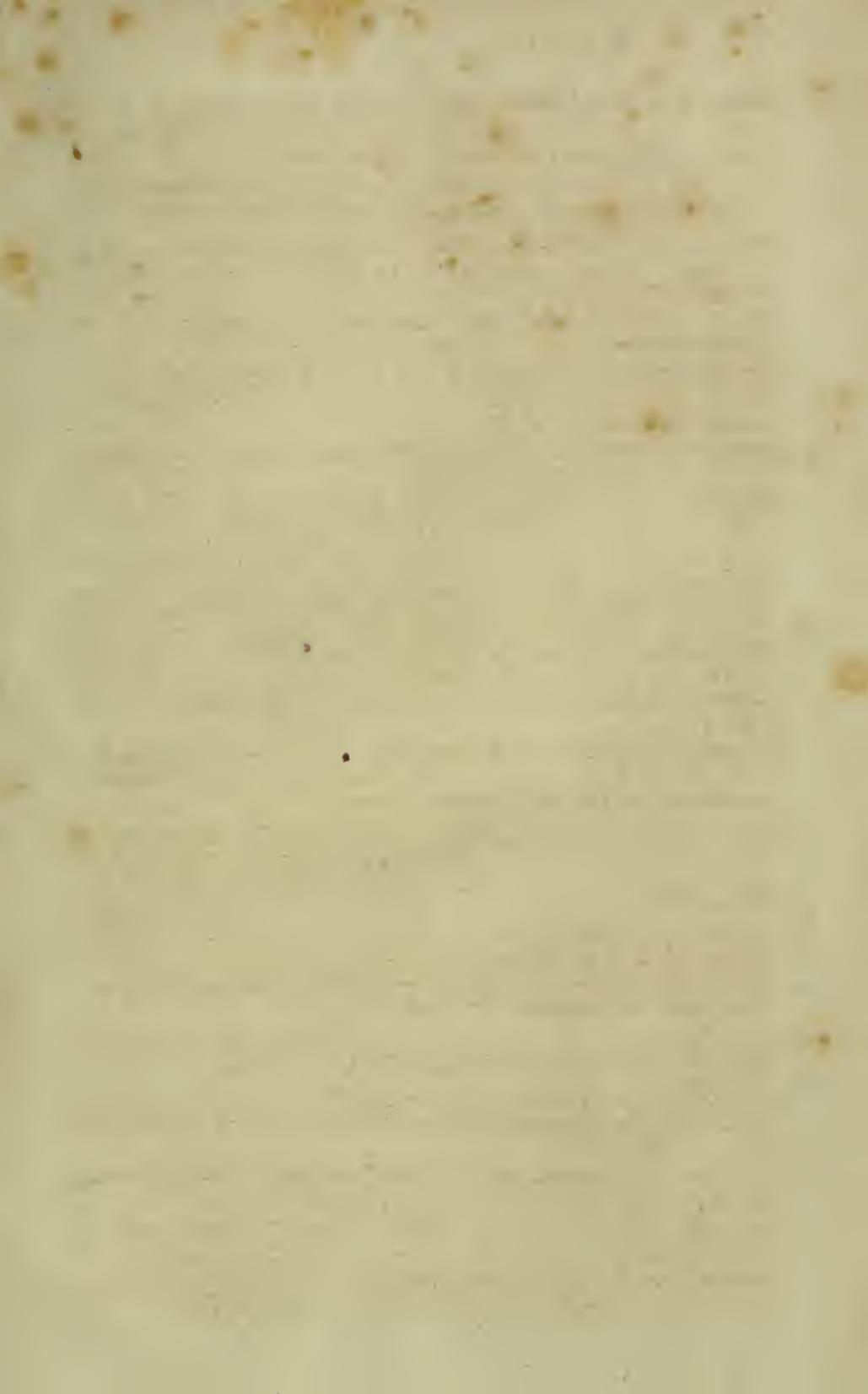
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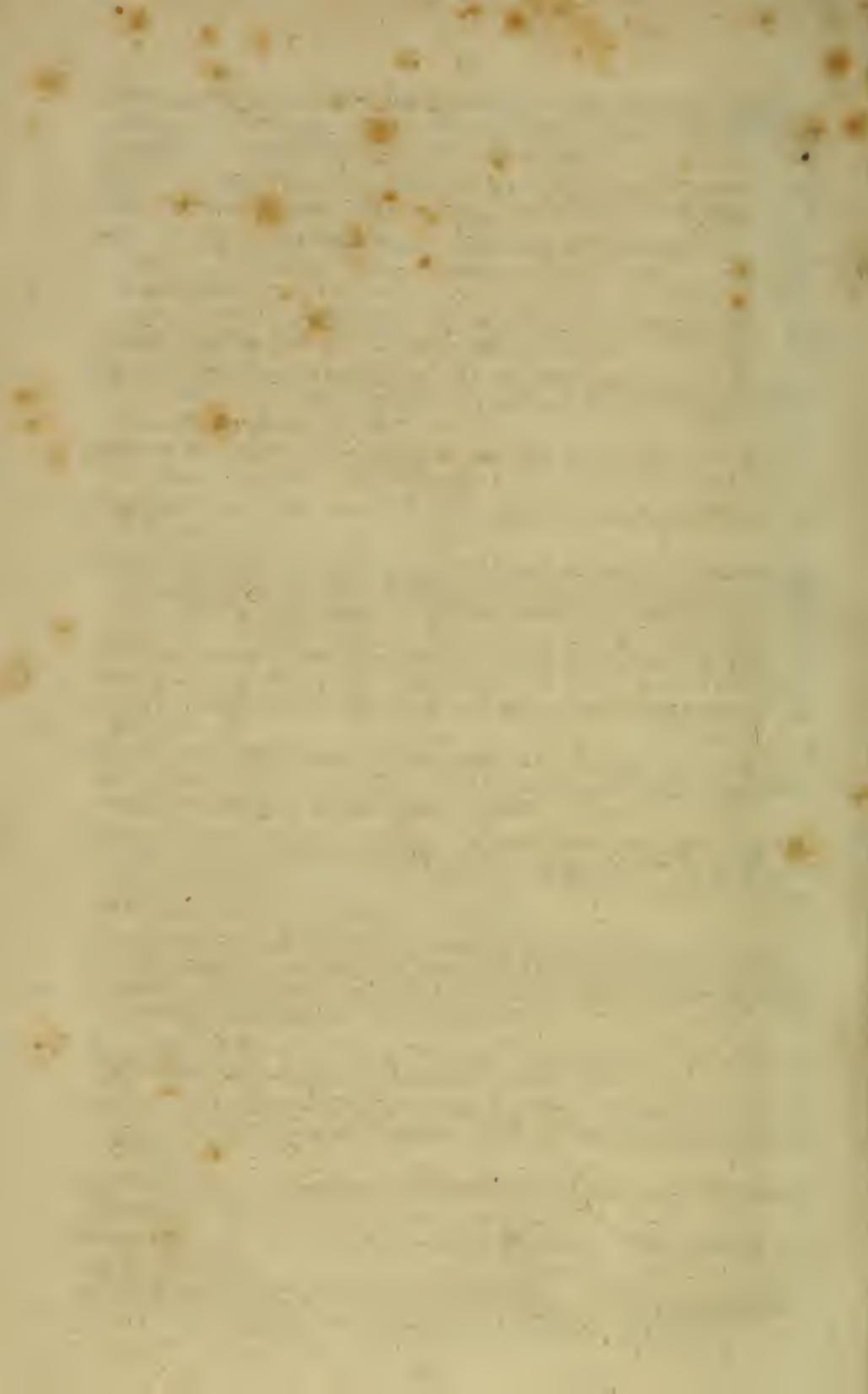
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