

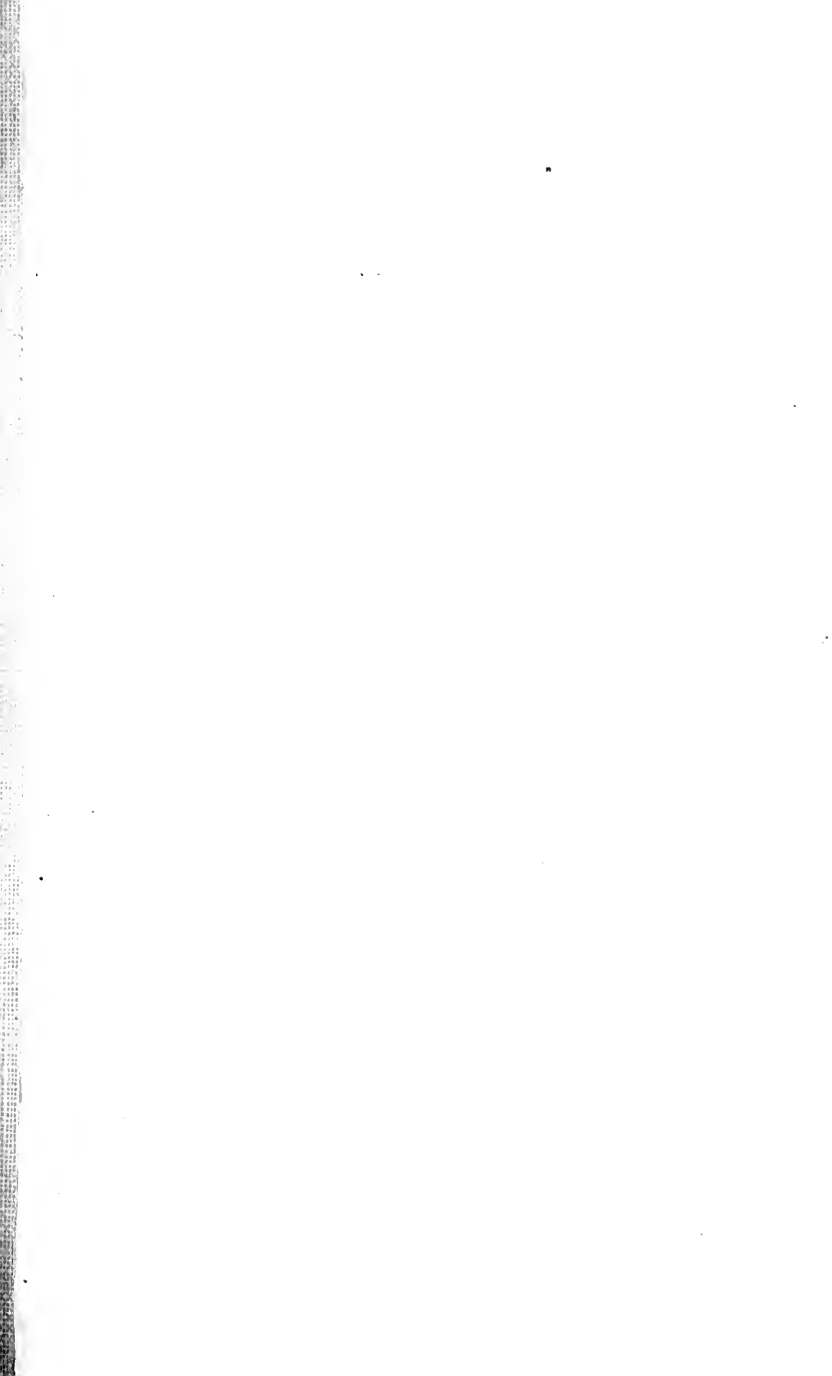


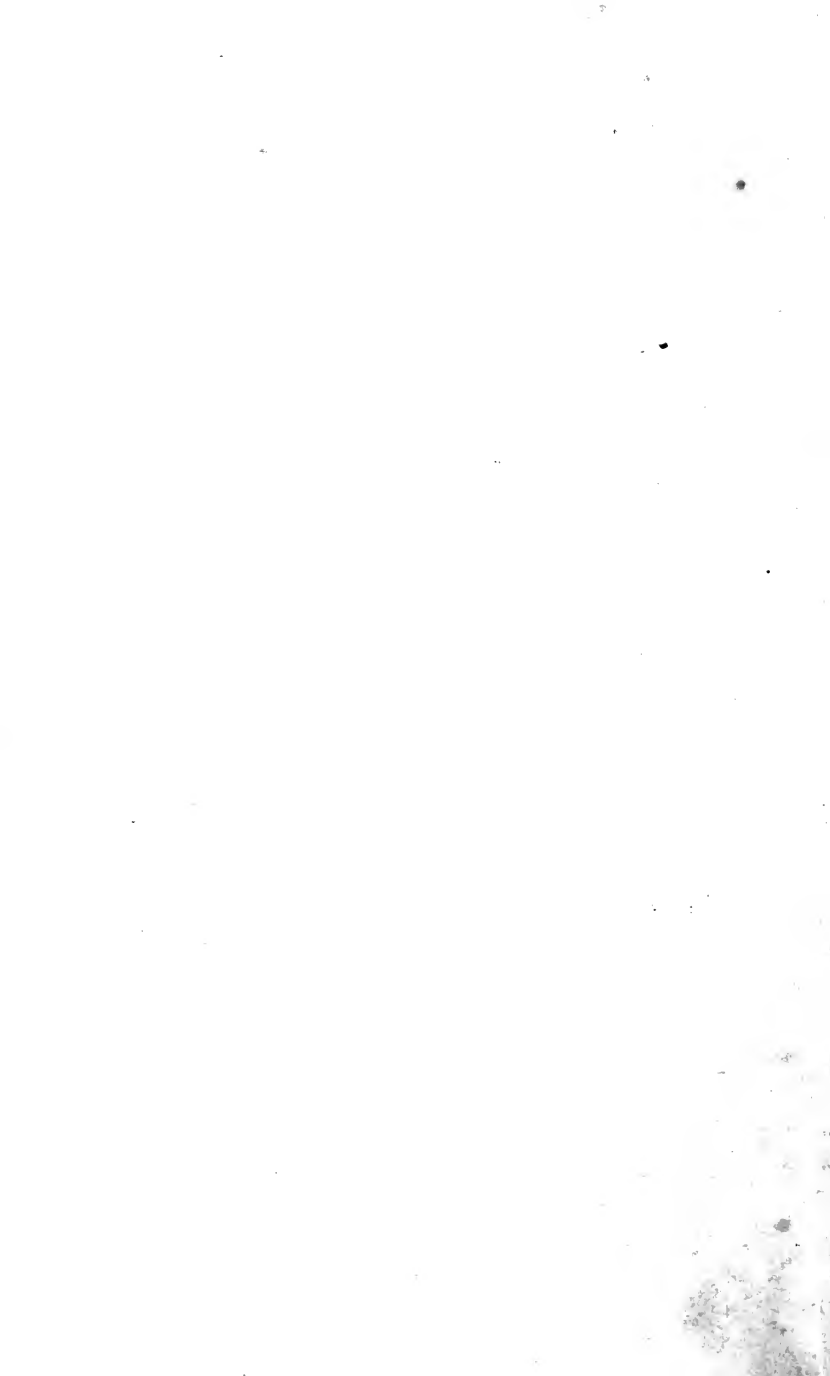
LIBRARY

OF THE

Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

(BV 002 .D3 □ 71
S Barrett, Alfred, 1808-1876.
J Essay on the pastoral office
as a divine institution in





ESSAY
ON
THE PASTORAL OFFICE,

AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION IN THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST:

CONTAINING
A PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE MANNER IN WHICH
IT IS EXERCISED AMONGST
THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS.

BY ALFRED BARRETT.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
AND SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER ROW.

—
1839.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

LONDON:
JOHN WILSON, PRINTER, RED-CROSS-STREET.

TO THE
MINISTERS OF THE WESLEYAN CONNEXION,
IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
OR WHEREVER THE GREAT HEAD OF THE CHURCH HAS ASSIGNED
THEIR SPHERE OF LABOUR,
THIS SMALL VOLUME,
INTENDED TO REMIND THEM OF THOSE GREAT PRINCIPLES
WHICH HAVE ORIGINATED AND
MAINTAINED THEIR EXISTENCE AS A BODY OF CHRISTIAN PASTORS,
AND BY THEM TO
PROMOTE THE SPREAD OF VITAL GODLINESS,
IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR UNWORTHY BROTHER IN THE MINISTRY,
THE AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE subject of the following Essay has occupied, at various intervals, the meditative hours of the Author for some time past, though amid the numerous and onerous duties of the Wesleyan ministry. There was no intention originally, on his part, of giving the meditations thus begun their present publicity and form. A call, however, being made for a work of this kind, he was induced to enter upon the task of preparing the volume, more with a view of improving himself in ministerial principles, than with the hope of attaining success, or of being able to supply a public desideratum; but as the hand of divine Providence has unexpectedly placed the Essay in its present position, it is offered to the church with unaffected humility.

The Author has not the vanity to suppose that he has cast any new light on those subjects which

are connected with the discussion of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Independency: he has, however, as far as the infirmity and obstinacy of human prejudice will allow, endeavoured, irrespectively of them all, to deduce from the Scriptures what he honestly believes to be the mind of the Holy Ghost, in reference to the various points discussed. If he has failed, it has not been for want of sincere attention, but of ability. Should the work prove the means of quickening, in the least degree, the ministry in general, and of diffusing, among the Wesleyan societies and congregations in particular, sound views on the pastoral charge, and its relations,—thus promoting the extension, spirituality, and peace of the church universal,—the great and desired end will be gained.

A. B.

TROWBRIDGE, *June 28th*, 1839.



THE

DONOR'S ORIGINAL ADVERTISEMENT.

IN conformity with a notice which has already been made public through the medium of "The Watchman" newspaper, the sum of One Hundred Pounds is hereby offered, as a premium for the best original Essay which shall be written on the Scriptural Character, Duties, and Claims of the Pastoral Office, with special reference to the manner in which that office is defined and exercised in the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion.

In explaining the motive which has led him to make this offer, the Donor begs to state, that his particular object is to obtain such an Essay as may be put with advantage into the hands of young Wesleyan ministers, and will be calculated also to disseminate, through the Wesleyan societies at large, scriptural views on the above-named subject. With this view he ventures to suggest, that the Essay should embrace such topics as the following:—the divine institution of the Pastoral Office;—its perpetual necessity in the church of God;—the necessity, nature, and evidence of a divine call to the sacred function;—the persons to whom the formal appointment to the office of right belongs;—the nature and importance of the Pastoral Office;—the qualifications required in the Christian pastor; the tone of mind he is called to preserve, and the Christian spirit which he is bound to maintain, both in his public ministrations and general conduct;—his peculiar responsibility to Christ for the purity, peace, and extension of the church; and the authority and influence, in spiritual affairs, which he must possess, to enable him faithfully to acquit himself in his responsible office;—the provisions necessary, or expedient, to prevent an injurious

or improper exercise of the pastoral authority;—the claims of the pastor, as such, to the esteem, affection, and prayers of the people for whom he labours, and to their contributions for his pecuniary support. It is further suggested, that in discussing these topics with regard to the Pastoral Office as exercised among the Wesleyan Methodists, the writer should state the arguments which show the agreement of their system, as to the constitution and regulation of their ministry, with the word of God; and its consequent adaptation to the glorious purposes for which the Christian ministry was at first established. The practical uses to be derived from the whole subject, in its various branches, should also be carefully brought out, and applied both to the people and to the ministers of the Wesleyan community.

The following are the conditions on which it is proposed that the premium shall be awarded :—

1. Each Essay submitted for the premium shall be fairly written out, in a large and easily legible hand, and forwarded before the 1st of January, 1838, addressed to “The Watchman” Office, Fleet-Street, London.

2. The Essays shall be sent in some other hand-writing than that of their respective authors; and each Essay shall be accompanied with a sealed note, inclosing the author's name, to be opened only after the adjudication of the premium.

3. All Essays received previously to the date above-mentioned shall be finally committed to the judgment of the Rev. Dr. Bunting, the Rev. Edmund Grindrod, and the Rev. John Scott, who shall be requested to pronounce their decision in the month of June following.

4. The Essay to which the premium may be awarded shall be published, as soon as may be convenient, under the direction of the Donor and Adjudicators of the premium; and the profits of the first edition shall be applied to the support of the Wesleyan Theological Institution. In case of any subsequent editions, the copy-right and profits shall belong to the author.

THE
AWARD OF THE ADJUDICATORS.

IN “The Watchman,” of February 22d, 1837, a premium of One Hundred Pounds was offered by JOHN FERNLEY, Esq., of Manchester, for the best original Essay on the Scriptural Character, Duties, and Claims of the Pastoral Office, with a special reference to the manner in which that office is defined and exercised in the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion; the Rev. Dr. Bunting and the Rev. Messrs. Grindrod and Scott, being appointed Adjudicators. In consequence of numerous unforeseen official duties, which subsequently devolved upon Dr. Bunting, he was compelled, some time ago, to withdraw from the responsibility which, in this case, had been assigned him. The two remaining adjudicators, deeply regretting this occurrence, and unwilling to decide alone, in an affair so important to all the parties concerned, with the entire approbation of the Donor, requested Dr. Hannah to supply the place of their esteemed friend; and the former, after some hesitation, consented to afford his assistance. Having duly examined the Essays, Dr. Hannah joined with Messrs. Grindrod and Scott in the following decision:—

“Eight Essays have been received, several of which possess considerable merit. In our unanimous judgment, that of which

the REV. ALFRED BARRETT is the author is justly entitled to the prize: to him, therefore, we do accordingly award it. We deem this very excellent production well adapted to promote the valuable design of the Donor, and doubt not that it will be extensively read by the lay-members as well as by the ministers of our Connexion.

(Signed,)

“ EDMUND GRINDROD,

“ JOHN SCOTT,

“ JOHN HANNAH.

“ *London, Feb. 12th, 1839.*”

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF DIVINE INSTITUTION	1

CHAPTER II.

MINISTERS ARE CALLED OF GOD AND HIS CHURCH	26
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH OF GOD AND ITS GOVERNMENT	61
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH FORM OF METHODISM AGREEABLE TO THE SCRIPTURES	103
---	-----

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE, AND ITS RELATIONS	144
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL AUTHORITY, AND THE GUARDS NECESSARY TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF IT	186
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

	Page
THE SPIRIT AND CONDUCT OF A MINISTER OF CHRIST	230

CHAPTER VIII.

LEARNING, A QUALIFICATION FOR THE MINISTRY	280
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLAIMS OF MINISTERS ON THE CHURCH	316
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER'S REWARD IN HEAVEN	351
--	-----

THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF DIVINE INSTITUTION.

“The ministry of things divine is a function which, as God did himself institute, so neither may men undertake the same but by authority, and power given them in lawful manner.

“Religion, without the help of spiritual ministry, is unable to plant itself, the fruits thereof not possible to grow of their own accord.”—HOOKER.

WHEN we retrace the history of the world, it is evident that from the very beginning there has been an order of men consecrated to the service of religion. The patriarchs were not only the chief governors of their respective tribes, but priests also; for they officiated at sacrifices, and engaged in special and domestic prayer. Such were Abraham and Jacob, and the pensive Job. It was when the individual had really become the head of a family, and the occupier of a domain, that he was by com-

mon consent invested with the twofold office; and although the rectoral and religious functions were exercised by the same person, yet the temporal rule which he had was of so simple a character, and was so thoroughly blended with the service which in those primitive times was rendered to God, that he was evidently a distinct and sacred man, and was so regarded by his numerous family. Divine Providence seemed to impress this feature upon the very first portions of society, that there should be amongst the people who were busied in the cares of life, one or more who should make religion a chief study and employment; who should offer prayer, and administer instruction in heavenly and eternal things; and no tribe could be satisfied, or maintain its order, without this arrangement.

Even when the pure faith which Enoch, Noah, and Abraham professed, had been forsaken, and the nations of the earth had fallen into idolatry and crime, the original frame-work of society was still preserved; there was still a ritual, though mysterious; there was still a priesthood, though wicked: the great enemy of man was convinced of the importance of the original design, and therefore furnished the fallen and guilty race with his own distorted copy. The priests of the heathen were sometimes priests only, and sometimes kings as well. With them was the learning and intelli-

gence of the nations, and, consequently, the power also: they maintained, as far as their dark policy could maintain it, the subsistence of society: by enfeebling the people around with ignorance, and by awing them with superstition, they gained a high elevation, and were true servants of their master; and to this day the ruined temples of Egypt, and the mystic tablets which lie crumbling there, tell us of their wickedness and might.

A certain writer, who has lately evinced a great anxiety for the civil and religious liberty of mankind, fixes his eye upon this corruption of the sacerdotal institution; and, following the line of a guilty and idolatrous priesthood down the history of ancient nations, and through the progress of that deep superstition which has arisen in Christianity, he labours to show that the order itself is an evil one, and engenders evil; and that men who are separated especially to minister in matters of religion, necessarily rise against the liberties of the community, and that society could manage its religion far better without them.

If this reasoning were to be adopted, what might we not prove? If Satan has succeeded in depraving the priesthood, it only shows how important an institution it is, if pure; and how subservient to the purposes of holiness. None who believe the Bible, will deny that men are spoken of who do serve Satan in the capacity of teachers of religion, and

that they are called his ministers. Moral power, when under the holy influence of God, is capable of producing the greatest amount of happiness; but when bereft of him, it is only power to blight and to destroy. The very devils had not existed, if they had not once been blessed angels; and that exalted nature, which once made them to be high and happy in glory, now only makes their hell the deeper. That foul example of priestly influence, which heathenish and superstitious nations have displayed, proves nothing against the wisdom of the original institution; but rather shows that it was an archetype, so fair and so good, that nothing was likely to succeed in the world but something which should bear to it a distant analogy.

Aaron, and the Jewish priests, were ordained of God by express and authoritative consecration; and to show that they were most entirely dedicated to the sanctuary, they were not allowed to have any part or inheritance in the lands of their brethren; they lived of the things of the temple, and they were bound to the people by the ties of reverence, regard, and affection. The extreme strictness of the ritual by which they were consecrated, the symbols of spotless purity which they were required to wear, the blameless conduct they were required to maintain, tended to show that the eye of God was over the people; that his ultimate design was their happiness and

holiness; and that therefore, in effecting it, he was careful of the character of those who should act as their ministers. It is sufficient to show what was the divine intention respecting the goodness and usefulness of this class of men, without examining into their actual character and history. The Levitical orders were appointed to minister in that sacred tabernacle which had been designed by the Holy Ghost, and which had been reared by the inspired Bezaleel and Aholiab, and who, in connexion with extraordinary prophets, thus prepared the way for a succession of religious teachers who should be more fully connected with the guidance and operations of the Spirit when the glorious latter house, the Christian church, should be opened. Not that we would be understood to say, that the ministers of Christ are, in the strict and proper sense, to be termed priests, for they have no sacrifices to offer; but that, as a class of individuals who are set apart to a solemn and spiritual work, they bear a resemblance to the priests of old, which resemblance St. Paul recognises in his argument with the ungrateful Corinthians, (1 Cor. ix. 13,) and shows that the claims and circumstances of the two classes are alike. The office of the ministry in the Christian church is instituted by the authority of Christ. The title Christ, or Anointed, implies a threefold function, as may be shown at length by a reference to the sacred writers. Anointing was used in

inducting a person into the prophetic, the sacerdotal, and also the regal office. Christ was therefore Prophet; for Isaiah predicts, when introducing him, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." (Isai. lxi. 1.) And that we may have no doubt as to whom he meant, our Lord applied this declaration to himself, when he said, after reading it in the synagogue, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv. 21.) And Peter shows, in his sermon, that it was the same Christ as was foretold by Moses, when he said, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you;" (Acts iii. 22;) and, in another place, that the unction which Christ received was that of the Holy Ghost: (chap. x. 38:) thus accomplishing the prediction of Isaiah, and showing that the Preacher or Prophet had resting upon him that very Spirit of which his prediction spake. He was Priest; for David declares this, "Thou art a Priest for ever." (Psalm cx. 4.) He was also King, according to the testimony of the same inspired man: "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psalm ii. 6.) Thus Jesus Christ, as Messiah, sustained a threefold relation to the church; and it is in reference to his threefold office that he is called Christ, being its Prophet to teach and reveal the will of God, its Priest to atone and intercede for its members, its King to govern by mild and holy laws. He was

Head over all things to the church. It is in virtue of his former office, that Christ institutes and appoints a living ministry. The prophetic function consists in revealing, confirming, and perpetuating the doctrines which contain the will of God for the salvation of man. No man had seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son declared him; and because he dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and knew the mind of the Father, he was qualified for the task. In order to make known the divine will unto men, he gave unto his apostles the words which his Father gave him, (John xvii. 8, 14,) however deep and enraptured those words might be. This authority to reveal and teach was confirmed by miracles of mercy, and ratified by death: and that it belonged to him to promulgate in all ages the doctrines of salvation, is evident from the fact, that it was his Spirit which was in the prophets, (1 Peter i. 11,) which prophets instructed the ancient church; and that, when ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men, (Eph. iv. 8,) and among those gifts were these, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," which body is the universal church.

Nothing, therefore, can be clearer than that Christ, by virtue of his prophetic function, had power and authority to provide for the diffusion of his own

truth to the end of time ; and this power he exercised by selecting his servants, and appointing them their work. It was after his solemn inauguration and unction, at the river Jordan, that he called the twelve apostles, and sent them forth on their arduous commission ; and afterwards seventy others also. But in neither case was there any prefatory reasoning, to show the fitness or expediency of the requirement : his language is that of calm and irresistible authority : “ Go your ways ; I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Nor had they obeyed long, before the miraculous effects which followed their preaching proved that the commission was divine. During our Lord’s life on earth, they were under his teaching ; and when he spoke of his church as of a household, the master of which was absent, he showed that they, during that absence, were the responsible servants, and subordinate rulers ; administering meat unto all in due season, until the hour when he, the Lord and Master, should return : and if that hour be the end of all things here, (and that it is, the context abundantly proves,) then was the office of minister or steward to be perpetual. He called their attention to a special promise which he made them, and which should be fulfilled on his going away,—the promise of the Holy Ghost, who should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them. Thus he referred

to an invisible, but a divine and ever-present Teacher, who should be with them when they could have his bodily presence no longer; and this prepared the way for those further communications which he made after his resurrection. He then announced, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.) Their mission was, then, subordinate to his own, and a part of the same great design. And further, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) And at the conclusion of the same discourse, he issued his final and comprehensive commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) From this mandate it is evident, first, that the ministry was appointed to all places with equal authority; for the sphere was "all nations." And, secondly, that it was not a temporary appointment, but a permanent one; for the solemn engagement was, that he, by his Spirit, should be with them always, and unto the end of the world. The apostles died, like other men, at no great distance from this period; and therefore the promise

contemplated their successors for ever, whoever those successors might be, and in whatever manner they might be ordained.

There was a divine wisdom in the allotment of different orders of ministers according to time and place, and the exigencies of the world around. "He gave some, apostles." To the Gentiles then existing, and even to the contemporary Jews, Christ sent those who had been called by him in person, invested with miraculous powers and plenary inspiration, to lay the foundation of the church, to complete the system of new-covenant doctrine, and to prove, with indubitable evidence, the divine origin of the whole : but as personal and miraculous vocation was not repeated, the apostolic order, as signifying persons sent by Christ, became extinct after their death; and we are not, with modern enthusiasts, to look for modern apostles. He also gave "some, prophets." To those dispersed Jews who were to be found everywhere, and who read the ancient Scriptures without fully understanding them, men divinely taught by the Spirit were appointed, who explained the written word, and made the Old Testament light to mingle with the New; a service this, which was important likewise to the intelligent Gentiles themselves. He gave others "pastors and teachers:" they were appointed to those who had already believed the Gospel, and who were united in church-fellowship; their work was, as their titles import, to superintend

the household of God, and to communicate continually both instruction and discipline to all its members. Their function, from its very nature, was abiding. Thus the wisdom which provided for the wants of different times and different people was evidently of a superhuman character, and showed the continued and unwearied interposition of the great Head of the church, giving energy and constant life to his own institution.

The Jewish hierarchy beheld the rise of these holy men with wrath and scorn, and felt it hard to learn that the Gentile world was appointed to be saved, and should therefore have a vocal ministry; but so it was. How could those dying men around "call on him in whom they had not believed? and how should they believe in him of whom they had not heard? and how should they hear without a preacher? and how should they preach, except they were sent?" No doubt, then, can remain, as to the divine institution of the Christian ministry, as far as the apostles, and their contemporary labourers who were appointed by them, are concerned: while they lived they acknowledged their responsibility to Christ, and to his church; saying, in reference to both particulars, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," (1 Cor. iv. 1,) alluding no doubt to the parable of Christ before mentioned: and, previous to their death, with minds inspired by the Holy Ghost,

they gave directions for the perpetuation of their ministry. It is impossible they could in this matter mistake the intention of their Lord; for the Spirit which they received was promised "to guide them into all truth." Accordingly, Timothy is advised, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also;" (2 Tim. ii. 2;) and Titus is reminded, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

Thus was provision made for the superintendence and instruction of the church prospectively. In the solemn charge which St. Paul gave to Timothy, at the close of his second Epistle, he not only shows what is the work of an evangelist, but also, by predicting the approach of error and ungodliness in times to come, and by assigning as a reason for ministerial diligence and holiness the prediction that such times would undoubtedly arrive, clearly evinces that the office itself was to be coeval with all time, and should not be abolished until the chief Shepherd should appear; especially as it was to be the great means of perfecting the saints, and edifying the body of Christ.

That the men appointed to follow in the track of the apostles were to be equally with the apostles "separated unto the Gospel of God," is clear from the exhortation, "Meditate on these things; give

thyself wholly to them," (1 Tim. iv. 15,) that is, to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. To Timothy, whom he represents as entering upon a warfare, an admonition is given: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) If St. Paul ever wrought with his own hands, and ministered to his own necessities, and thus engaged in the affairs of life, it was voluntary, and for an especial purpose, as he himself pleaded. All those things which Timothy had heard from his inspired director, relating to the ministry itself, he was enjoined to commit unto others, who would in that case be instructed that their whole selves were to be engaged in the service of Christ. Ministers were therefore to be perpetuated from that time thenceforth; ministers who were separated from earthly things, and who were to be considered as consecrated to the Gospel and to God.

As Christ had predicted that the Holy Ghost should be given to his servants after his ascension, in order to endue them "with power from on high," and that their work should be efficient, it is, finally, of the greatest consequence that we should be satisfied that this did take place. Accordingly, we read of the disciples at the day of Pentecost, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" (Acts ii. 4;) that Stephen was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" (Acts vi. 5;) the same was said of Barnabas; (xi. 24;) and, as the consequence of his

labours under such an influence, "much people was added unto the Lord." And after the remarkable illapse of the Spirit at Ephesus, there were such results as to warrant this note of admiration, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (Acts xix. 20.)

This accompaniment of the heavenly influence was to be the standing test of the true ministry. That good thing which was committed to Timothy, he was exhorted to keep by the Holy Ghost: he was the seal of Christ to their vocation, and the constant pledge of his approval; and wherever in after-years results like those spoken of in the sacred narration were realized, the official and ministerial character of those who were the acting instruments in these delightful scenes of employment was recognised.

Among those who in modern days have denied that it was a prospective plan of Christ and his apostles to have men separated to the work of the Gospel, and supported by the offerings of the people, the members of the Society of Friends, so called, stand most prominent. Their main objections have been met and replied to in the foregoing observations: and when they would further state that the internal teachings of the Spirit render a living guide and pastor unnecessary, we would quote against them the Lord himself; who, after assuring the pensive band around him that the Spirit should testify of him, observes, "YE ALSO shall bear witness, because ye have been

with me from the beginning." Their vocal instructions were not to be dispensed with because the Comforter was given: he rather was intended to qualify them for the work, and to co-operate with the truth which they declared. Although it may be admitted, that the circumstances of the world are now somewhat different, yet the moral aspect of man in his natural state is the same: the need he has of the twofold call of the Spirit and the Bride, arises from his circumstances as a sinner. Besides, we are positively told, faith cometh by hearing; and how can men hear without a preacher? as the apostle himself asks. The Spirit was intended to act, as has been shown, in conjunction with the publication of the Gospel, and not independently of it: and if there were men from the beginning who were accounted overseers of the flock of Christ's disciples, we have warrant to say that it was the Holy Ghost himself who made them so; (Acts xx. 28;) and the authority of his servant Paul to say too, that to supply those men with all needful temporal things, was a matter not of benevolence, but of equity and right.

There is yet another class of persons who have adopted opinions similar to those mentioned above, but who place their objections on a different ground. These are they who are, professedly at least, jealous of the liberties of mankind, and who view with extreme suspicion every thing which wears the semblance of temporal or spiritual authority, however it

may be defined and guarded. This is an unhappy state of mind, and renders any one incapable of examining in a serene and humble manner the Scriptures of truth on the subject. Distorted views of the rights of man will never be rectified but by prayerful submission to the decisions of God; for in them alone the true relations of all creatures are exhibited, and the rights of each, in consistency with the rights of the whole. Persons who are thus devoted to an illusory and unreal freedom assert, that in the present state of Christianity, ministerial powers may be exercised well enough by men in every rank and condition of life, whatever other temporal employment they have, provided their intelligence be equal to that of the people among whom they live: but the ministerial office, as we explain it, exhibits a distinction of men to whom certain duties and rights belong, and to them exclusively, let what will be the mode of their appointment. It exhibits, so to speak, a little inclosure, separated from the great secular domain, and no one can pass within but those of certain character and conduct: it warns away the unholy at the entrance, like the inscription upon the ancient temple. This is the ground of suspicion,—the recognition and embodying of a peculiar class: and if an appeal to the Bible be useless as to the propriety of this, we have not much hope in appealing to reason. So long as the pastors of Christ's church are sanctified men, (and may the day never dawn

when they shall be otherwise!) so long the sacred office will be viewed by very many with envious eyes, because it is connected with a privilege and honour not open to all: and would that the misguided could know, that there is a sorrow belonging to it as real and incommunicable as the distinction itself! If the ministry, however, be a monopoly, so is heaven. It belongs exclusively to the sanctified; and, as far as it is possible, the rule of admission into the latter, must be applied to the case of the former: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." (Rev. xxi. 27.) Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rose against Aaron and his sons, because they had a privilege above the rest of the congregation, even though they had no temporal inheritance; but the awful miracle which overthrew and engulfed them in the act of their sin, shows to all ages that God will guard an institution which he himself has established. Let the ordeal of scrutiny be rigorous when the question is tried, "Is such an one called of God and of his church?" but when it is settled, and such an one is chosen, let him, without envy or surmising, take his pastoral crook, and act as an under-shepherd in subordination to Christ the Lord of all.

Having, as we think, established from the Scriptures the divine institution of the office, and its intended perpetuity until the end of time, we may now briefly show that it is suited to the circumstances

of man, when scripturally enlightened reason itself is judge.

1. It is suited to our state of moral trial. We assume that the world as it is, and including all the unevangelized portions of it, needs an effectual, ever-repeated publication of the truth. This no one who holds revealed religion will deny. If, then, there be not a standing human ministry, to proclaim the Gospel where it is not known, and to maintain its doctrines where it is, the lack must be supplied by constant miraculous interposition. Angels might suddenly unveil themselves among us, and with deep eloquence declare the will of God and the Gospel of Christ; but unless they were understood invariably and exactly as Bible truth is understood, and unless the whole coincided, the very circumstance of listening to a messenger from heaven, would tend to shake the New-Testament system; for it would tend to a conflict of evidence. An awful curse is registered against an angel himself if he should preach any other Gospel than that which Paul preached. Besides, when moral evidence respecting divine things is presented to the mind, so as to form a medium for our trial, the constant recurrence of visible signs and wonders would not be according to the character of that government which God exercises over us. We walk by faith, and not by sight; and faith, if victorious, is rewarded: but it cannot be exercised where its object is confused by continued miracles;

for not only might the unity of the truth be destroyed by its being variously understood, but signs from heaven, and even messengers again and again returning, might be considered and treated as signs and messengers no more. A voice might speak from the temple of God, it is true; but silence is imposed upon it, until it shall be heard to say, "It is done," (Rev. xvi. 17,) and when every island shall flee away, and the mountains are not found. Until then, a human ministry best agrees with the probationary character of this our earthly state, and not one carried on by unbodied spirits; for if men "hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.)

2. It is recommended by having sympathy on its side. In preaching the Gospel, it is necessary to refer to the inward miseries which sin has introduced into the human heart. Who could do this so well as they who have experienced them? It is necessary to pierce into the very depths of feeling and passion, and to detect every manifestation of the carnal mind, in order to show how grace can sanctify and save. Who are best fitted for this work of scrutiny and exposure? Are not men, who themselves undergo the process? These things in an angel's sermon would be mere idealisms,—things supposed and believed, but not understood; but in a man's they would be attended by authority

and force, because suggested by deep experience. Who “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”*

The great High Priest is represented as eminently qualified for his profession by being touched with the feeling of our infirmities: this was the bond of union between him and the sinners he came to save, —his human sympathy, his fellow-feeling; he could not have been the Priest he was without it. And shall we not admire the same feature in the pastoral institution of Christ? Men should preach unto men; for it is the language of heart to heart: and the heart is what is contended for by God on the one hand, and the enemy on the other.

3. It opens new streams of happiness. A true Christian ministry cannot be exercised without success in some degree; and where there is success, there will be joy in every city. If a sinner is saved, he is made happy; but the joy is not confined to his own bosom: like the mystic waters of Jerusalem, it flows two ways, and the instrument is gladdened by it as well as the receiver. No happiness is so pure or so deep, as that which arises

* The sacerdotal office is executed here upon earth, but is classed with heavenly things, and deservedly so. For neither man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any other created power, but the Paraclete himself, hath arranged this institution, and counselled men while in the flesh to imitate the ministry of angels.—Chrysostom, *De Sacerd.* Hohler's Trans.

from a consciousness of having contributed to the eternal good of a human being. A relation arises between the servant of Christ and his flock, which is more fruitful of exalted affections than any worldly relationship, because it is not only heavenly but endless. Spiritual children are not only the pastor's crown and rejoicing now, but also will be at the coming of the Lord Jesus, and consequently for ever and ever. That must be a wise and divine plan which makes such provision for an increase of moral happiness.

4. Because it furnishes an example of the influence of the laws of Christ as Mediator. In secular society law is made to prevent evil, and arms itself against the offender with terrible sanctions. But the laws of Christ are suitable to his redeeming character; for, having in them holiness and mildness blended, they promote the welfare of every true member of his kingdom. Where shall we look for the effect of these laws but in the church? and how there, except there be those who are appointed to administer them? Where they are allowed to have the fullest operation, so great is the peace and joy which follow, that the ministry carries on its face the sign of its divine commission.

5. Because it conduces to the welfare of the community. All who admit that men are benefited by Christianity, must admit that they are benefited by the ministry; for ministers are presumed to pos-

sess its spirit and power; and, being placed in a public position, every word they utter, and every thing they do, has an influence upon the world around. The sphere of every one of them is like the surface of a stone-stricken lake: concentric circles are expanding around, and from time to time, to an indefinite distance; and if each be an eminently good man, they are circles of goodness, which thrill into each other; the calm of spiritual apathy is disturbed; men are called from their undue attention to earthly things, and led to think on things eternal.

Nothing tends more to felicitate human society than when a considerable portion of Christ's servants are permitted to mingle with the secular part thereof, and to infuse their habits of sacred thought and feeling into all families within their reach. The same reasoning will show how beneficial they are to a nation. Glowing descriptions are found in the writings of the prophets, of the peace of those nations among whom the Gospel prevails. The true ministers of the Gospel, then, by their prayers and labour, yield a portion of that peace even before the millennium: just as the first-fruits are beautiful and acceptable, though only small compared with the harvest. History has shown, that because of their near connexion with the community, their influence through the public mind has reached the seat of government; and there being legitimately felt and considered, it has returned back again in

the form of law; and O, were they all holy men, how might that law be imbued with the spirit which has just been described!

So far have we endeavoured to prove that the pastoral office was instituted by Christ; and that it is eminently suited to the moral wants and exigencies of man as he now exists, and as he shall exist to all ages. Whatever is human we know is imperfect; and, therefore, in the ministry itself we have had many instances of moral frailty. Sufficient sanctifying grace may not have been obtained to subdue every unholy temper in many of the servants of Christ; and errors of judgment may have often been committed by them; yet, as far as they have acted by their Master's law, they have been as productive of good to the church and the world, as fountains are productive of water. Leaving the apostles in that heaven, into which they doubtless entered after they finished their course, let us look along the ministerial line. There were Ignatius and Polycarp, martyred at the evening of a spotless and laborious life:—Athanasius, who adored his Saviour as God over all, even against the world:—Chrysostom and Basil, whose ministry was full of Christ, and rich in evangelical unction; insomuch that once it was said of the former, it were better the sun should not shine than that he should not preach. There was, after a dark interval, Luther, arising like some stern prophet in ancient times to

plead the cause of God against idolatry; who, after he had brought back the truth as it is in Jesus, let fall his mantle on a milder band, Melancthon, Calvin, Zuinglius:—Hooker, whose majestic mind seemed to delight in nothing so much as in contemplating the heavenly world, and the various orders of angels who inhabit it, and whose most ardent endeavour and desire was that the earthly Zion might resemble that divine original:—Baxter, who spent half a century of weakness and pain in mourning over a dying world, and who sent his pathetic call by writing to many people who never knew him after the flesh:—Whitefield, lifting up his voice like a trumpet, and declaring to a guilty populace the unsearchable riches of Christ:—Wesley, with calm and resistless energy, bearing evangelical light into every corner of the land, in spite of persecution and scorn; not only tasking his own powers to the uttermost, but arousing the energies of others, so as to put the whole of the then slumbering church in motion, and to make provision, as far as human means could be a provision, for the enlargement of that mighty work which he saw, with a prophet's eye, was only the beginning of greater things:—Benson, who carried his trembling audience with rapid transition from the mount that burned with fire to the hill of Calvary:—Hall, who exulted in lofty strains at the coming kingdom of Christ:—and, finally, Watson, whose eye, like that of Moses,

seemed capable of surveying both the wilderness and Canaan, and who led us in his aspirations from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord:—besides a host of others, whose names are almost forgotten on earth, and whose only record is on high. These were men of different times and of different churches : some exercised their vocation under the smile of the secular magistrate, some under his frown, some under his indifference ; but as the evidence of their call was seen in their ability, holiness, and success, we see that it is the Holy Ghost who draws the line down the course of time, sometimes crossing the institutions of men, and sometimes running parallel with them ; and that it is he who shows who are the true ministers of Christ, and the followers of the apostles and martyrs of the primitive age.

CHAPTER II.

MINISTERS ARE CALLED OF GOD AND HIS CHURCH.

“Tell me, shall we still seek the cause of the anger of God while we assign such holy and fearful things to be polluted by sinful and worthless men?”—CHRYSOSTOM.

THROUGHOUT the pages of this Essay, the word of God alone is taken to be a sufficient and paramount authority. There would have been less need to insist on this, had there not arisen within the bosom of the church of England a band of divines, who, belonging to the school of archbishop Laud, are using all their learning and influence to revive some of the most dangerous doctrines held in common by that prelate and by Romanism. Perceiving that if the Scriptures are taken to be the sole source of doctrinal instruction, this system cannot stand, they loudly assert the necessity of what is called Catholic Tradition: and, despite of the undoubted great talents of many of this school, it is strangely argued, first, that this catholic tradition is to be used for establishing the “divinity of Scripture,”

—a position utterly untenable, and which, if otherwise, could be very well spared; and then, that the Scripture as interpreted by tradition, is to be referred to as the final test of truth;—a process which puts Scripture in the back-ground after all. The great reformers began by exposing this master-dogma of Popery, and directed wearied and harassed men to repose their whole souls upon undoubted and undistorted revelation; and if they found the word tradition in the New Testament, they showed, as bishop Burnet afterwards, that “in the apostles’ days, and for some ages after, it is very clear they meant only the conveyance of the faith, and not any unwritten doctrines.” And if they referred at all to tradition in the Popish sense, it was only to show that even this, as far as it was worth anything, was decidedly against their opponents. Indeed, the heretics of the primitive age were the first who referred to unwritten tradition, and the orthodox frequently met them on their own ground; so that, in this respect, they and the reformers acted alike. If the exclusive authority of the sacred writings be the question, nothing can bear more directly on the subject than the testimony of the earliest fathers, including Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, and Chrysostom, all of whose sentiments are merged and included in a remarkable saying of Basil, as quoted by Jeremy Taylor: “It is a manifest fall from the faith, and

the clear vice of pride, either to refuse anything of what the Scripture contains, or to introduce any thing that is not written." But if we had none of these testimonies, the evidence of the sufficiency of Scripture would not at all stand affected. The opinions of men have in all ages vanished away like vapours from the sky, while written revelation has been a steady light, "shining in a dark place." As the navigator on the trackless ocean, for common and minor purposes, may consult his chronometer, but for higher must observe the clear and unchanging index of the heavens; and even by this sidereal observation must try the correctness of the chronometer itself: so the theologian may occasionally advert to the formulæ of men, the symbols and expositions of councils; but receiving these as secondary information, he must ever, both to test them and guide himself, look to the oracles of God, upon which alone is impressed the stamp of infallibility. It is allowed on all hands that the Scriptures are *θεοπνευστος*, "inspired of God;" consequently true as God is true: surely, then, they may be allowed to speak for themselves on the subject of their own sufficiency; and whoever will listen in the spirit of a docile disciple of Christ, to him the controversy will be at an end. For we are told, 2 Tim. iii. 17, that the Scriptures are given in order "that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good word and work;" and how can that make a man

perfect as a teacher which is not itself perfect as a rule? And again, the decision of Christ is solemnly recorded against Jewish traditions, when they were brought to distort the written word; and by what argument is it made to appear, that subsequent tradition rests on a better foundation, or is more authoritative, than Jewish? And, finally, the whole canon closes with an awful threatening of divine judgments on him who shall have the presumption to add unto the words which that canon contains. Turning aside, therefore, from human systems, we submit all opinions, whether our own or those of others, to the paramount and indefectible authority of the word of God.

The apostolic rule, in reference to those who are appointed to the pastoral office, is, that they shall be "faithful men," and able to "teach others." The word "faithful," standing as it does, can only mean *trustworthy*; and, perhaps, was used in consequence of the well-established New-Testament simile of a "steward," being employed in speaking of a servant of Christ. To be faithful is to discharge all the responsibilities of an important trust. The Lord's message is not to be less serious and important, because in the mouth of his servant: his truth is to be announced, and his purposes sought to be accomplished, with guileless and constant sincerity. This is the broad and general rule which bears upon the subject; but, general as it

is, no stricter is necessary, or ought to be necessary, to deter a man from entering the visible fold of Christ, who is conscious that to carry on the purposes proposed by the Gospel, is not his chief end and aim: such an one could not be called in any sense, true or perverted, a faithful man; and especially when we remember that in the days of St. Paul, faithfulness had to be put so severely to the test, that if it were not stronger than the love of life, it could not for long subsist. In those days this scriptural canon was a stern one; and indeed is so still: for who shall presume to relax the strictness of an inspired law, or give it a looser sense than it had when first enacted? The men contemplated by the apostle, are those who are willing to consider themselves as responsible for carrying on the designs of Christ in the world, notwithstanding they are called to suffer opposition, and pain, and death itself. But this is not all: the New Testament goes into detail; for where Titus is directed in his choice of elders, the rule enjoins that the person chosen shall be *ανεγκλητος*, “blameless,” as “the steward of God;” and, after enumerating other moral qualities, requires that he be just, holy, temperate,—the first great distinction including all the less ones. The word *ανεγκλητος* is used likewise in reference to a candidate for the office of deacon. (1 Tim. iii. 10.) The two other places in which it occurs are, 1 Cor. i. 8, and Coloss.

i. 22; in the first of which it is used to signify the result of being confirmed in the truth and privileges of the Gospel, and as a preparative for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; and by the use made of it in the second, it is shown to signify that which flows from reconciliation to God through Christ. The blamelessness here specified, then, must be taken to mean that Christian holiness which instrumentally is produced by unfeigned faith in Christ, and immediately by the Holy Ghost, and is a concomitant blessing of justification. If all this cannot be deduced from the word itself, (and we would not strain a meaning,) the sense is fixed by the context, which makes the adjectives "just" and "holy" to be minor details of the grand characteristic, *ανεγκλητος*. Justice, holiness, and temperance, are things not to be found in man's fallen nature, but are rather fruits of that Spirit, who is the author and maintainer, not merely of religious belief, but of religious experience. That a person designed for the ministry must possess Christian holiness, in the strictest sense of the word, is evident from the nature of the work he will have to enter upon, which is, to "feed the flock of God."

This figurative expression implies much. If those which are to be fed are souls, then he who feeds them, must himself be able to understand what are the wants, and weaknesses, and miseries of a soul in its unsaved state; and what its joys and aspirings,

when pardoned and regenerate, and what its temptations and conflicts throughout a life of trial; and be able to administer his supplies according to the state of the individual.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man,” said St. Paul to his son in the Gospel. Timothy himself, although supernaturally endowed, must pause before he ushers into the church a minister, because the man of his choice could be no neutral character,—he must prove either a blessing or a curse. A pastor “must be blameless,” we would reiterate; not merely free from reproach in all the relations in which he stands to man, but one who, as far as man can judge of man, is in Christ Jesus; on whom there is no condemnation imposed on the part of his God; and who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. God alone can know infallibly who are in Christ; but there are always outward evidences of inward religion, and these are invariably to be required: they are the fruit of the Spirit, which “is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Against those who exhibit this fruit, says the apostle, “there is no law:” in the evangelical sense, they are blameless. Many persons who abound in the holy tempers and evidences of grace just mentioned, may often commit errors of judgment, and in consequence do wrong, and be led into involuntary transgression; but purity of motive being the great test of moral sincerity, sin

in such a case is not imputed; and even where sin is committed after conversion, and condemnation follows, a renewed act of faith in Christ, when accompanied by deep humiliation and desire, is a means of restoration to a consciousness of that pardon which is the ground-work of regeneration, and to the possession of peace, its heavenly companion; and the believer, in reference to the general character of his state before God, is blameless. But never must it be forgotten that, in all circumstances, it is through the atonement of Christ.

We cannot, for a moment, meditate on the apostolic rule already mentioned, without perceiving the mind of the Holy Ghost, in reference to the subject to which it refers. A pastor must be blameless: in other words, a steward of God must be a child of God; exercising that faith in Christ which justifies him freely, and brings to him the Comforter; who, dwelling and abiding in him, continues to sanctify the new nature which he has produced, and to make him holy and unblamable in love. God who searcheth the heart can alone know, as has been just said, who answers this description; but the outward signs of this state of grace are to be invariably sought after, and the profession of it required from the individual under trial.

We are told by our papalizing divines, that the Christian church is now what the Jewish nation was once,—the “beloved of God;” and that all who are

admitted into it by baptism as administered by the hands of those who have been episcopally ordained, and who have in a visible line succeeded to the apostles, are in consequence holy, that they are regenerate and in Christ Jesus, members of his church; and, as such, partaking of the emblems of his broken body and shed blood, they are confirmed as saints and heirs of life eternal.

Thus grace is represented as being efficaciously conveyed by means of the sacraments, and the evangelical covenant established to those, and only to those, who receive them under certain circumstances. Far be it from us to speak lightly of those signs and seals of God's love and merciful intentions towards us which baptism and the Lord's supper are. We devoutly acknowledge the former to be the rite of admission into the Christian church, and emblematic of that effusion of the Holy Ghost which all who believe in Jesus shall receive; and that the other is a memorial of those atoning sufferings which procured all our privileges both of grace and glory; and further still, that they are both covenant pledges on the part of God, that he will be faithful to convey all those blessings, to which they symbolically refer, into the souls of those who are faithful to their part of the covenant according as their circumstances may require.

When we then receive those sacraments, we confess to engage in a federal act, which is equivalent to

signing our names, or any other mode of assent which might be understood as binding. But to become a party to a covenant, and to fulfil its provisions, are very different things; for we see that many have been baptized, as Simon Magus was, who have neither part nor lot in the matter, and who, like him, are declared to be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. That infants are members of Christ's true church, is acknowledged, not because of their baptism, but because of the constitution under which they are born, and because they are interested in the free gift which comes upon all men to justification of life; and therefore, being members of the church, baptism in their case is truly significant of that pacific relation in which they stand to Christ, and of that influence of the Holy Ghost under which they are placed. It is true we cannot tell what is that process by which they are connected with Christ; and how, in case of their removal from the world, the original stain is washed away: we know what is necessary in the case of adults; but this case cannot be scrutinized, and it suffices us to know, even from the declaration of Christ himself, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven,"—then previously, without doubt, members of the kingdom of grace on earth. But we cannot be too strongly or solemnly impressed with the truth, that PERSONAL FAITH IN CHRIST, which is preceded and accompanied by true repentance, is the

only means of admission into the invisible and true church, the names of whose members are written in heaven. Of this, all adults, except those in a state of idiocy, are capable, under the influence of God; and of all adults it is inexorably required; and indeed this was the first lesson taught to the great apostle of the Gentiles, when it was told him by the Lord, that he was sent "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and *inheritance among them which are sanctified,*" or rather, among the HALLOWED ONES, "through faith which is in me." (Acts xxvi. 18.) Gladly do we admit that the visible church is said to be beloved of God, as the original church of the Romans was; and that this or similar expressions are often employed in the Scriptures; but they refer to the actually sanctified portion of the church, which charity would lead us to hope is the greater portion.

Baptism, when administered to a believing adult, who is recovered from heathenism, is the active expression of God's promise, and may become, under such circumstances, the actual channel of grace, as well as the rite of consecration to the Trinity; and when administered to that believer's child, it is a pledge on the part of his heavenly Father, that he will maintain his merciful relations to the child also; who, although it cannot repent and believe, has

nevertheless an interceding Saviour, and a praying parent. But how can the rite in either case, by whomsoever administered, *ex opere operato*, convey grace, as the Popish doctrines teach, or open the gate into Christ's spiritual and invisible fold? Baptism and the Lord's supper are of a federal character, both solemn and binding: they conduct into a state of church privilege, but not necessarily into a state of salvation. All this is digression; but, after all, it is subservient to our main purpose, which is to show, that a man cannot be a Christian by ritual consecration, and that he cannot be considered holy because admitted into some section of the visible church, however that church may in a conventional sense be termed "holy," and "beloved," and the "house of God." "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour." (2 Tim. ii. 20.) "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

The apostolic requirement is, then, that a pastor be a Christian, and holy in that sense which we scarcely need to establish. Regeneration in his case flows from faith in Christ; for he that "believeth that Jesus is the Christ," St. John says, "is born of God;" which being born of God, is explanatory of that being born *ανωθεν*, "from above," without which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. (John iii. 5—7.) The same faith it is which first in

order brings the forgiveness of sins: and thus all the benefits of adoption, without a reservation or hindrance, are bestowed on the believer; and on him rests the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, by whose operation is produced his evangelical blamelessness. "The righteousness of the law," saith the apostle, is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 4.)

Having the Bible in our hands, and taking its precepts in their obvious sense, we hold that no man is eligible to be appointed a minister, who does not give evidence that his heart and conduct have been fully brought under the influence of that Gospel which he is to teach: if it be not so, he cannot labour with a ready mind; and, in consequence, cannot answer the demand of the New-Testament canon. If he be brought into ever such an unbroken line of succession from the apostles, it is all in vain: no power on earth can ordain an individual who, upon the principle of St. Paul, has no right to be viewed as a candidate for the pastoral office. The first successor or successors of Timothy who ordained an unholy man, so far from being led by the Spirit into all truth, even in the sense in which the church of Rome argues, are convicted by the written word, of having departed from the guidance of that Spirit, unless the Spirit in the word, and the Spirit moving on the understanding, may utter contradictory and opposing language. The

first person in the line of ordination who, when he was inducted, could not be called a faithful man, broke the claim of that line, as such, to the authority of Christ and of the Holy Ghost; and the true ministry was perpetuated only among its own faithful living links, and among others with whom they had no outward or visible communion.

In many corrupted churches which are called apostolical, how many breaches have been made? Let the records of ecclesiastical history reply. A minister is called of God; and we have been endeavouring to establish the fact, that he must have undoubted piety, and unequivocal sincerity, before he is a subject of that call: this moral state is a preliminary, not something which must be sought for afterwards. The youthful prophet must be in the temple, waiting with devout and hallowed feelings for the Lord, in order to prepare him for that solemn and decisive vocation, which shall prompt the reply, "Speak; for thy servant heareth."

Having seen that it is the true Christian, and he only, who can be the subject of the Spirit's call to the ministry, we may now inquire in what that call consists; or how the mind of the Spirit, in reference to any particular person, may be known. The written word shall still be our guide. Accordingly, we find St. Paul stating, "If a man desire the office of a bishop," or pastor, "he desireth a good work." The clear inference here we think is, that the ministerial

work and office is the object of desire; and that this inward desire, on the part of him who is the subject of it, must go before all application to be ordained; and that, if it is the Holy Ghost who makes the overseers who are over the flock, (as stated Acts xx. 28,) then the first step of his operation after their conversion, is to produce and maintain in their minds this desire after the employment, be it of greater or less intensity. This is to be considered the general and ordinary mode of vocation; for in those few instances, in which a person is summoned by God, and yet he on the other hand will not believe the voice is God's, and labours to avert his mind from the subject, it is either when the summons is sudden and extraordinary, like that in the case of Saul of Tarsus, or when the appointed work is out of the usual course, and perilous, as in the case of Moses and the prophet Jonah. It is not sufficient to say that a dread of the ministry, on account of its sacredness, is a proof that desire for it is not present: the emotions are not at all incongruous: the deepest dread may co-exist with the most fervent desire.*

* On this and on other subjects connected with our design, we may profitably adduce the opinions of the reformer Calvin; who, although bewildered by a metaphysical philosophy in his interpretation of those scriptures which refer to the extent of redemption, brought to the study of the word of God a discriminating judgment and a devout mind. On the point before

As long as we argue with those who believe the Scriptures, it will not be difficult to show that the Holy Ghost may be, and is, the author of special and peculiar desires in the minds of Christians; for to produce them is a part of that working, by which

us, referred to in 1 Tim. iii. 1, he shows that ambition, which in all worldly cases is sinful, is so in a high degree when it has for its object the ministry,—that is, as we understand him, the honours and emoluments of the ministry; that the apostle in this place speaks of pious desire; and also that individuals who devote their youth to sacred studies, may give, nay, ought to give, themselves to the pastorate. Yet the whole passage likewise shows, that their undoubted piety is already assumed by him,—by which, no doubt, in their case he understands the divine vocation; and that they are to be called by others as well as by God.

“Verum quæritur an ullo modo episcopatum appetere liceat. Videtur enim absurdum ut quis voto præveniat Dei vocationem. Atqui Paulus dum temerarium desiderium reprehendit, permittere videtur ut circumspicere et modestè quis appetat. Respondeo, si aliis in rebus damnatur ambitio, in episcopatu multò gravius damnandum esse. Atqui apostolus de pio desiderio loquitur, quo student sancti homines quicquid habent doctrinæ conferre ad ecclesiæ ædificationem: nam si docendi munus appetere omninò nefas esset, quorsùm se discendo compararent, qui totam adolescentiam in sacræ Scripturæ lectione consumunt? an non Theologicæ Scholæ Pastorum sunt seminaria? Proinde qui ita sunt instituti, non modo licitè possunt, sed etiam debent etiam antequam in munus sunt co-optati voluntaria oblatione se ac suam operam sacrare Deo. Modò tamen non se ingerant ipsi, ac ne voto quidem suo se designent episcopos; sed tantum parati sint ad munus obeundum, si eorum opera flagitetur.”

The subject of Theological Institutions is noticed in the proper place.

he helps human infirmities in prayer. But it is only in connexion with sonship; "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." If we have to do with infidels and sceptics, it must suffice at this time to show that our doctrine is not chargeable with absurdity: for every day shows that men by signs and words are able to influence men; and as this is mind acting upon mind, it indicates that God too may immediately so act upon one who is his own creature, as to produce certain desires and a certain purpose, especially if that purpose be a very beneficial and holy one. It is in ways like these that the Spirit operates upon the souls of those who are under his initiatory training: he produces a more than ordinary concern at the misery and danger of unconverted men; he causes a secret but growing love to those devotional acts of which the ministry is full, such as prayer, contemplation, Christian fellowship, and visits to the sick; he sheds a light upon the written word, causes many a beam to fall upon an especial place, by which some hidden harmony is brought to view; he cherishes that longing in the soul to know the mind of God, which in the breast of the Christian is as restless a principle as is ambition in a worldling, or genius in a poet. These are the elements of that craving which the called one of Christ will feel: sometimes it rises in full strength soon after a remarkable conversion; and sometimes, in the case of a religious youth, it

begins early in life, and is coeval in ardour with his growth in grace.

In every case it is a craving after the work and influence of the ministry as a means of good, and not after any honours or emoluments which are connected therewith. It is an emotion which is taken to be the same in character, as that which the candidates in Timothy's time were conscious of, who could not possibly choose the ministry for anything but as being the institution of Christ, and a channel of grace unto the world; because, in those days, as far as regards worldly possessions, it was poor as the Son of man, and was the doorway to suffering, and scorn, and death. Every emotion of the mind has its correspondent outward expression; and, therefore, this will show itself whenever it has existence. A desire for the ministry cannot long be concealed, nor indeed ought it to be; for it must be evinced previous to all theological training. The order of things is not to be reversed: no education can anticipate the call of God, or has a right to presume upon it: if a literary and biblical course be deemed necessary afterwards, it becomes a different question, which shall have attention in its proper place. A man must be a prophet, in order to enter the school of the prophets.

If any church-system allows of scholarship, as the preliminary qualification, with the expectation that the Holy Spirit will sanction the man, it

is an expectation that may not be realized; or, even if it is, the order of God is inverted, which alone can give authority to a rule. When the sacred desire arises in the breast, and when it is shown to be genuine, by a pious deportment, then let our aspiring friend be sent to his tutors to be instructed more perfectly; but not, as far as the ministry is his object, until then; and when it arises, it will soon be confessed.*

The next evidence to be adduced is, the concurrence of the church; which connects with it an acknowledgment of the individual's reputation. On this, St. Paul, our authority, laid stress: "He must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." The reasons for this are many.

First: such a requirement is an indispensable check to fanaticism. A madman may deem himself called to a throne; a visionary may consider himself divinely commissioned to burn a cathedral; and many a one, not wicked but weak, may conceive that he is bound to preach the Gospel.† If it be his sole opinion, and no one in the church or in the

* I do not, however, say it is a fearful thing to desire the work, but the power and authority.—CHRYSOSTOM on Timothy.

† When the blessed Paul says, that "he must have a good report of them which are without," he by no means supersedes a severe and strict investigation, nor does he consider such an investigation to be the leading indication.—CHRYSOSTOM.

world concurs with him, he is convicted of delusion ; for the world has a standard of propriety to judge by ; and the church has the standard of Scripture, against the precepts of which no pretensions to spiritual light are of the importance of a feather.

Secondly : it is a check to that zeal which is not according to knowledge, as well as a test of enlightened and scriptural zeal. Many persons, in the first fervour of their Christian love, and in the compassion which they feel for the perishing, are apt to aim at extensive usefulness, and to think that nothing but the ministry will be proper for them as a sphere ; and persons, too, whose habits of mind, and inferior gifts, would make them miserable in such a yoke. This test is applied to them in mercy : it may prevent their entrance upon a path of difficulties, in which they would, before long, sink ignominiously. Every company of believing people is supposed to be capable of judging of the New-Testament doctrine in reference to ministerial candidates ; and, therefore, the collective wisdom of the church confirms or denies the individual's call, testing it by the view they take of the Scripture standard. There were many holy and happy persons among the converted when the apostles first preached Jesus ; but when they would supply the subordinate office of the church, the deaconship, care was taken to have persons, even from among them, who were of honest report. How

much more care than was needful in reference to the pastoral office! Whoever is appointed to this last, he must be no “novice;” Gr., *νεοφυτον*,—(1 Tim. iii. 6;) not newly come to the faith, or inexperienced: and of whom can the inquiry be made, but of the fathers and brethren with whom he holds communion? When the summons is unequivocal, the concurrence of the church gives a high and additional satisfaction to the mind of God’s servant himself, and is a shield against temptation: indeed, without it his authority is incomplete.

In the business of personal religion, a believing penitent, who has affiance in the atonement of Christ, receives an inward witness of his adoption, which to himself is satisfactory: but, in addition to this, there is the testimony of his own spirit; that is, a consciousness that his powers are renewed; and, indicative of the mighty change, there is the manifold fruit, confirming the persuasion immediately vouchsafed. Very similar to this conjoined evidence, is that by which an individual is attested to be the intended servant of Christ and of his church.

The Holy Ghost speaks in person unto him, and his brethren echo back the voice: both in reference to this matter, as well as to individual salvation, “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” (Rev. xxii. 17.) It is not a sufficient observance of the rule, when two or three individuals only are concerned

in promoting the entrance of the candidate into the church: they may be his personal friends or relations, and therefore partial; they may have temporal emoluments at their disposal, and may be actuated by a sinister motive of providing a maintenance for him. The approbation of such persons, however loud and cordial, can never come up to that "good report" which the Scripture, by inference and precept, requires; and no church can, in obedience to Christ, open so wide the door of admission, as to allow any one to enter with a suffrage like this.* The "good report" can only be ascertained from the immediate congregation or society; and is officially made by those experienced and qualified members thereof, who sit in the deliberative assembly. Then it is shown who, and who not, are faithful men.

A third particular, which may be mentioned as a mark of the Lord's chosen one, is this,—the concurrent arrangements of Providence. He is not

* What wonder is it, that worldly men, doing every thing for glory, popular applause, and wealth, thus err; when they who affect to be freed from all these are not better disposed, and, when they contend about heavenly matters, deliberate as if a few acres of land, or some such thing, were the subject; and carelessly take and appoint common men over those things for which the only-begotten Son of God refused not to make himself of no reputation, and to become man, and to take the form of a servant, and to be spit upon, and scourged, and in the flesh to die a reproachful death?—CHRYSOSTOM. Mr. Wesley's united criteria were, *gifts, grace, fruit.*

merely incited to the ministry, but his way is made plain.

It is impossible to believe the Bible, and to reject the doctrine of a special Providence. The natural world is governed by grand and uniform laws, we know; and there is no departure from them, except in the case of miracle: but as man is the subject of God's moral government, infinite intelligence may so influence the proximate causes and effects which are around us, as that they shall be subservient to a moral purpose. It is natural that famine should lead to migration; so it was in the case of Jacob and his family; but it was providential in accomplishing a purpose of God. Thus the very hairs of our head are numbered,—all his saints are in his hand. The illustrations of this doctrine are more or less signal, according to time or circumstances; but they may be confidently looked for in those steps by which a person is led to the sacred work we speak of: this is a solemn part of his life, and providential interposition may be expected to display itself. Accordingly, if he has been engaged in worldly pursuits, an unexpected opportunity occurs of closing them; if he has been poor and unfriended, he is brought into the notice of the church; if he has family incumbrances, they disappear; and if he be secretly meditating designs in relation to the great undertaking, the hearts of others are secretly inclined

to project the same plans, and to fall in with them.

In these, and many other ways, may the hand of God display itself. Saul departs, blind and terror-stricken, to Damascus; but Ananias is secretly prepared to receive him. If every Christian is exhorted, "Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy path," much more is the ministerial candidate; and no man will find more than he, the truth of the text exemplified; for the way he is about to take is an awfully important one, fraught with infinite consequences, not only to himself, but to others: and if that way be made plain, nothing remains but to pursue it at all hazards; for when God calls, obedience or peril must follow.

This, then, is the summary of what we would say constitutes a person faithful, eligible to be put into the ministry, and which proves him to be moved by the Holy Ghost thereunto:—

1. An experimental acquaintance with Christianity, which is rendered indubitable by a holy life.
2. Secret incitements to the work, which are produced by the Spirit; desire, although often mingled with dread.
3. The concurrent voice of the church, including both pastors and people.
4. Those harmonizing openings of Providence

which, more or less, according to circumstances, may be expected to appear.

The actual appointment of approved probationers rests with the ministry entirely. Matthias was appointed by the eleven; Timothy by the apostles and the presbytery; from which examples, ordination appears to be an act of ministerial office. Those who are about to discharge this important and responsible part of duty, of course appeal to the people for their hearty concurrence; and, if it be obtained, and a good confession is made before many witnesses, by the individual to be appointed, then the formal ordination is their own work. The practice of antiquity was in conformity with this view: for Cyprian, amongst others, intimates, that it was his constant custom, in all ordinations, to consult the people, and, with their common counsel, to weigh the character and merits of every candidate; (Epist. xxxiii., *ad Clerum et Plebem*;) reserving, of course, to himself and colleagues, the formal function.

And it is not by one minister only that a junior pastor is ordained, but by the conjunct act of several. This is deducible from the New Testament, by the simplest and clearest inference: for Timothy, whose case has just been alluded to, was not ordained by the laying on of St. Paul's hands only, but likewise by those of the presbytery. And it is difficult to conceive how those episcopal churches who

adopt a different mode, can justify themselves by a reference to the sacred record: for it is not possible to suppose, that St. Paul should delegate to another an authority which he did not assume himself. Firmilian says, in his day, that "in the church seniors preside who have the power, among other things, of ordaining:" and so, at that time, it was the act of several, and not of one.

Connexional churches have their own ministers; and Independent, or Congregational, have the assembled neighbouring ones; and thus, in serious and prayerful convocation, and in the presence of the people, they require a public avowal of faith and experience from each probationer, and then set the whole of them apart to the Lord, and to the service of his sanctuary. The laying on of hands is a scriptural and impressive circumstance, and ought, therefore, to be observed as well as any other which has apostolic usage for its precedent. The practice is older than Christianity, having been derived from the Jews, who made use of it on several occasions. Hands were laid on the sacrifices, as if to transfer the guilt of the offerer to the expiatory offering; and subsequently the elders of the synagogues used it, who laid their hands on the head of a person when they prayed to God especially on his behalf. Our Lord observed the same custom, both when he conferred his blessing on children, and when he healed the sick; and so

did the apostles likewise, when they inwardly pleaded for the Holy Ghost to rest upon any one. But as no precept was left on record, either by our Lord or his disciples, relative to the observance of this rite, it is evident that it rests upon custom, and not upon divine authority, although it may have arisen originally from a divinely appointed rite by way of imitation. It is no sacramental rite, no *opus operatum*, conveying either grace or authority by its own working, as the church of Rome absurdly teaches; but as it was performed by those inspired persons who completed the New-Testament canon, and who opened the mysteries which had been hid from ages and generations, it is highly proper that every Christian church should follow their pure and elevated pattern, as the greater number of churches from the beginning have done.*

* Calvin regards Timothy as designated to the ministry by prophetic impulse, and then formally ordained by the college of elders, of which, we may ourselves judge by another passage, that St. Paul was the directing authority. The outward act he considers merely a circumstance, as indeed in its Jewish use it always had been, but admits it to be an important and impressive one:—"Cæremoniam pro ipso actu ordinationis posuit. Itaque sensus est, Timotheum quum prophetatum voce ascitus fuit in ministerium, et deinde solenni ritu ordinatus, simul gratia Spiritus Sancti instructum fuisse ad functionem suam exequendam. Unde colligimus non inanem fuisse ritum: quia consecrationem quam homines impositione manuum figurabant, Deus Spiritu suo implevit." 1 Tim. iv. 14: "Neglect not the gift," &c.—And again: "Primum impositio manuum ordinationem significat: hoc est, signum pro re ipsa capitur." In loc. cap. v., ver. 22:

Thus have we endeavoured briefly to show who are truly and scripturally called to the ministry, and in what formal manner they receive their authority.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man.”—And again, in 2 Tim. i. 6, he judiciously reconciles the facts, that Timothy was originally introduced into the ministry by Paul, and yet at the same time elected by others; and he distinguishes, too, between ministerial ordination and church vocation: “Non dubium est quin fuerit communibus ecclesiæ votis expetitus Timotheus, non autem electus privato unius Pauli arbitrio. Sed non est absurdum ut sibi Paulus electionem privatim ascribat, cujus præcipuus fuerat auctor. Quanquam hîc de ordinatione potius quam de electione agit: hoc est de solenni instituendi ritu.”

He shows also that the virtue of ordination does not consist in any sacramental efficacy, but rather in the gracious unction attendant upon prayer to God: “Hoc constituto quæritur an per externum signum gratia fuerit data. Ad quam quæstionem respondeo, quoties ordinabantur ministri, precibus totius ecclesiæ fuisse Deo commendatos; atque hoc modo impetratam illis fuisse gratiam à Deo, non autem virtute signi fuisse illis datam. Quanquam signum non frustra nec inutiliter adhibebatur: sed tessera erat minimè fallax ejus gratiæ quam ex ipsa Dei manu percipiebant. Neque enim profana quædam fuit inauguratio ritus ille, ad conciliandam modo in hominum oculis auctoritatem inventa; sed consecratio coram Deo legitima, quæ non perficitur nisi Spiritus Sancti virtute. Præterea signum pro tota re vel actione accipit Paulus.”

Charles Wesley’s beautiful hymn beginning, “Thou, Jesu, thou my breast inspire,” is, perhaps, one of the sublimest and most intensely devotional prayers put into the lips of a ministerial candidate that ever appeared in our language. Dryden’s “Veni Creator Spiritus” is solemn and sweet, but devoid of the evangelical unction which overflows here. Those who have heard these sacred strains poured forth by a full and large congregation, especially if they are ministers themselves, will never forget the emotions of that hour.

Men are liable to err in themselves, and to be deceived in others; and, therefore, many have been, at different times, appointed ministers who ought not to have been so appointed, and who have either speedily retired, or remained a burden on the people,—“*fruges consumere nati.*” But among a spiritual and devoted people this will not often be the case. The Holy Ghost, who always glorifies Christ, does not partially attend to the work of raising up a duly qualified ministry: he ever makes it appear who are the Almighty’s servants, whom he upholds,—his elect, in whom his soul delighteth; he allures them by his secret voice, and then prepares them for labour by his mighty energy. The unction which he sheds upon them in their after-toil is a proof of his presence and sanction, whoever or wherever they be.

Men might be appointed to the sacred office by mere human authority, without having been the subjects of sanctifying grace and divine vocation, and might go to their place in the church, and, like the pillars in some ancient ruined temple, support for awhile the outward and hoary pile; but within is desolation and the moaning of the midnight wind. The Holy Spirit is the glory of the latter house. “A two-fold effusion,” as Howe says, “we may expect of the wrath and of the Spirit of God: the former to vindicate himself, the other to reform us. Then will this temple no more be termed forsaken: it

will be actually and in fact, what in right it is always, Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven. Till then little prosperity is to be hoped for in the Christian church: spiritual prosperity without a large communication of the Spirit, it cannot have; external without it, it cannot bear." As for that theory which would limit ministerial authority to a certain line of men exclusively, who can trace back, as it is asserted, their regular succession from the apostles of our Lord, nothing can be more unworthy in itself, or more dishonourable to the Holy Ghost.* Who ever has shown that there has been

* Who have settled the disputes, as to legitimate succession, between Cornelius and Novatian, Liberius and Felix, Damasus and Ursinus, Boniface and Euladius, Symmachus and Laurentius, Theodore and Paschalis, and numerous others in the church of Rome? Who has shown who were the undoubted first bishops, or that the very first was ordained by an apostle at all? Peter did not visit Rome till after Paul's Epistle had been written, it is certain; and, consequently, not until the church was established. For although Irenæus (*adv. Hæresis* iii. 1) and Eusebius (*Chron. ad Ann. 2 Claudii*) are appealed to by Roman Catholics, to prove that that apostle founded the church, and resided as bishop for twenty-five years, beginning from the second year of Claudius, or A. D. 43, yet, it is evident, those writers refer only to a tradition, which tradition is little heeded by many learned critics of the same church; and which is refuted, by the fact that Peter, in the sacred history, is said to be imprisoned by Herod Agrippa (*Acts* xii. 3, 4, and compare ver. 23) in the last year of this king's reign, which year synchronizes with the fourth of Claudius. Of course Peter, after this period, was at Jerusalem, not at Rome; and it is beyond doubt, he was present at the council of Jerusalem, in the ninth year of Claudius. (*Acts* xv. 6, &c.)

such an unbroken lineage, as that which is so much vaunted, especially when contending pontiffs have at the same time been disputing each others claim, and raising around them a storm of spiritual thunder? And if it were so, if there were such a chain, does divine influence and unction, imparting authority, confine itself to follow a succession which has so

At Paul's visit to Rome, no one appears to have mentioned or known Peter: if, then, the latter came, he came after, (as Origen and Dionysius testify he did come,) and the church must have been founded by some who came back from the feast of Pentecost, and who are probably saluted in Paul's Epistle. They were not apostles. For more copious information, vide Stewart's Introduction to his Commentary on Romans, pp. 37, 38.

The learned and excellent Dr. Clarke, speaking of the uninterrupted apostolical succession, sarcastically observes, "He who appeals to this for his authority as a Christian minister, had best sit down till he has made it out; and this will be by the next Greek Kalends."

Mr. Powell, in his work on "Apostolical Succession," has, with the utmost diligence and learned research, investigated the subject, and established, in summary, the following propositions:—

1st. That there is no positive proof, from the Scriptures, of these claims. 2d. That the general spirit and scope of the Gospel is opposed to them. 3d. That in scriptural evidence they are controverted, as well as by Christian antiquity. 4th. That the church of England, at the Reformation, was against them. 5th. That all the Christian churches in the world, and the greatest divines of all ages, have considered that the ministers of Christ are equal in point of order. 6th. That there is no sufficient evidence of a personal succession of valid episcopal ordinations, in the history of any church whatever. And, finally, that the true apostolical succession is the succession of the apostles' faith and holy labours.

many dismal links? * Man may indeed so far avail himself of his knowledge as to direct the stream of electric fire, and provide the path in which it shall run; but he cannot so control the illimitable Spirit, nor has the Spirit himself laid down any prescribed track in which he will move. No; "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and vain is the attempt to bind it in fetters: in passing over this desert world, it may move in a gentle breeze, or forceful gust, in a certain path, or by an universal gale; but it accomplishes the purposes of redeeming mercy, and breathes life and health throughout the sweep. Under its influence many shall arise from spiritual death, as in the vision of the prophet, and shall fill the assemblies of the church and the ranks of the ministry; and the Holy Ghost shall be the universal authority, because he is, when fully obeyed, the universal order, light, and life. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.)

* No one, who looks along the line of either Roman or Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics, would, on the whole, find reason to be proud of connexion with them; as will appear from a fragment of Alcuin quoted in Mosheim, (cent. 8, chap. i. 6,) and William of Malmesbury. (Chap. viii. 6.) Augustine, the founder of the Anglo-Saxon church, appears to have been a spiritual man, and so were the venerable Bede, and Alcuin and Anselm; but the greater part were so sunk in worldliness, that little was gained by a transition from Druidism to a corrupted Christianity, at least till the era of Alfred.

If then Moses, with all his learning in the wisdom of the Egyptians, shrank from the task of becoming God's minister, when his call was loud and undoubted, how much more reason has the most accomplished individual of the present day to shrink from the very thought of the pastorate, until he is the subject of a scriptural and divine vocation! The forms of church law, in the case of given men, may be complied with; but that fearful passage of the prophet may apply, "I sent them not, neither commanded them, nor spake unto them." (Jer. xiv. 14.) We have heard the cry of warning respecting unauthorized ministers as it is echoed from certain quarters; nor do we despise such a warning; for to enter the ministry unauthorized, is an act of presumption, the most awful and guilty that could be committed. But the cry has prompted us more than ever to try the principles on which we rest; to examine with diligence and prayer the word of God on this momentous subject: and now, being convinced that the teachings of the holy book are such as have been detailed in this chapter, we do echo back the warning with all its eternal weight. If ye who aspire after the pastor's office, or are now placed in it, be devoid of vital holiness, and consequently of love to God and zeal for the salvation of souls; whether ye be illiterate and obscure, or whether surrounded by ecclesiastical pomp, and invested with the badges of hoary antiquity, or

dained by episcopal hands, and fraught with the most elaborate endowments; ye are the intruders who are concerned in this matter! ye are the Nadabs and Abihus of the age, who bring to God's altar strange fire,—if indeed it be fire at all! On you be the onus of this dread admonition, though we lift it not from ourselves; and even for you would cherish, though quivering with emotion, the utmost prayer and pity: indeed, there is room for nothing else; for we shall soon be judged at the same bar; the omniscient Judge of which has already said, respecting Gospel ministers, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” (Matt. vii. 20.)

Servant of the Lord, who hast held on thy way through evil and good report, leave those who fraternize with Rome to pore over their “endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith;” though it is a wonder that they can do this without trembling, seeing every thing depends upon the continuance of the chain, which haply they may find broken. Leave them to their ill-constructed fable. Thine be the richer joy of calling to mind the repentance, and faith, and pardon, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and concern for the honour of God and salvation of men, of all which thou wert the subject:—thine, to trace the inward drawings of the Spirit, and the outward working of God's providential hand, in reference to thy appointment and ordination:—thine, to number up in every

place spiritual children, and to read those epistles written in fair characters,—thy credentials which appear in their holy lives:—thine, to watch the operation of the same grace within thee still; and without, the same evidence of the approbation of thy divine Master. Eliab may ask thee what thou doest in the army; but, if strengthened from above, thou wilt live to achieve more than he. Thou wilt fight and conquer, while he is idly vaunting his armour and commission, and wilt lay thy trophies, together with thy sins and unworthiness, at the feet of Christ, the Lord of all.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH OF GOD AND ITS GOVERNMENT.

“Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels, and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.”

HOOVER.

IN the present stage of this Essay, it may be well to advert to the meaning of the word church. The Greek word *ἐκκλησία* simply means an assembly of people; and is, by consequence, in itself a very general term, and may admit of the following significations, according to the connexion in which it is found:—

1. The company of all those who have been baptized in the name of Christ throughout the whole world, and who believe in the doctrines of Christianity.

2. Those who are real believers, and are united to Christ by true faith, and, in consequence, have an inheritance among them which are sanctified: they are said to be the invisible church.

3. "A congregation of faithful men, in which the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." (Artic. Church of England.)

4. A union of several or many such congregations, who are conventionally attached for the purposes of mutual support and direction.

These are the most usual meanings of the word; and they are all so needful in their place, that they cannot severally be dispensed with, but the context alone can fix them, except when an especial adjective is employed for the purpose.

As the church of Christ, in its largest sense, is, as Mr. Watson observes, "a visible and permanent society, bound to observe certain rites and obey certain rules, the existence of government in it is necessarily supposed. All religious rites suppose order, all order DIRECTION and CONTROL, and these a DIRECTIVE and CONTROLLING power. Again, all laws are nugatory without enforcement, in the present mixed state of society; and all enforcement supposes an EXECUTIVE. If baptism be the door of admission into the church, some must judge of the fitness of the candidates, and administrators of the rite must be appointed; if the Lord's supper must be partaken of, the times and mode are to be determined, the qualifications of the communicants judged of, and the administrations placed in suitable

hands; if worship must be social and public, then again there must be an appointment of times, an order, and an administration; if the word of God is to be read and preached, then readers and preachers are necessary; if the continuance of any one in the fellowship of Christians be conditional upon good conduct, so that the purity and credit of the church may be guarded, then the power of enforcing discipline must be lodged somewhere. Thus government flows necessarily from the very nature of the institution of the Christian church;" and this government has been provided for by Christ and his apostles, as shall be shown in the course of the following pages.

The nature of this government is wholly spiritual. "My kingdom," says our Lord, "is not of this world;" and therefore the laws of the church must partake of that holy and benign character which belongs to the doctrines of the New Testament and to things above. There must be no coercion, no temporal inflictions, either to compel those that are without to enter, or to discipline those who are within: every rule must appeal to the sanctified judgment and affections of the Christian people, to the tender relations which subsist between them, and, finally and chiefly, to the commandments of Christ. Disobedience to these commandments incurs no especial temporal peril; but if extreme and unrepented of, it entails the loss of grace, and, what

is more awful, of eternal life. But the church is assumed to consist in general of the obedient; and therefore provision must be made, according to the merciful principles of Christianity, to promote that holy walking which is enjoined upon its members, and to admonish, censure, and even, in extreme cases, expel those who persist in a different course. As we are now to show more fully, that this directive control and pastoral care of the church of Christ is committed to his ministers, it is necessary to consider what were the original orders of them, and what form of church polity appeared to be adopted under the sanction of the blessed apostles. Having ascertained this, it will be clear that whatever church approaches the nearest this original pattern, taking times and circumstances into account, it will be most agreeable to the will of God.

The apostles were an order supernaturally endowed, and immediately commissioned; and therefore they could ordain no successors. The prophets, too, mentioned in the New Testament, were miraculously gifted, and held a temporary office. The evangelists, or at least those who were so by eminence, as Timothy and Titus, were never empowered to ordain evangelists, although they ordained other ministers, and were themselves the assistants of the apostles: that office, too, therefore, as far as it was a special and distinctive one, ceased; although all persons, at the same time, who (*ευαγγελιζω*) publish the Gospel,

with proper sanctions, are in the general sense evangelists.* The pastors, therefore, who are included in the same enumeration with the foregoing classes, are to be considered as the permanent ministers of the church, as has been briefly hinted in the first chapter. These pastors are referred to, in various places of the apostolic writings, as consisting of bishops and presbyters, who are to feed the flock: and here the question arises, Are these two distinct orders, or one order with two designations? The scriptural field of inquiry is not extensive, but clear and open.

When St. Paul sent for the presbyters of the church of Ephesus, to meet him at Miletus, he charges them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you επισκοποι,"—bishops. Presbyters are here called bishops; and the injunction which is given them "to feed the church of God," shows that they are pastors. Again, Paul directs Titus to "ordain presbyters in

* Calvin, on 2 Tim. iv. 5, "Do the work of an evangelist," says to this effect: "Opus facere evangelistæ est præstare quod evangelista dignum est. Cæterum an hoc nomine generaliter significet quosvis evangelii ministros, an vero speciale aliquod fuerit munus, incertum est. Magis tamen in hanc secundam partem inclino: quia ex quarto capite ad Ephesios haud dubie constat ordinem fuisse inter apostolos et pastores medium: ita ut essent evangelistæ apostolis secundi adjutores." It is a wonder that this reference to Ephes. iv. did not lead him to express himself more decidedly; for it evidently settles the case.

every city;" and adds, as a direction, "For a bishop must be blameless." Bishops and deacons are the only official persons addressed in the epistle to the Philippians; and if presbyters were not included under the term bishops, why is the notice of them omitted? Again, (1 Peter v. 1, 2,) "The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, *fulfilling the bishopric thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." So far the Scripture is clear, that the terms are used interchangeably, and designate but one order, the pastors before spoken of.

The earliest fathers take the same view; for they show that presbyters discharged the same ecclesiastical functions as bishops, and were therefore, as far as divine right is concerned, of equal authority. They preached, as Origen, who was a presbyter of Alexandria; they baptized; (Tertull. De Bapt., p. 602;) they administered the Lord's supper; (Ignat. Epist. ad Smyrn.;) they ruled in the churches; (Cave's Life of Polycarp, p. 127;) they presided in the deliberative assemblies together with the bishop; (Tertull. Apol., c. 39, p. 709;) and lastly, they ordained, after the example of the presbytery in the case of Timothy. (Firmil. apud Cyp., Epist. lxxv., sect. 6, p. 237.)

So that there appears to have been not the least distinction, originally, in point of order. The high episcopalians assert, that as St. Paul ordained presbyters, and during his life exercised authority over them, so he delegated in two instances this same superintending power, the one referring to the case of Timothy, the other to that of Titus; both of whom ever after were authorized to act as *episcopi pastorum*, "bishops of the pastors." But we have already seen that St. Paul did not himself ordain in this case of Timothy, without the concurrence and assistance of presbyters; and therefore, acting in concert with others as he did, that sole power over other pastors which is referred to, was not manifestly claimed. Besides, as Timothy and Titus were special and extraordinary ministers, *εὐαγγελισταί*, "evangelists," they are not to be viewed in the light of successors, but of assistants of the apostles, invested with the same powers, which powers they were never commanded or authorized to delegate to others; for, we repeat, they never ordained successors to their own especial office. Archbishop Cranmer, who was himself an Episcopalian, and who has been styled the Father of the English church, seems to have felt the force of the argument drawn from these Scripture facts and precedents, and to have acknowledged how difficult it is to show that bishops *jure divino* have authority over presbyters. He says, "The bishops and priests were at one time, and were not two things, but

both one office at the beginning of Christ's religion." *

There was, however, an early distinction between bishops and presbyters, so early even, in some instances, as while the apostles were living; but this distinction may be accounted for, without having recourse to the theory of divine right. In the churches which were planted by the apostles, several presbyters or elders were ordained, partly to supply the present need, and partly to provide for the increase of believers: and, indeed, such a course would be necessary, if we recollect that the first congregations of Christians, at a time when there was no spacious building for them, would have to assemble

* The sentiments of our Genevan commentator as to the equality of bishops and presbyters, and their identity of order, are, as may be expected, sufficiently clear and decisive:—"Nam quum Paulus generaliter comprehendat omnes pastores, ipsi episcopum accipiunt qui ex uno-quoque collegio eligebatur ut fratribus præssset. Meminerimus ergo perinde valere hoc nomen, acsi ministros, vel pastores, vel presbyteros nominasset." (1 Tim. iii. 1.) Here a bishop is a presbyter chosen to preside among his brethren. And again: "Mihi quidam non displicet quod statim ab ecclesiæ primordiis receptum fuit, ut singula episcoporum collegia unum aliquem moderatorem habeant: verum nomen officii quod Deus in commune omnibus dederat, in unum solum transferri, reliquis spoliatis et injurium est et absurdum." (Epist. Pauli ad Titum i. 7.)

Such was the constitution of the early Christian church in Britain, as exhibited by the venerable Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History, and that too, Mr. Powell states, before the arrival of Augustine.

in different houses or rooms, and therefore every assembly would require a presbyter to conduct the worship, and to rule also; for the presbyters, or “elders, that ruled well,” were to be “counted worthy of double honour.” As there were, therefore, a number of elders to one church, there arose the *cætus presbyterorum*; which was the chief deliberative council, in which the affairs of the church were managed, and measures were taken for the spread of the Gospel, as was the case in the church of Jerusalem. This meeting of presbyters, Mr. Watson observes, “would naturally lead to the appointment, whether by seniority or election, of one to preside over the proceedings of this assembly for the sake of order; and to him was given the title of ‘angel of the church,’ and ‘bishop,’ by way of eminence.” “The latter title came in time to be used exclusively of the presiding elder, because of that special oversight imposed upon him by his office, and which, as churches were raised up in the neighbourhood of the larger cities, would also naturally be extended over them. Independently, however, of his fellow-presbyters he did nothing. The whole of this arrangement shows, that in those particulars in which they were left free by the Scriptures, the primitive Christians adopted that arrangement for the government of the church, which promised to render it the most efficient for the maintenance of truth and piety; but they did not at this early period set up that unscriptural distinction of order between

bishops and presbyters which obtained afterwards. Hence Jerome, even in the fourth century, contends against this doctrine, and says, that before there were parties in religion, churches were governed *communi concilio presbyterorum*; but that afterwards it became a universal practice founded upon the experience of its expediency, that one of the presbyters should be chosen by the rest to be the head, and that the care of the church should be committed to him. He therefore exhorts presbyters to remember that they are subject by the custom of the church to him that presides over them; and reminds bishops that they are greater than presbyters, rather by custom than the appointment of the Lord, and that the church ought still to be governed in common. The testimony of antiquity also shows, that after episcopacy had very greatly advanced its claims, the presbyters continued to be associated with the bishop in the management of the affairs of the church."

Cyprian declares, that he did all things *communi consilio*, "by the common counsel" of his presbyters. (Epist. xxiv. 55.) The learned and venerable Hooker himself admits the force of the testimony borne by these early writers to the consuetudinary character of episcopal authority, as it then existed; and seeing that the government of the flock is not in the Scripture expressly assigned to bishops for ever, he is obliged to own the church may be justified in adopting another form of polity, in case

the episcopal rulers should become proud, overbearing, and immoral; so that, although he considers the original institution of bishops with superior powers to have taken place in the lifetime of the apostles, and under the especial supervision of the Holy Ghost, yet the admission just mentioned is fatal to their claims as pleaded for *jure divino*. Jerome and Cyprian, together with other primitive fathers, and Hooker too, appear to have adopted the questionable position, that the ministers of the Christian church are strictly similar to those of the ancient sanctuary and temple. Bishops they compare with Aaronical priests, archbishops with the high priests, presbyters with the Levites. But the comparison will not hold good: there are some general points of resemblance, it is true; for both classes were ministers of God, and separated from all other concerns, and entitled to the offerings of the people; and to these points of resemblance St. Paul refers, 1 Cor. ix. 13. But, on the other hand, the same apostle shows, that Aaron and his sons officially were shadowy persons and types, not of Christian ministers, but of Christ: they followed in hereditary succession, and were instituted by theocratic laws. But Christian ministers are selected and drawn, not according to established rules from the mass of believers, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Ghost. Never is the term *ιερευς*, "priest," applied to Christian ministers in the New Testament. Viewed in detail,

then, there is as much difference between the persons compared, as there is between a temporary and worldly institution, and a spiritual one which remains of an unchangeable character unto the end of time. The primitive fathers were not infallible, any more than our revered and highly-gifted countryman himself; for even from the days of Ignatius and Polycarp, they give evidence of the fact by their conflicting opinions, and by many superstitions. The philosophic or Judæo-philosophic schools in which many of them were trained, would tend to tinge their understandings with sullied light; and they would not, without special interposition of God, so clearly apprehend that analogy of faith which is the indispensable touchstone of scriptural interpretation, and which an after-age might more clearly understand. When we wish for authority, we cannot depart for a single moment from the written word. When Hooker argues that bishops governed in the church from the beginning, he appears to make no distinction between an episcopacy which recognises bishops as superior to other ministers by church compact, and that which allows them to rule by virtue of superior order and divine right. We have, then, the fullest evidence to prove that they and presbyters were originally men of the same authority and powers; and that when a distinction arose between them, it was conventional, and for the sake of expediency bishops became superior "*jure*

humano," and with the common consent of their fellow-presbyters.

The word *επισκοπος* is an official term, which signifies, from its etymology, one who overlooks; and *πρεσβυτερος* is a title of respect, which was given to the teachers in the Jewish synagogue: and it was from the pattern of the synagogue, and not from that of the temple, that the apostles modelled the primitive church; for not only do we find elders there, but the "angel," the presiding minister or bishop over the rest. Nothing could be more proper than that the apostles should adopt a mode of church order to which many of their converts had been so long accustomed, and which afforded such great facility for the administration of all the ordinances.

When a church is composed of but one congregation, (and so were many of the primitive churches composed,) the minister is then unquestionably a scriptural bishop; for it was a primitive principle, *Εις επισκοπος μια εκκλησια*,—but only bishop of the flock, *episcopus gregis*.

When many presbyters are ordained to one church, they are, in their collective capacity, bishops of the flock and of the pastors; because they exercise an oversight, not only of the people, but of each other. And if they have a president, he is eminently and distinctively a bishop; first, probably, a moderator of the assembly, but afterwards recognised by common

consent as a governing power, though still in connexion with the presbytery assembled.

Such an Episcopacy as recognises bishops and presbyters of one order, and that the former are only “*primi inter pares*,” and superior conventionally, appears, then, to come nearest the New-Testament plan, and the practice of the primitive Christians. This view is adopted by Archbishop Usher, who pleaded for such an Episcopacy; and for which, if it could have been established, Richard Baxter, the great and good Nonconformist, would have been thankful.* It is found in a variously modified form in connected churches, and indeed in all churches whose ministers, like those, for instance, of the Wesleyan connexion, are subject to the discipline of ministerial convocations. Diocesan Episcopacy was the product of a later age; though it is not necessarily an evil arrangement on that account: on the contrary, in a large association of churches, in a province or country, it may be a good one; that is, if principles undoubtedly scriptural

* He was of His Majesty's mind in his Icon Basilicon, that Presbytery is never so considerable or effectual, as when it is joined to and crowned with Episcopacy.—PARR'S Life of Archbishop Usher.

In this judgment it appears, from a pamphlet published at the time, that Dr. Hammond coincided.

Episcopal government, managed in conjunction with presbyters, presbyteries, and synods, is not contrary to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive church, but most agreeable unto both.—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

are preserved, and the rights of presbyters not violated.* The New Testament only lays down the great laws of the case, and leaves the detailed regulations to be determined by time and circumstances; so that while these laws are observed, Christians are at liberty to adopt that form of church order, which shall best secure the stability, and promote the spread, of religion.

Next to bishops and presbyters there appears to be a distinct and subordinate order of ministers,

* Nature and Providence do not move by leaps, but by insensible and soft degrees, which give stability and beauty to the universe. Is not the world composed of disagreements, hot and cold, heavy and light? and yet we see these oppositions are, by means of middle and conciliating mixtures, wrought into a compliance. It is the same case in subject and superior. Higher and lower, betwixt top and bottom, are but as several links in one providential chain, where every individual, by virtue of this mutual dependency, contributes to the peace and benefit of the whole. Some are below me, and this sweetens the thought that I am below others: by which libration are prevented those distempers which arise, either from the affectation of more power, or the shame of having none at all. As these degrees of mean and noble are, beyond doubt, of absolute necessity to political concord, so possibly the closer the remove, the better yet as to the point of social expedience; provided that the distances be such as to avoid confusion, and to preserve distinct offices and powers from interfering. Nor is this gradual method only suited to human interest, as being most accommodate to public quiet, and to defend the sacredness of majesty from popular distempers; but it is the very rule which God imposes upon the whole creation; making of the same lump one vessel to honour,

mentioned in the New Testament, *διακονοι*, "deacons." Their first appointment is related in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It was when the church had greatly increased, and the charge of the temporal concerns of the poor and of the widows had become oppressive to the apostles, and hindered their more spiritual duties. Accordingly, they appointed Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, by imposition of hands and prayer, unto this more secular business; although, as these chosen men were miraculously gifted, their labours were not confined to serving tables.

That the office was intended to be a permanent one, is evident from the fact, that directions are given, in the first Epistle to Timothy, respecting their appointment, and their qualifications laid down. They were required "to be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre:" indispensable virtues these in men who had money in their hands, and social and eventually sacramental ordinances under their care. Macknight considers that they are often comprehended under the term elders: and this is probable, when we remember that they are not especially enumerated

another to dishonour: (Rom. ix. 21 :) subjecting, by the law of his own will, this to that; that to what is next above it; both to a further power; all to himself.—Author of "Interest Mistaken."

in those ordinations which the apostles made in the churches they founded, (Acts xiv. 23,) although they could not have been omitted; for there was equal need of them in all places.

It seems evident, that unto deacons were not committed stately the public ministry of the word, and the administration of sacred rites; for they, the deacons, were appointed in order that the apostles might more fully attend to these themselves. It is true, the first deacons were eminently holy men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; but, divested of the miraculous gifts which, of course, belonged only to that special time, they did not appear to claim either pastoral authority, or exercise pastoral powers. Stephen did wonders and miracles among the people, in addition to his official deeds, but not in the character of a public teacher: he disputed in the synagogue and in the council; but his conduct was purely necessary, and his discourse, though inspired, was apologetic. Philip, another of the primitive deacons, did certainly both preach and baptize: "for he went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them there;" and also, having joined the Ethiopian on his journey, he "opened his mouth," "preached unto him Jesus," and afterwards baptized him in the water by which they were passing: but it must be recollected, that Philip was not merely deacon but evangelist, or an assistant of the apostles; and, therefore, all this was done

by virtue of his office as an evangelist, and not in consequence of his diaconal ordination. Nor is this a mere invention, adopted to serve a theory; for, in Acts xxi. 8, there is mention made of Paul and his companions at Cesarea entering the house of "Philip the evangelist," who, we are expressly told, was "one of the seven."

No doubt but all sincere believers, at that day, preached Jesus in a certain sense; that is, conversationally among the strangers with whom their lot, for the time, was cast; and the deacons, especially, would so act, with the approval of the apostles: but all we mean is, that they were not specially appointed to this work, nor was it comprehended in the business over which they were set. It was theirs to take charge of the widows and of the poor, to be the stewards of the offerings brought from the people, and to serve the church in various acts of economical and temporary arrangement. The office might be held by females; for Phebe was a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, and Euodias and Syntyche were probably of the church at Philippi: and deaconesses were highly useful then, to those young members who were of their own sex, as well as to the widows; especially as the customs of society had laid a greater restraint upon the social intercourse of women with men than has been felt since those times. But women were not allowed to teach, but enjoined to keep silence in the

churches.—And thus briefly does the Scripture speak of deacons.

By some writers on church government a third class of ecclesiastical persons has been devised, namely, “lay-elders,” with which supposed office that of deacon has been sometimes confounded; but no solid foundation can be discovered in Scripture on which to rest this system. Hooker proposes to discuss the question of lay-elders, as forming, together with pastors, a joint jurisdiction, in the sixth book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*: but that book is evidently unfinished, and closed by some other and feebler hand; for the argument there against this regimen is not conducted to its issue,—a circumstance which is certainly to be regretted. However, the chief strength of the cause is considered to lie in the text quoted above, from 1 Tim. v. 17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and doctrine.” From this it has been argued, that the apostle here recognises certain elders ruling, and yet who did not labour in the word and doctrine, but who were, in the present popular sense of the term, “laymen.” Now, although it may be granted that in apostolic and primitive times, under the term “elder” might be comprehended occasionally other office-bearers, such as deacons, yet it is evident, in such cases, the lower office was

merged in the higher; and still more evident, that the elders or bishops who formed the pastorate, whatever they might be besides, were fully separated from secular society and devoted to the service of the church. The very text in question intimates this. But as Calvin was the first man who interrupted the ecclesiastical regimen of the middle ages, by establishing the platform of Geneva, in which lay-elders are recognised, and from which other churches have since copied their institutions, it will be well to hear his sentiments on the passage. After quoting Chrysostom's opinion, that the honour in question was the double honour of temporal support and reverence, and after stating his own to be, that it signified a double offering or stipend, as compared with that given to widows, who are spoken of in the context, he proceeds: "Præfert tamen eos qui in verbo et doctrina laborant, hoc est, qui docendo verbo sunt intenti. Nam duæ istæ voces rem unam significant, nempe verbi prædicationem. Sed ne verbi nomine otiosum studium et speculativum (ut vocant) quispiam intelligeret, adjecit doctrinam. Colligere autem hinc licet, duo fuisse tunc presbyterorum genera: quia non omnes ad docendum ordinabantur. Nam aperte verba sonant quosdam benè et honestè præfuisse: quibus tamen non erant commissæ docendi partes. Et sane ex populo deligebantur graves et probati homines, qui una cum pastoribus communi consilio et auctoritate

ecclesiæ disciplinam administrarent, ac essent quasi censores moribus corrigendis."

He finds here two kinds of presbyters or elders, those "who labour in the word and doctrine," and "grave and approved men," who, together in common council and authority, administer the discipline of the church. But if it were certain that these grave and approved men had an equal share in the administration with the evangelizing presbyters, nothing can be clearer than that they did not at all answer to the modern idea of laymen; for, on Calvin's own showing, and on the showing of all eminent critics, *τιμη* in this passage signifies reward, stipend, or wages: and, therefore, these all, whether they preached, or catechised, or served the church in any other manner of guidance and instruction, were persons fully given up to the ministry, and had no temporal concerns of their own to manage; for they were actually supported by the church. If then the term *cleri*, or clergy, be used to signify in ecclesiastical writings the pastors of the church, or those who administer the paternal discipline, and Jerome applies the term to such because the Lord is their *κληρος*, "lot," the individuals referred to by our reformer, as being implied in the text, are manifestly included under the term. Mr. Nichols says: "The Assembly of Divines at Westminster spent much time concerning lay-elders, and their power of ruling. This they laboured to prove from the ex-

pressions in 1 Cor. xii. 28, 'helps, governments,' &c. Dr. Lightfoot opposed this opinion by proving, that the Septuagint employs one of the Greek words there used as the translation of a Hebrew one, which imports not the act, but the ability of gifts fit to govern; and the other word imports 'helps' to interpret the language and sense of those who spake with tongues, as is apparent from the 28th to the 30th verses of the same chapter." And, besides this criticism of Dr. Lightfoot's, the difficulty of making out the case from so general a statement must have been felt by every one. It is not meant here to deny that pastors ought to act in concurrence with other advisers: such an arrangement is both reasonable and scriptural; but those advisers will be found among the deacons, who were never, till a later age than that of the apostles, reckoned amongst those who, in the strict sense, were termed cleri, or pastors.

Deacons cannot be reckoned amongst pastoral and evangelizing ministers, without, besides other anomalies, taking this inconvenience with it,—that females must be included; for Phebe is expressly a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea: and yet females, by apostolic authority, as we have seen, are bidden not to teach, but to keep silence in the church.

In the churches of antiquity, the diaconal office did not sustain any material change, though a few particulars, which times and places made necessary, were added. The deacons, as appears from the

earliest fathers, prepared the bread and wine of the Lord's supper; in cases of necessity, and in the absence of the pastor or bishop, they baptized; and, by the permission of the bishop, they occasionally preached. From them the presbyters were generally ordained: so that those who were called to teach and rule had to pass through all the gradations of office, in order that their progress might depend on character and Christian worth.

A number of still subordinate offices were likewise appointed; such as those of sub-deacon, reader, and so on; but as these are amongst the things which the church may appoint or annul at pleasure, they will not be the subjects of especial consideration.

As far, then, as ministers are concerned, this is the sum of what we are taught from the New Testament, and from apostolic practice:—

1. That the pastoral care and oversight of Christ's flock is committed to a class of persons who are sometimes called bishops, and sometimes elders; the former denoting the nature of their office, and the latter being a title of respect, and adopted from the later Jews.

2. That from the earliest times there was one chosen from the several presbyters of the church to preside over the rest in their assemblies; and that

he was, by way of eminence, styled the bishop : yet still he was only first among equals ; and his superior powers were only conventional, and not held by divine right.

3. That, besides the pastoral ministers, there was a subordinate order, called deacons expressly : and that their office was prospectively considered to be perpetual and needful ; which was, to take care of the poor, provide the bread and wine for the Lord's supper, engage in private instructions ; in cases of necessity, and in the absence of the regular minister, to baptize ; and sometimes, under his appointment, to preach.

And now, with regard to the churches themselves, it is of importance to inquire what form they assumed, both previous to, and after the completion of, the canon of Scripture.

During the lives of the apostles, they, with the evangelists, were the supreme pastors of all the churches, and acted according to the authority vested in them by Christ. After their death, many small churches would be found in remote places, and considerably distant from each other : each of these would act upon the principle before adverted to,—“ One bishop to one church,”—and thus would become independent, and be governed by its own laws. Such were, probably, the churches mentioned in the Apocalypse : for Ignatius shows that at Smyrna,

Philadelphia, and Ephesus, the people could assemble in one place, and receive the sacrament at one table; and that the bishop, or pastor, could personally know each member of his flock; and that this was likewise the case at Magnesia, Trallium, and other places. This was one form, and continued while the apostles and evangelists had a jurisdiction over the whole, and for some time after; indeed, where congregations were isolated and remote, no other could be adopted. But, in large cities, congregations gradually multiplied out of one original one, each of which congregations required a pastor; and some, likewise, arose in the villages around, to each of which there was sent a minister from the body of presbyters, who was called chorepiscopus, or country bishop; but all these were subject to one assembly, at the head of which was the bishop by eminence, the *episcopus gregis et pastorum*.

Such was the church of Alexandria; and such, eventually, as they increased in numbers, were many of the rest; and thus the prevailing form of polity became the connexional, many congregations placing themselves under a common inspection, and submitting to a common government. Rome, Antioch, Constantinople, Carthage, Jerusalem, and the aforementioned city, were the great centres from which germinant churches proceeded; how soon, alas! to be blighted by error and sin! This connexional

church-form would be in strict accordance with the spirit of the discipline exercised by the apostles and evangelists, who exhorted that the strong should bear with the infirmities of the weak. It would be the unvarying result of Christian zeal; for when men are anxious to promote the salvation of others, they not only add to the number of their own spiritual children, but likewise to the number of devout congregations, who will all naturally cling to the parent church, as the off-shoots of the banian, although radicated themselves, cling to the parent tree.

In this form lay the energy and expansiveness of the Christian ecclesiastical system; and, before the policy of the world was allowed to interfere, the system was effective. The sphere of each pastor was originally called *παροικια*, "parish," and in the fourth century, *διοικησις*, "diocess." Metropolitans or archbishops, and primates, arose in days of outward prosperity, and when the church government was made, in a plastic manner, to resemble that of the secular power; and in course of years, the single churches and the religious connexions, which were originally so simple and efficient, were merged in the provincial allotments and dominant usurpations of the church of Rome.—This may conclude our glance at ecclesiastical forms.

In connexion with the present subject, it may

next be a proper matter for inquiry, To what ends are church order and authority to be made subservient? The answer to this question is not difficult; for as the whole is instituted by Christ, and forms a part of his redeeming plan, it is in order to promote the simple purity, efficiency, extension, and stability of Christianity in the world; keeping, at the same time, the fact constantly in mind, that the church is a permanent, though voluntary, society, and exists solely for spiritual purposes, and administers mild and spiritual laws.

The first thing to be observed, towards the securing of these ends, has ever been the preservation of sound doctrine. Our Lord, when on earth, laid down the most solemn warnings against false teachers; and so likewise did his apostles. St. Paul told the Ephesians of men who should arise, even among themselves, "speaking perverse things;" and also cautioned Timothy against such: he calls them "men of corrupt minds;" and speaks of Hymenæus and Philetus using words which did "eat as a canker." Titus, likewise, was warned of "vain talkers and deceivers," "whose mouths," the apostle does not hesitate to say, "must be stopped." Here, then, we find St. Paul confiding the power to declare what is sound doctrine, to the future church, that is, to the ministers and people of every evangelical body until the end of time; which power is implied in the command given to silence the

promulgators of false doctrine. This has been called, by systematic writers, the dogmatic power; and although the language sounds somewhat harsh, when put in an English version, and the claim has been carried by the church of Rome to a most monstrous and anti-Christian usurpation, yet it has a meaning which, when properly understood, is founded in truth. The church of Rome brings in her traditions as of equal authority with the holy Scriptures, and directly in the face of that rule which declares the Scripture to be sufficient for doctrine; so that with this unholy adding to the words of the book, all Protestants have nothing to do, but appeal to the sacred canon, and to that only, as the true and infallible guide.

All persons, however, do not interpret the Scriptures in the same manner; and therefore, from the beginning, there have been occasionally assemblies of ministers convened, who have deliberated together respecting the sense in which certain doctrines and precepts are to be understood, and who, when they had agreed, declared the sense, both on behalf of themselves and of the churches united with them. Such assemblies were the council at Jerusalem in the apostles' days, respecting circumcision; the council at Nice, in the third century, condemning Arianism, and establishing the Godhead and Sonship of Christ; the council of Constantinople, soon after, which established the doctrine of the Divinity

and Personality of the Holy Ghost. These councils, and others, have been greatly revered by Protestants, not because they considered them infallible, but because their decisions were founded on the plain and literal sense of Scripture, as the church of England declares in her articles:—" Things ordained by general councils as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared they be taken out of holy Scripture." At the same time, "in the multitude of counsellors there" was "safety."

When each church had adopted its system of doctrine, and had declared how it understood the words of the Bible, whether such declaration was made by a reference to councils, or whether by adopting creeds and confessions which flowed from them, all persons might then join that church whose views accorded with its approved standard; and, having actually joined it, they became responsible to the standard, and by it all subsequent heresies were tried.

The "*potestas dogmatica*," therefore, which the schoolmen strained to such a height, when mildly interpreted, means nothing more than a power to declare the sense in which the different doctrines of the Gospel are to be received, and to make such provision that those doctrines so understood shall not be vitiated. Every Christian church has this power: and when the doctrinal code is adopted, the

ministers and subordinate teachers are bound to teach in accordance with it; appealing confidently to the words of inspiration as their authority, and then, with some degree of deference, to the decisions of general councils, as an important, but not infallible, confirmation of the truth.

By this power the church may silence, and indeed is required to silence, any one within its pale, who teaches what is understood to be false doctrine: otherwise the unity of the faith could not long exist, nor indeed the church either. And no injury is hereby inflicted on the individual: he knew under what compact he at first became a member; and therefore, if he change his mind, he at least has no right to change the terms of communion in favour of himself, an individual.

In order to the promotion of the great ends which have been mentioned, there must be, likewise, an authority which shall form regulations for the conduct of ministers, officers, and members, and which shall establish every thing relating to the order of worship, the observance of rites, and the management of the spiritual, economical, and financial affairs of the community.

This has been called likewise by the schoolmen, “*potestas διατακτικη*,” the disposing power; and although the church of Rome has carried this to an unscriptural and abominably sinful height, in order to justify its own load of idolatrous observances, yet,

when properly explained, it is found coeval with every form of Christianity whatever, and rests upon the apostolic direction, "Let every thing be done decently and in order." That there must be an arranging authority, and that the members of the community, for Christ's sake, and for peace's sake, should obey it, is evident, in the first place, from the fact, that the manner in which many duties and services are to be performed is nowhere pointed out in the letter of Scripture, and therefore it is left to be determined by inference and analogies.

The observance of the sabbath is binding; and the church must show what are, in certain cases, violations of that sacred rest. The sacraments must be administered; and the church must determine in what mode, as the written word is silent on the subject. It must also, in special cases, interpret the bearing which the laws of Christ, and the spirit of the Gospel, and the general principles of revealed truth, have upon those cases. It must appoint the liturgical forms, when such are used; set apart days of thanksgiving and prayer; direct the order of public worship and private meetings; and many other things which times and circumstances can only give rise to, and which cannot possibly be named in this short and imperfect summary.

To use a simile of Hooker's, it no more implies imperfection in the New-Testament revelation, that

it should leave many things to be regulated by enlightened reason, than it implies any imperfection in God's work, that when he has by his creative power brought forth man, he should leave him to be clothed and housed by the dictates of wisdom and his own exertions: and especially, we may add, when the light of reason in such a case is objectively the light of revelation. But, with the twentieth article of the church of England, we maintain, at the same time, devoutly, "that it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written," nor indeed to any thing that is from God's word clearly implied; for where no special precept is found, the scope and tenor of the sacred page will be abundantly decisive. A devout and humble examination of that scope and tenor will prevent any positive institution which shall be contrary to the simplicity and spirituality of the Gospel; and where there is a standard of doctrine, there will generally be a standard of opinion as to what is, or what is not, calculated to promote the interests of religion,—what is offensive to the majesty and glory of God, and what would preserve the humility and promote the devotion of man.

As the disposing authority lies with the church, so for its exercise it is responsible to its great Head. If every thing is "set truly in order," "done to edification," and to the glory of God, then the work of holiness is promoted, and the church is God's

sanctuary; but if the want of spirituality and unction be met by a round of observances and spiritless forms, the glory is gone, and there is as much difference between the two cases as there was between the fire that burned on the high priest's altar, and that which Christ sent down from heaven. Such a torpid formality as is here supposed, such a perversion of authority, God will judge.

And, thirdly and lastly, in promotion of the great ends before mentioned, there is the judicial power, "potestas διακριτικη," a power to inflict or remove censures. This has been magnified by that fallen church of which we have spoken, (and which of course has monopolized it,) so as to exercise a control over the divine mercy, and influence the decisions of Almighty God. Impious and tremendous in the extreme! But nevertheless there is a judicial authority lodged with every true Christian church: it is bound to rebuke the offending members who sin within its pale; to withdraw, in particular instances, church privileges for a season from the unhappy persons; and in cases of flagrant transgression, or protracted and impenitent contumacy, to exclude them.

In this case the church assumes no greater authority than many a worldly society; but there are much more solemn consequences involved in the act. Exclusion from the church cannot be lawful unless the excluded person has violated the laws of Christ; and supposing he continues in impenitency,

his interest in Christ is likewise forfeited, and he is now in the sterile wilderness of the world. Not that he is a child of wrath because of the church's sentence, but because it declares and echoes the sentence of God. Our Lord taught the mode of conduct which was to be pursued in his kingdom, relative to an offending brother: he was first to be admonished privately; next in the presence of witnesses; and if a sinner still, he was lastly to be referred to the church, and made an outcast, considered as a heathen man or a publican,—until repentance, as we learn by inference in another place, should warrant his restoration.

The gift of the keys of the kingdom of heaven unto Peter, upon which the Papists have laid such stress, is capable of an interpretation which quite harmonizes with the view we take of the judicial sentence, and which view is, in fact, partly grounded upon it. Keys were a symbol of power, and were worn as such, Lightfoot shows, by the Jewish elders, who were wont to open the meaning of the sacred books, and to pronounce decisively on matters connected with their law; and according to their decision the individual was bound or loosed as regarded the consequences. Accordingly, our Lord promised to give unto the apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven; saying, that whomsoever he bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and whomsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. And in Matthew xviii. 18, a

similar declaration is made to all the apostles, in which the binding and loosing power committed to them is connected with that censure of the church, to which the offending brother just mentioned is liable. The apostles, therefore, were empowered to open the kingdom of God to the Gentiles, and to declare authoritatively what were the terms on which salvation was to be obtained; to pronounce, as in the case of Simon Magus, upon the state of certain individuals; and to declare what was obligatory upon men in general.

For this they were qualified by receiving the Holy Ghost, which in this matter preserved them from all error. And accordingly, in the course of their ministry, they made use of their authority, which was, not of themselves to forgive sins, but to declare under what circumstances God forgave them; and not of themselves to excommunicate and condemn men, but to show in what cases God did so. When any evangelic communion, therefore, rightly interprets these apostolic canons of condemning or acquitting, it is furnished from them with an infallible rule of judgment, by which to try the case of all offending members; and, as far as it proceeds on a parallel with that rule, the sentence which is uttered on earth is not only approved but confirmed by Almighty God in heaven, who cannot contradict his own inspirations. When that sentence extends to the expulsion of any one, and no unholy motive or error of judgment inva-

validates it, the offender is thereby separated from that special grace of Christ, which is granted to believers in their collected and united state,—is debarred access to that river the streams of which make glad the city of God. By this the church bears its testimony against sin before the world, remembering, with sacred dread, that judgment must begin at the house of God; and by this it preserves a pure and spiritual community, who shall be the depositaries of Christian holiness, and witnesses for God.

The primitive Christians used the utmost severity to the offending and lapsed; and when they excommunicated them, would not allow of their return until cries, tears, and a reformed conduct had given the utmost proof of deep repentance. They soon carried the exercise of this discipline too far; by reason of which, and by their unguarded method of defining the authority whence it was derived, they laid the foundation for those Papal corruptions which eventually darkened and distorted the fair face of Christianity on earth.

Tertullian says of the expelled, “*Gladio spirituali necantur*,—They are killed with the spiritual sword:” and too often is admission to the peace of the church by him and others made identical with admission into the true kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, by parity of reasoning, exclusion from the one, the same thing, actually and unexceptionably, as exclusion from the other. But the sentence of

which we speak is an empty sound, when not founded on the law of Scripture, or when pronounced over an innocent person. All judgment is given unto the Son, whose final and irrevocable sentence, both in the case of true Christians and undoubted sinners, is only anticipated and declared in his church below.

Such is the great end, then, for which believers are called into one society,—the promotion of pure and undefiled religion in the world; and as Christianity is intended to re-establish that holy order, which sin has so long broken, we may confidently look for a display of it in that institution which contains the living witnesses of its power.

Such a union and such arrangements as we have been speaking of, afford scope for the exercise of those graces which Christians are presumed to possess: for it is only in church union that believers can “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;” that they can “be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;” that they can be subordinate to authority, and, as individuals, mutually tender and forbearing. It is here only that the finest sympathies of the soul are called forth: for in every spiritual and believing community there is such an intercommunion of joy and sorrow between the members, that the heart of every one is made much more tender and expansive, than if he occupied a solitary posi-

tion. It is only as a flock, too, that they can be the subjects of pastoral care: believers are, in a higher sense than circumcised Israelites, God's people,—“the sheep of his hand:” there is one sacred inclosure which, like the tabernacle of the Israelites, is illumined from above by the semi-bright cloud of the divine presence, but all is wilderness beside: blessings descend on the church which do not and cannot descend on separate individuals in the same manner; they have been quickened together,—they are raised up together,—they sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,—they have an unction from the Holy One which was never either asked or received by those who are without; and are thus under a course of discipline and training which shall sooner or later terminate in their being admitted into the church of the glorified.

The New-Testament code does little more than define the peculiar relations which subsist between ministers and people, and enjoin the duties which mutually flow from those relations. For there is no especial plan of ecclesiastical government recognised; nor is it likely that there should be, when we recollect that the same volume describes the state of man to be broken and perturbed, until nearly the time of the end; and that therefore all voluntary combinations of men would fluctuate with the troubles of society. The changes which take place in the visible church, however, do never affect

the stability of that unseen one which enumerates its members in nearly every people and every land. As long as the world stands we cannot look for outward uniformity; for not only must the administration of rites and ordinances be made to depend on climate and locality, but the manner in which ministerial functions are exercised will vary according to the character of the people. In an intelligent and educated community, all church-laws and outward regulations must be made to appeal to the enlightened wisdom of the mass; and formidable guards must be established to prevent the abuse and excess of pastoral power; and considerable scope must be allowed for the influence of pious laymen to range in. But in many other instances it cannot be so. A man of God, and a member of some Christian community, departs to a distant shore: having been first commissioned by his brethren at home, and commended to the Head of the church in prayer, he lands among rude and idolatrous tribes, and, after a series of preparations, opens his message,—preaches the word with a yearning heart, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; the result is, as it ever has been from the beginning, multitudes begin to weep, believe, and live, and are baptized in the name of the Trinity. But, that they may have that training which shall make them holy and happy, and preserve them in the faith against temptation and the wiles of Satan,

it is necessary that they should be formed into church order; and yet what do these sons of the forest know of order in the sense in which we take it? What do they know of the principles of ecclesiastical government? Must not the missionary be the directing spirit of their infant religious state, and must not his first directions and appointments be arbitrary? If there be among the converted some who are capable, sooner or later, of assisting him in his happy toil, must not he single out the individuals, give them their authority, and appoint them their work? And from his decision, in purely religious matters of arrangement, can there be any appeal? Is he not the angel, the bishop, of the church? And long perhaps must he labour there before the people are prepared intellectually, or by scripturally instructed minds, for that exact form of polity and order which his brethren observe at home. Both Eliot and Brainerd, in the midst of their labours, acted on Episcopal principles, although bishop was not their title; and so, in reality, must every missionary act until the new church begins to foster and raise up its own ministers, and devise a canonical record for its own regulation.

All minor details may be innocently adapted to the genius and habits of a people. The elect of God amongst the poetic and imaginative easterns may act in one way, and the pensive deep-thinking inhabitants of the north in another; the

converted isles of the sea may eventually have their mode of building, and the polished inhabitants of an imperial city, theirs: and if all use gold, silver, or precious stones for their material, and build on the true foundation, Christ's law and written word,—well; but if there be a mass of wood, hay, and stubble, however it be garnished, the fire shall consume it, although that which is incorruptible and of God may remain.

When God reduced those chaotic masses which are mentioned in the history of the creation to divine order and beauty, and formed the world by the energy of his Spirit, his power first communicated the impulse by which it commenced its majestic movement in the infinite space; and his presence still directs its deeply eventful journey, and maintains its mutual dependencies until the last day shall come. But in the mean time, there are minor laws in force which are created by time, and place, and people; which laws are alike tending to the fulfilment of his designs, and to the promotion of the happiness of man,—laws which are not enacted by his word, but recognised and sanctioned by his providence. And in like manner God the Holy Ghost has called into existence a spiritual and indefectible church universal, for the purpose of glorifying Christ and fulfilling his redeeming purposes; and is so present with that institution, that the gates of hades shall never prevail against

it, however many of its visible members may pass through into their eternal state, or however many of the hosts of darkness may issue forth to their hopeless battle: yet, at the same time, every section of that church creates for itself a spiritual code on minor matters, which sometimes the necessities of the people, and sometimes the changes of society, suggest.

These laws may not be dictated by the Spirit's immediate suggestion, or placed in the inspired record; but if they are agreeable to Christ's all-authoritative commandment, and if their administration has tended to the increase of believers, and to their knowledge, their purity, and peace, then they have the Spirit's sanction; and the work of man, in a higher sense than the imaginative ever dreamed of, has results which are destined to immortality. God is glorified in the very handy-work of his servants; for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE METHODIST CHURCH AGREEABLE IN FORM AND REGIMEN TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

“How sedulously have indifference and selfishness employed themselves to pile up their icy barriers around the different divisions of the church, and to restrain those tides of generous feeling, which were designed to roll through the expanse of the common ocean, to the mere creeks and gulfs which indent its shores!”—WATSON, vol. ii., p. 140.

As these chapters are intended for the use of the Wesleyan Methodists, it is now time to direct attention to that form of church order which is established among them. Nearly half a century has elapsed since the apostolical Wesley went to his rest, and nearly an entire one has passed over since the societies under his care began to be formed. They are found existing and increasing in the principal towns in the kingdom, and in foreign lands are multiplying on the numerous mission stations. A religious system, which includes above three hundred thousand persons, united in close Christian fellowship, and nearly a thousand effective ministers, must have an influence in the land of no very feeble character; and an appeal to the history of the past

century will show that it has been an influence for good,—it has been arousing, regenerating, and hallowing. It is painful, however, to think, that even to this day we have had to defend our position; to build like the ancient Jews, who wrought with their hands, and carried a defensive weapon by their side: though this last, we may safely say, has never been used without necessity; and aggressively, never.

The high Churchman, from the beginning, has denounced us schismatical, departing without cause from the national communion; and the high Dissenter, on the other hand, has scorned our inconsistency, as he terms it, in taking up separated ground from the Anglican church, and yet not formally professing that establishments *per se* are wrong. We mourn over the spirit of mutual exclusiveness which has stolen over each portion of the Christian fold: and perhaps we ourselves are more imbued with it than we are wont to suppose; but, if this be the case, it has been breathed upon us.

We sigh over the ravages made by the common enemy in the world; but, in order to advance the cause of Christ, and promote the establishment of his kingdom, we are far from thinking that it is our duty to give up a position which was taken in a time of peril, or to be silent, when another part of the host charges us with having ventured unauthorized into the field, and, almost with the wrath

of an Eliab, bids us, David-like, back again. Our domain has been wrested not from the church, but the world; and therefore we abide, until supplanted and succeeded by worthier, or we perish away: to do otherwise, would be to turn against Providence, and prove traitors to Christ.

In the first place, and in answer to high-church objections, we plead Not guilty to the charge of schism. Campbell shows that the word *σχισμα*, although literally signifying "a rent," does not, in its scriptural sense, mean an outward separation of persons from a visible community, the members of which communicate and worship in a certain manner; but that it implies, when used by the apostles, that torn and agitated state of a Christian society which is produced by the alienation of the affection of certain members from certain other, who are all, nevertheless, inclosed by one pale. It may arise from an improper attachment to peculiar persons and peculiar opinions; and consists in perturbing the church by its constant and flagrant breaches of charity. In this sense the word is inapplicable to us most utterly. When Mr. Wesley, in the bosom of the church, began to revive the doctrine of the apostles and of the Reformation, he did not exhibit any thing of that unholy conduct which the word imports: there was no vaunting of himself, no claim to superior light, no invidious comparison of himself with his brethren, no depreciation of the church order to which he

was subjected;—he yearned and laboured for the spirituality of the establishment; and when converts multiplied around him, and one or two ministers beside, he grieved that no one in the clerical ranks would either sanction him or aid to cherish the rising flock, and that they would rather vituperate both, and drive the latter from the Lord's table.

What could he do? He believed his Bible, and considered sinners to be in that awful state which that holy book describes: with his light and conviction, he could not but attempt to save them. The church either could not or would not furnish pastoral aid and guardianship for the thousands who were reclaimed from sin; and therefore he was compelled to furnish it himself, by appointing religious teachers from among the best-informed and most spiritual of the converted. But it was no disaffection to his ecclesiastical superiors, or compeers, that led to this: he loved them as a brother,—he exhorted them to arise and awake: witness his university sermon,—his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,—his Circular Letter. And when, O grief of heart! he saw the sacramental table inaccessible, and the people as sheep without a shepherd, he was moved with compassion, and saw that the time was come when the commands of Almighty God were no longer to be disobeyed, by adhering to the minor details of humanly established order, and that now the fence must be overleaped, as the

boundary was too strait. He did not, however, sin against the true *potestas διατακτικη* of the church, as explained in the last chapter; for the *potestas* in question implies a power to supply such modes of discipline and instruction as both new converts and established Christians may require: but this power, in reference to the Methodists, was not exercised; in fact, the Lord's supper was virtually denied them. If the church of England, then, had made no provision for a special work of God, was he to make none? This was the issue of the matter,—souls must perish, or he must go beyond order. The provision that he made was supplementary, and absolutely necessary: he gave nothing but what the church was bound to give; that is, if the church's own doctrine was to be still promulgated, believed, and experienced, the lack of true doctrine, and of love and zeal on the part of the clergy, had to be supplied by a class of men who providentially appeared at the time, and whose labours were abundantly blessed by God. These were the doings of Mr. Wesley, who, with all his people, as long as he could, cleaved to the church; and if Campbell, just referred to, is right, he was guilty of no schism, he opposed no authority, declared no false doctrine, arose against no brother, formed no party;—they who departed from the word of God, as interpreted by the articles and homilies, and who opposed and insulted the holy man when he appealed to this

same text, and the same comment,—they were the true schismatics.*

But the sense of the word schism has been somewhat altered by ecclesiastical usage: it has been used from far antiquity to signify a causeless separation from the visible society of the church, and from the jurisdiction of its pastors; and, if it be so understood in the present case, the charge against us assumes a different aspect, but is still one from which we are freed by the following considerations. When Mr. Wesley left behind him in the world his numerous societies, it was evident that by far the greater part of them were composed of persons who never had attended, and who never would attend, the services of the church. They had been irreligious. When brought to God, they were taught and inclined to keep Christ's commandments, of which a highly important one was, that they should commemorate, by the sacrament, his atoning sufferings

* If it be argued that schism consists in withdrawing from a church which derives its ministers by assumed succession from the apostles, such an argument would be fraught with inconveniences. Paul, in describing the spiritual building of the Christian church, states, that believers "are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) Either then the true basis of church legitimacy is the *doctrine* of those who are mentioned in the text; or else those who monopolize the term "church" to themselves, must exhibit a succession of prophets, as well as apostles, for both are connected with the chief corner-stone.

and death. This, at the church, they could not do; for either they were actually refused communion, or their numbers were too great for the parish minister to receive. They likewise pined for the pure administration of the word; but from by far the greater proportion of pulpits they could obtain nothing but meager Pelagianism, and hackneyed generalities against enthusiasm, mingled with abusive attacks upon those preachers to whom, under God, they owed their all. Such a state of things could not long continue; and, especially, as many of the clergy added to their bigotry immorality, the Methodist people could have no confidence in them. In their own preachers they had confidence; and therefore they called earnestly upon the Conference for the administration of the ordinances of Christ. The Conference felt their awful situation: the assembled preachers prayed and wept, and at last yielded, by pressure of circumstances, to the wishes of the people. The separation from the church, long foreseen by Mr. Wesley, took place: the persons who had been called to labour in the Gospel by him, and who had been virtually ministers of the Gospel even so far, now became fully and ostensibly such, and the whole body a distinct church. In Mr. Wesley's ordination of his preachers the church universal acquiesced; an extraordinary field of labour was opened; the Spirit called,—the church was silent; the Methodists stepped in, and

their pastors, discharging all the duties of the ministry, became true and legitimate successors of the apostles.

Thus there was a separation, but not without cause: it was no schism; it tended rather to prevent a thousand schisms. The mother-church did not, and perhaps could not, like the eagle, flutter over her young one, and teach her to venture forth into the stormy element of spiritual warfare: no, we were spurned, and left to try our pinion alone. And if it be argued, that, as there is in the present day, a most visible and delightful improvement in the established church, both as regards the revival of its doctrines and the character of its ministry, we are yet schismatic if we return not to its bosom; our reply is, that as our people were gathered out of the world by the labours of our ministers, and have been cherished long by our own ordinances and institutions, it is not likely that any other system could secure for them an equal privilege; which privilege we are bound to afford, as long as we are able, on the same ground as parents are bound to provide for their children. If we were not to provide for our own, we should likewise deny the faith, and be worse than an infidel.

We greatly and heartily rejoice in the improvement of the Anglican church, although our assertion is not much credited: we, too, in our turn, have been the foster-mother of many of its ministers,

and our prayers shall be offered for its spirituality. But we must keep our own position; for we are now a church too; and so far from being the abettors of schism by retaining that position, we are preventing the desolating consequences of that sin, as scripturally understood: for the moment our ministers abandon their charge, the people are broken into ten thousand fractions, irreparably injured by the shock, and can never unite more. At no period of Methodist history could the result have been otherwise.

In answer to the strictures of high Dissent, we can only say, that we cannot allow the assumption that establishments are antisciptural and inconsistent in themselves with the supremacy of Christ; consequently, we cannot require either of our catechumens or ministerial candidates any protest against them. As nations are collectively responsible unto God, according to the doctrine of the Scriptures, so we think the governments of those nations may, under wisely ordered circumstances, do something to meet their national responsibilities, by providing religious institutions for the people; at the same time that they tolerate and protect the ministers which arise from voluntary churches. Whether those who come to us adopt one view of ecclesiastical government or another, it is no matter: they acquiesce in our own, and come for higher and holier purposes, than the promotion of the interests or aggrandizement of a party.

To the world we offer no apology; we only offer Christ. Nor should we apologize to the church, were not our legitimacy called in question. It shall now be our endeavour to show, that our principles and polity are, as far as can be sincerely learned, conformable to the canons of the New Testament, as explained in the last chapter. We do not engage to show that Methodism was studiously composed and framed *a priori*, in order to form a masterpiece of ecclesiastical perfection: for there was no human designing in the case; the arrangements were successive, providential, and must be deemed by good men to have been inevitable. Every thing was done by Mr. Wesley at a crisis, with great wisdom, and in the spirit of prayer, but not with premeditation. There was no archetype before his eye: when the fabric arose, it was found to be built according to the divine word; the proof, therefore, that God directed the work is more decisive. There was a pattern in the mount; but the Almighty did not show it to our founder, as he did to Moses.

1. In the first place, the utmost care is taken to secure, that all who are admitted into the ministry are called of God, keeping in mind the admonition before adverted to, "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God;" and remembering, that if there be overseers of the flock, they must be made so by the Holy Ghost. The way in which ministers are originated is this:—The societies are divided into

“classes,” consisting of from twelve to thirty persons, as it may happen; one of whom, who weekly meets and converses with the rest, is called the “leader.” When there appears to be in any class a youth of more than ordinary promise, he is first invited by his leader or religious friends to engage in prayer-meetings, with proper restrictions; and afterwards, if his mind should be scripturally enlightened and his piety undoubted, and his convictions of duty coincide, he is allowed by the superintendent minister to preach occasionally to the smaller and country congregations, according to the directions of a printed plan, and is received into the body of “local preachers.” After having been a while thus engaged, if his mind should continue to expand, his heart be still divinely affected, his desire after the ministry increase, and fruit of his labour appear, the superintendent minister proposes him, in a “quarterly meeting” of the principal members of the society, as a candidate for admission into the ministry. Here it is that the people choose their own pastors, or at least have a positive veto in their election, as was the ancient practice. (Vide Euseb., lib. vi., p. 312.) Should he be unanimously approved, he is referred to the yearly meeting of the ministers of the “district” in which he resides, for examination. Here an account, from his own lips, of his conversion to God is required, and of the state of his religious experience: he is examined as to his views of Christian doctrine stated

in the New Testament, and explained in the writings of the founder of Methodism. If he be approved here, his name and character are transmitted by document to the "Conference" at its annual sitting; and then, if all be well, he is appointed to a "circuit," which comprises several congregations, and in which he labours with another, or with several other ministers in connexion. But many fail before they arrive so far: and even here the trial is not ended; it is only, in the most important sense, beginning.

Every candidate must labour for four years on probation; and every year be subject to a scrutiny at the "district-meeting," respecting character, talents, and improvement. At the fourth and last year of trial he again relates his conversion, and states his Christian experience, and undergoes a long and strict theological examination, both before the district-meeting and the Conference, in order that the fullest assurance may be obtained that, first, he is a faithful man, and, second, able to teach others also. This being done, he, with his brother candidates, makes a solemn profession, before a large congregation,—a "many witnesses,"—of his faith in Christ, of his ministerial call, and his resolution to be faithful to it; and then, with universal sanction, and after having answered the heart-searching questions of the formulary of the church of England, is solemnly ordained by the imposition of hands and prayer. With all these guards, it is evident, that, as far as one

human being can judge of another, our ministers are faithful, and called of God. We make no invidious comparisons between ourselves and other churches in this respect; but only show that there is, on our part, an honest endeavour to follow, in this all-important point, the example of the apostles, and to obey the commands of Christ.

2. In the next place, we consider, that the subordination and disposition of our ministers is likewise according to the New Testament.

Every one who is ordained is considered a scriptural presbyter; and, therefore, as possessing equal authority with his brethren to perform pastoral functions in the congregations of the people: yet several distinctions obtain, nevertheless, which are partly enjoined and partly conventional. In many circuits there are young ministers stationed together with elder ones, the eldest or most suitable of whom is distinctively the "superintendent," (which word is a literal version of bishop,) who exercises an oversight of the rest, and directs their labours. To him the younger, and especially the probationers, render obedience in all matters relating to their sacred work; and in this they follow a precept which is binding upon all believers, and especially upon those who have the charge of them, as the context will show: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." (1 Peter v. 5.) Age has usually connected with it experience and

influence; and these united command respect. The instances are very rare in which a young minister is wiser or holier than his senior colleague: but where such instances do exist, the law of subordination cannot be infringed; for the peace and stability of the church depend upon its observance.

As a number of circuits collectively form a "district," into a number of which again the Connexion is allotted, the district ministers are, in certain respects, under the inspection of the one who presides at their annual meeting: he is entrusted with powers beyond the rest, in order to secure the efficient enforcement of discipline, and the regular and constant charge of official duty. The subordination of the rest unto him is purely by compact, and does not arise from any original distinction in ordination: he is an elder who rules; and, if he follows the apostle's direction, will rule well, as regards not only the flock, but the movements of his brethren. Thus in like manner we learn, that there were many, or at least several, elders in the church at Ephesus. When St. Paul came to Miletus, he sent for them; and in that spirit-stirring charge which he delivered on the occasion of their assembling, there was this injunction, "Take heed to yourselves." And by a further perusal of the text, we find it explained and enlarged: "grievous wolves," it was predicted, should enter, "not sparing the flock;" and even from their own number "should men arise, speaking

perverse things," and seeking "to draw away disciples after them."

Here is an exhortation to the guardianship of their own body; and how could it be exercised unless some one among them were invested with a special power of investigation and discipline? To say it should be given equally unto all, were a contradiction; for the power would then be self-destructive. We find, therefore, in the apocalyptic charge which our Lord afterwards gave to the church of Ephesus, that there actually was a presiding minister who overlooked his brethren; he is termed the angel of the church; his conduct is mentioned with approbation, as not having borne with them "that are evil," and as having "tried them which say they are apostles and are not,"—notwithstanding the rebuking and impressive exhortation which follows. Thus the angel was set over his fellow-elders, not because he was greater than they, for there is no scriptural account or inference of his elevation, but because his fellows consented on account of the expediency and even necessity of the appointment: his name was the same as that of the spirits who stand before the throne of God, and who are frequently engaged in ministering unto man, probably to intimate that his solicitude and love should be like theirs. In like manner did St. James, as bishop, not as apostle, overlook the elders of the church at Jerusalem. A Wesleyan

district, therefore, with the "chairman" minister at its head, is a fair copy of these ancient and scripturally established polities. For if it be said that the angel, as mentioned in the Apocalypse, was the minister of one church only, it must be recollected that his jurisdiction, as appears from early writers, extended to the "chorepiscopi," the pastors of the surrounding and country congregations, as well as to his co-pastors who dwelt with him in the city. The Wesleyan chairman is presiding minister of one church; and if we include, after the ancient manner, the neighbouring communions of the minor towns and villages, which are around the city where he himself labours, we should then have the Wesleyan churches of London, of Bristol, of Bath; for the word *ἐκκλησία*, as has been observed before, may mean either one assembly, or a number of assemblies consolidated under one government. Cyprian, in the third century, was bishop of Carthage; but it is evident there were under his direction many others, whose ministry was exercised in different places. We know this partly from the epistles which he wrote, and partly from the numbers which attended the council held at his city, whose names were not connected with places which were generally known. Some may think that a Wesleyan CIRCUIT presents a more exact resemblance than the DISTRICT to the ecclesiastical constitutions of Jerusalem, Ephesus, or Carthage, because it generally embraces but one

town with its surrounding villages; and that its superintendent more correctly corresponds with the primitive angel or bishop of the church. The only difference, however, lies between the extent of sphere embraced by each, and in the number of ministers concerned; and as the circuit has not usually more than two, and never more than five, besides the local preachers, who are engaged in effective labour, the chairman's office seems in detail most like apostolical Episcopacy.

Whether or not, both cases exhibit the same scriptural principle. Pastors are labouring together in the work of their Lord: they "take heed" to themselves; and, in order to do this effectually, one of them, like the Ephesian or Jerusalem "pastor gregis et pastorum," is invested with the oversight or superintendence of the rest: if they need direction and advice, he gives it; if consolation or encouragement, it is his to administer it; and if charged with immorality or breach of discipline, to bring them to trial,—though subject, at the same time, to the law himself.

The chairman, especially at the synodal meeting of the district, (for synodal we may correctly call it,) investigates by inquiry the character and conduct of every member present; and thus an easy way is open for all to fulfil the great scriptural commandment which binds to mutual fidelity and watchful care.

The annual meeting of the general "Conference" under its "president," who is likewise invested, for the year in which he is chosen, with official and superior powers, is likewise another instance of the same kind, and on an ascending scale; for although we find nothing exactly like it in the Acts of the Apostles, or recorded in their epistles, any more than we find the mention of archbishop there, yet it is based on the spirit and scope of the Gospel. By such an arrangement a religious union arises, and a common disciplinary code. They that are strong are enabled, in a general and comprehensive sense, to bear with the infirmities of the weak: they can "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The president is, for the time being, eminently bishop of the general church; chosen by his brethren, his office has no temporal emolument beyond theirs; and, although a temporary as well as an honourable one, yet it cannot be arrived at but by long-continued fidelity, holiness, and wisdom: he is president only for the year. The ancients in the fourth century had similar assemblies, as to their formal constitution; but we need not refer to them, as they, and all other matters of expediency, are left open questions by the word of God, and are only guided and restricted by its general tenor.

The Wesleyan Conference, again, investigates all characters; hears all final appeals; appoints all ministers, having first ordained them; receives and

records the financial arrangements; and in its collected state, by pastoral oversight, endeavours to effect those purposes which were contemplated by the Saviour in forming his kingdom.

Being vested with the executive power, it has succoured either the minister who was factiously opposed, or the private member, or the office-bearer, who was tyrannically oppressed; it has protected the faithful and orthodox minority of a society against an erring and unfaithful majority: whereas, had the society been independent, no resource would have offered,—the alternative would have been, internal schism or actual division.

3. This last particular leads us to refer to the connexional form, especially, of Wesleyan Methodism, as being agreeable to the precepts and spirit of the Gospel. How are Christians exhorted to “walk by the same rule,” to “mind the same thing,” to “be of the same mind one toward another;” exhorted, that “there be no schism in the body;” and how the valedictory prayer of Christ pleaded that believers might “all be one!” This uniting plan is a means of affording scope for the observance of these sacred rules on a very extensive and comprehending scale. It is an expedient for binding together, for purposes of strength, all who on principal subjects think and act alike. It produces that uniformity which results from unanimity, not which embraces every minute particular and mode of worship, but which

recognises every thing important in Christian fellowship.

The connexional existence of the body is maintained, in the first place, by the itinerancy of its ministers. The trust-deed, which is enrolled in the Court of Chancery, and which secures the chapels to the Connexion, makes especial provision,—that in no chapel shall the person who is appointed, exercise his ministry for more than three years; but after the expiration of that, or a shorter term, the Conference shall remove him elsewhere. There is, therefore, a constant movement going on, which is fruitful of life and impulse; and by this means every society is provided with a ministry of various gifts and talents, and its members are prevented from saying, at least for long together, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” The pastors, too, by being cast repeatedly into fresh circumstances, are reminded as often that “here we have no continuing city,” and are incited to renewed efforts and zeal. This changing scene is not without its trials, both to the Wesleyan preachers and their friends; but if those trials be means of bringing them all nearer to God, which result has heretofore been realized, they are rich, nevertheless, in mercy.

A movement like this, so universal and constant, tends to weave part to part most intimately: it binds the circuits together like the strong meshes of a net; and makes those who labour in them to

be, in some humble degree, followers of those who were constituted by our Lord “fishers of men.”

Another connexional feature is the establishment of general treasuries, supported by general contribution for defraying casual and local expenses.

The first is that which relates to the support of ministers, and the contingencies of the Connexion. The ministers stationed in the circuits are supported by the stated and voluntary contributions of the members thereof. But in many the societies are small and depressed in circumstances, and are not able of themselves to furnish a sufficient amount for the purpose: in this case, the defaulters receive aid from the central source; and thus the weak are aided, as well as kept in existence, until they entirely stand of themselves. Of such importance is the Contingent Fund. This is not the case in established, or even in congregational, churches: for in the former the endowment is fixed by law: and in the latter the supply, though voluntary, may be so small as to require the pastor to eke out his subsistence by means of a temporal calling; for the people stand alone, and receive help from no other people,—no other source.

Again: the families of some of our ministers are large; those of others, less so: therefore, children are provided for separately by a distinct fund, to

which all the circuits contribute, after the ratio of a fixed number of members to one child; which ratio is regulated at every Conference, as the number of children to be provided for each year may be more or less. Thus the burden is equalized, and the largest family may be appointed to the poorest station without any serious inconvenience. Each circuit receives from the fund according to the number of children which may then be in the families of the ministers appointed to labour in that circuit. There are likewise other funds, similarly constituted, and managed by their several committees, chiefly laymen; and all these funds are founded on the scriptural and noble principle, that the many shall aid the few, the powerful sustain the helpless, and the general effort provide for the contingent and oft-repeated local call.

There is yet a third instance of connexional intertexture manifested in the provision which is made for the unimpaired preservation of the doctrinal code. It is composed of evangelical Arminianism; a system of scriptural interpretation, which acknowledges all our salvation to be of God's grace, and yet preserves the moral agency of man. The doctrines of this system run through the Sermons of Mr. Wesley, and his Notes on the New Testament; and therefore the great chapel-deed before mentioned, refers to these standard works as the theological criterion, and makes it binding on every regularly-appointed

preacher to teach these doctrines, and no other. The moment he becomes erroneous, he is liable to suspension or expulsion, having broken the compact by which he at first entered the pulpit. The trusts of the chapels are therefore held for this great purpose, that Wesleyan doctrines shall be preached there henceforth and for ever. Independent churches in this respect are very different: for as each congregation chooses its own minister, he must by necessity adapt his sentiments to the taste or doctrinal views of those who compose it; and thus, in a large collection of instances, we shall have every form of doctrine from Socinianism to high Antinomianism, and each of those instances is liable to fluctuation. But Wesleyan Methodism appeals to one standard; and thus secures to its largely-extended societies of people the same lessons of Christian truth, and, as far as human power can, secures them for ever.

Every one who has studied ecclesiastical history must confess that there never was such a system of intercommunion as is here mentioned. To produce it, there must be, it is evident, much local and individual sacrifice; but it is a particular sacrifice for a general good, embodying that sublime and expansive principle of the apostle Paul, "None of us liveth to himself." To all our ministers and members, Methodism is a widely-spread home: the trials which they undergo are for the system's sake; they

are a price paid to promote the interests of Christ's kingdom.

4. We instance another point of conformity, as we deem it, with the principle of the New Testament, in the scope of labour which our system affords to that secondary order of teachers who are not pastors, and who, in holy Scripture, are termed deacons.

We have seen already, in the appointment of Stephen and his fellows, that unto them the care and oversight of the flock of Christ was not committed, nor even the stated ministry of the word; but that their work was of a more private character, and included the management of financial and social matters, termed in the sacred texts, serving tables, and occasionally public preaching, as well as a general course of engaging in subordinate instruction, and the service of the church. It is evident that everywhere there should be such a class of persons, for the cause assigned by the apostles: it is not reason that those who have the solemn responsibilities of the ministry, should leave the word of God, in order to attend to all the minor matters of duty; and therefore the primitive Christians, after the manner of the Jerusalem converts, universally had deacons. The church of England takes a peculiar view of the diaconal office: for in that communion deacons are considered an order of public ministers, yet still not pastors; for they are not allowed to bap-

tize, or to administer the Lord's supper, except in one kind and as assistants; nor are they allowed to pronounce the liturgical form of absolution over penitent sinners, which act is considered connected with that binding and loosing authority which was committed only to pastors. The Baptist and Independent brethren make the office somewhat less public: their deacons carry the sacramental cup to the people, having first prepared the elements; they visit the sick, arrange meetings, and occasionally exhort and preach. As the apostles appointed men to this office, who were full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, it is evident that the piety and spirituality of this order ought to be above that of common believers. Our community may be said to take a comprehensive view of the diaconal office; for with us it includes several offices, all of which are somewhat different from each other in detail, but still come under that great distinction which has been adverted to, and which recognises that a deacon is the assistant of his pastor, and a servant of the church. Wesleyan deacons comprehend,—

(1.) Leaders,—who are at the head of the smallest divisions of the society, the classes, as has been already said. They meet the members thereof weekly, converse with them respecting their spiritual state; if penitent, troubled, or tempted, they console them; if unstable and wavering, warn and exhort them to seriousness; if happy, rejoice with them; if ignorant,

instruct them, and lead them on in holiness: and thus they assist in pastoral oversight.*

(2.) Local Preachers,—who, being first properly examined as to their gifts and graces, are each commissioned to carry occasionally into villages and obscure places the Gospel of Christ. The ministers in a circuit cannot supply, on the sabbath, half the congregations which may be gathered, if those of the country are included; and therefore these zealous and devoted brethren, often after a week of secular toil and care, take extensive journeys into the country, and preach as their various acquirements and their knowledge of divine things may enable them. Some are men of education and talent; and some have had no advantages of education; but all are devoted to God, and all understand the connexion and bearing of the vital truths of Christianity: at least the utmost of human scrutiny is employed to secure that they answer this description.†

* Some writers on the Wesleyan polity have made our leaders to answer to the elders, and our ministers to the evangelists, of the New Testament. The resemblance, however, fails: for the office of evangelist distinctively was, as we have seen, extraordinary, and expired with Timothy and Titus; and the elders are represented as labouring in the word and doctrine, which our leaders never do. The above arrangement reconciles all facts, as well as doctrines.

† These valuable men are properly reckoned amongst the diaconal body, because, from very early antiquity, deacons were wont to preach. Origen indeed preached before he was form-

(3.) Prayer-Leaders,—who conduct the devotional exercises of private social meetings; and who assist sometimes on other occasions, by engaging in prayer.

(4.) Circuit and Society Stewards,—who receive the contributions of the people, and who disburse them by providing for the ministers and their families. Their department affords a fine position for seeing how much may be effected by generalizing the effort. In some churches the minister's support comes chiefly from a few and largely-subscribing individuals; a circumstance this which often lays a serious obstacle in the way of his fidelity: but in ours, every member is a contributor; the burden is so distributed, that no one is oppressed by it. The cost of supporting the ministry, when viewed apart from missionary, eleemosynary, and seat-rental contributions, does not amount to an average of more than twelve shillings per annum, per member.

(5.) Poor-Stewards,—who prepare the bread and wine of the Lord's supper, and the simple food used at love-feasts; and who receive the offerings on both occasions, and then apply them to the relief

ally appointed to the ministry at all. Baxter, in his *Christian Ecclesiastics*, allows the lawfulness, and even desirableness, of pious laymen engaging in this work. The good which has been done by the local preachers of Methodism, shall only be fully known at that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

of the sick and poor of the flock, especially of the widows. Thus, exactly following the primitive practice, they assist by serving tables and ministering to the poor.*

Thus does the office branch out with us into a number of particulars; but still its scriptural character is preserved. All churches are found to vary a little in their views of even an institution apostolically founded; and to do this they are undoubtedly permitted by the Great Head himself. In this band of Christian office-bearers, Wesleyan Methodism has numbered many revered and spotless names; many who have appeared to walk in the steps of those worthies who are spoken of in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. "Honourable women not a few" have unobtrusively but energetically laboured in the Lord, after the example of Euodias and Syntyche, blending all the tenderness of a woman's heart, with that steady fortitude which is

* It is rather strange that they who are so fond of appealing to antiquity, in justification of minute forms and ordinances, should maintain such a profound silence in reference to these means of edification, which Methodism and Moravianism have restored,—the feasts of charity. (Jude, ver. 12.) "*Statis diebus mensas faciebunt communes, et peracta synaxi post sacramentorum communionem inibant convivium, divitibus quidem cibos afferentibus, pauperibus autem et qui nihil habebant etiam vocatis.*" (In 1 Cor. xi., Hom. xxvii., Chrysostom.) Also Tertullian, "*Cœna nostra de nomine rationem sui ostendit. Vocatur enim $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$, id quod est penes Græcos dilectio. Quantiscunque sumptibus constet, lucrum est pietatis nomine facere sumptum.*" (Apol., cap. 39.)

inspired by deep piety. Leaders have arisen, such as have been beyond all value : standing like Moses at the gate of the camp, they would ever cry, " Who is on the Lord's side ? let him come unto me ; " and when they had got any to enter the sacred inclosure, and when they had recovered a strayed one, they rejoiced with unspeakable joy. No prayers were too fervent, no anxieties too deep, no labours too great, to save a dying sinner. Had they been in an establishment, its canonical law would have fettered, and perhaps utterly confined, their efforts ; but we thank God that our church polity, by his providence, has been so constituted and made elastic, as to afford us the full benefit of the efforts of these holy men, without compromising the regard which is due to the especial pastoral office, as the great guardianship of the church. Besides the benefit resulting from their actual labours, there is that resulting from their participation in the deliberations of the vestry. Here the wisdom of age and of experience, as well as that acquired by talent, has most ample scope : for " in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." The utmost latitude is allowed for their co-participation with the Conference in the government of the societies, and only stops short of the line of co-legislation. One does not necessarily imply the other. The subordinate offices of the church are created by the ministry : let that cease, and the rest will fall. There could be no deacon, that is, speaking Methodistically,

no local preacher, leader, or steward, to assist, if there were no minister to be assisted. If it be said the local preacher may take the minister's place, it is in fact admitting that there must be such a place, and granting our proposition.

In all these representations of Methodism, we do not undertake to show, as has been before stated, that the scheme was preconcerted; for this would not be true. In fact, every successive part of the plan was the creation of Providence, except it be that of the itinerancy of ministers: this appears to have been taken rather from a discriminating knowledge of human nature. The lack of spiritually-minded and evangelical clergy, led to the appointment of preachers; the numbers of new converts, to the appointment of leaders; the financial offerings, to that of stewards; and so the whole was at last completed, after the parts had been produced, as great men are often produced by the exigencies of the times. And as the success and efficacy of this system has been beyond all precedent, we may say, as Hooker once said in reference to another, that "it was from heaven, was even of God, the Holy Ghost was the author of it."

Our general form of ecclesiastical polity is Presbyterian, combined with Episcopacy, *jure humano*.*

* Similar to the form ideally contemplated, as far as outward regimen is concerned, by archbishops Leighton and Usher, whose opinions are mentioned.

The established church of Scotland is not very dissimilar. The same principles are acknowledged, both at home and abroad : the missionaries stand in the same relation to the parent Connexion, that the ancient chorepiscopus did to the city bishop.

The moral argument, leading to the conclusion just referred to by Hooker, is very strong ; for it was exigency which led to the appointment of presbyters and deacons in the apostolic churches ; and this will not be doubted. It was a like exigency which laid all the details of Methodism open to the directing hand of the same God of providence and grace, as wrought so mightily in those times of primitive simplicity.

Before this chapter is concluded, there is one arrangement of internal Methodism, which has been already glanced at, deserving especial notice : it is that of class-meetings. It will not be denied that the communion of saints is at once a privilege and a duty : a privilege, in that it implies the ineffable consolation of their intercourse with God and with each other ; and a duty, inasmuch as the Scriptures expressly command that actual fellowship, and mutual watchfulness and care, which the word implies ; especially as it is used by St. John, when he says, (1 John i. 7,) “ We have *κοινωνίαν μετ’ ἀλλήλων*, fellowship one with another.” Accordingly, we find it written, “ Not forsaking the assembling yourselves together, as the manner of some is ;” which words are to be interpreted rather

of private than of public devotion, referring as they do to times of bitter persecution. And besides, the same duty is enjoined by implication in various injunctions, particularly those in which we are required to "let the peace of God rule in our hearts, to the which we are called in one body;" to "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another;" to "comfort ourselves together, and edify one another." And we may well urge that all this is in strict conformity with the spirit of vital Christianity, when we learn that under the Jewish dispensation, so far inferior in glory, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. iii. 16, 17.) The profound and accurate bishop Pearson, besides showing that the saints of God have communion with God, and with holy angels, and with departed believers, includes, in his exposition of that part of the Apostles' Creed which refers to the subject, this view of sensible fellowship: "The saints of God, living in the church of Christ, have communion with all the saints living in the same church. 'If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one

with another;' (1 John i. 7;) we all have benefit of the same ordinances; we are all endued with the graces of the same mutual love and affection, 'keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;' (Eph. iv. 3;) all engrafted into the same stock, and, as receiving life from the same root, all 'holding the same Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' (Col. ii. 19.) For in the philosophy of the apostle, the nerves are not only the instruments of motion and sensation, but of nutrition also; so that every member receiveth nourishment by their intervention from the head: and seeing the head of the body is Christ, and all the saints are members of that body, they all partake of the same nourishment, and so have all communion among themselves."

Now all this scriptural language is figurative, and descriptive of the effects of inward religion. And how, we ask, is this spiritual communing to be provided for in the church of God? Unquestionably, by affording and appointing opportunities for devout and serious conversation on personal religious experience. In this way the inquirer may be instructed, the desponding penitent encouraged, the believer reanimated, and the whole, by this sympathetic interchange of thought, abundantly united and quickened, and made to realize that presence of Christ, which is especially promised to two or three met

in his name. It is not enough that believers meet at the table of the Lord: that, we grant, is a symbolical acknowledgment of mutual fellowship; but there needs something to actuate it, to make it available for all the purposes of holy walking and of spiritual life. The primitive communicants were enabled to spend more time in mutual and spiritual discourse than we now, on sacramental occasions, could do, even if, in the present state of society, this were allowed, and were reckoned a wise arrangement. Moreover, the divine ordinance of the Lord's supper, with all its primary importance, could never be intended to set aside a divine doctrinal command respecting intimate spiritual fellowship in private meetings: for it is in this latter course that they are proved and taught, as the catechumens were of old, and their sincerity ascertained, before they can have a scriptural warrant to draw near with faith, and receive that sacrament to their comfort. It is, then, with great thankfulness for our privileges, that we recognise in the Wesleyan class-meeting the exact provision which has just been referred to. The leader is the spiritual adviser of the little flock over which he is placed; he directs, at their weekly meeting, their devotional exercises; and on ascertaining the state of each member, he administers warning, encouragement, or direction, according as it is needed; and the members themselves, thus "not forsaking the assembling themselves together," and

thus “speaking often one to another,” are edified by mutual intercourse, faith, and prayer. The general work of the Spirit is laid down in the Bible; but here each person present has the joy and privilege of tracing it, in its endless diversity of operation, in particular individuals. The class-meetings have been, and are still, the soul of the body; and we wonder that other Protestant churches have not something to answer to them. The Moravian church is the only striking exception.

As the Wesleyans have gone from strength to strength, they have been refreshed from these sacred pools, filled by heavenly rain, and which have made the valley of Baca a well. Never, therefore, can their purity and efficiency be with too great jealousy guarded. It is very likely that the practice of auricular confession is nothing more than a foul and far-gone corruption of some primitive meeting, designed for the edification, in a private manner, of the members of the church.—But to return to the general subject.

The form of Methodism in the United States of America is actually Episcopal; and this arose partly from the wish which Mr. Wesley always cherished, to abide as far as possible by the order of that church in which he had been brought up, and partly from the peculiar state and requirements of the people there. Missionaries had been sent over by

Mr. Wesley in 1771, in pity to the thousands who had neither fold nor feeder; and in after-years others were sent. In 1777 there were forty preachers, and a numerous society who communicated with the established church, when and where they could; but when the States acquired independence in the struggle which took place, and most of the regular clergy had left the country, the Methodists of America could not receive the Lord's supper, or have their children baptized, unless they had ministers appointed of their own. Here again was a crisis. Mr. Wesley applied to the bishop of London, to ordain a bishop for the Americans, but could not prevail: he therefore appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, to take the general charge of the societies and their preachers; and two elders to act under them, preaching the word and administering the ordinances; and the whole community was formed into a church. Mr. Wesley, though attached to the order of the establishment, nevertheless took the same view of Episcopacy which we have been advocating, and therefore considered that it was not anomalous for him, a presbyter, to ordain a bishop in a primitive sense; for he held the orders to be identical. "I firmly believe," he said, "that I am a scriptural *επισκοπος* as much as any man in England," or in Europe; "for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove." In this matter, therefore, there was, again,

no schism: no man's right was invaded, no authority was impugned: a providential path opened. Mr. Wesley might have said, as St. Paul, "A great and effectual door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries;" (1 Cor. xvi. 9;) so that nothing remained but to enter it as a door of hope. His conduct in this respect would be justified by Hooker himself; whose words, defining the word bishop even as prelatists do, would serve to support many an argument which we have endeavoured to exhibit:—"Another extraordinary kind of vocation is, when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the church, which otherwise we would willingly keep, where the church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor possibly can have a bishop to ordain: in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give place. And therefore we are not simply, without exception, to urge a lineal descent from apostles, by a continual succession of bishops in every effectual ordination." (Eccles. Pol., vii., chap. 14.)

Since the appointment of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, in the manner just mentioned, bishops and elders have ever had the oversight of the Methodist church: they travel much, and their labours are great: they govern in convocation or conference. No form of polity could be devised for the American societies which would answer the ends of the Gospel better:

for many of the preachers in that vast country are necessarily both young and inexperienced, and therefore need the guidance of the wise; and, labouring far apart, they require frequent inspection and Episcopal control, to make up for the want of mutual advice and direction. But as there is no distinction of order assumed, and as the subordination which obtains is founded on Christian respect and affection, we appeal likewise to transatlantic Methodism, as being agreeable to the principles of the New Testament, though differing in detail from Methodism at home, and coming rather short of it in strictness of discipline.

If, however, we show that ours is no premeditated system, but the gradual fabrication of divine Providence, we would, at the same time, not plead for it as being absolutely perfect: perfection can only be ascribed to Zion above.

The removal of its ministers from place to place may be, in some degree, against that particular pastorship, which consists in visiting from house to house, and in obtaining a personal knowledge of every member of the flock. The early calls which it makes for the services of all who have zeal and piety, may have been connected with too little regard, in some instances, for their knowledge: instances of frailty may have been found in all its ranks; and where are they not to be found? But still

it has been to thousands what the ark was to the Noahic family: it has housed them well from the tempests which were, and are still, breaking over the world; it has borne them over the deep waters; and now they are in glory,—that is, if the word of God, and if a renewed life and a triumphing death, can afford any evidence that they are landed there. It is a Missionary church, crowded with those who are, professedly at least, aggressive and militant members; whose field is the world.

The pious Dissenter looks back upon the history of his fathers, and upon the congregations of his community, as existing in past times, and feels his heart glow, while memory presents to mind those noble-minded men, who lifted their voice for God, even when amid the smoking ashes of London; and who went to the beds of the sick and dying, with offers of pardon and peace, when the plague tainted the air; and he blesses God for being connected, though distantly, with a race who, rather than violate their conscience, gave up their worldly all. His feelings are to be revered.

The pious Churchman in his sanctuary is reminded of many an event of past history, in which the British clergy were witnesses for God:—the Reformation, coming like the day-spring from on high: the higher pastors declaring, and then burning for, the truth, when Popery, alias Moloch, bore sway: the learned pouring light upon the Scriptures,

and the Scriptures again pouring light upon them, until they became a fear and a terror to the infidel libertines of a voluptuous age, and to the demi-gods of a maddened democracy. And then, for how many ages past, have the arched and awful roofs above him echoed with Christ's true doctrine, and especially with that impressive and solemn epiphonema, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!" While the billows of sacred song are swelling over head, and breaking successively as upon the inmost soul, it is not mere sensibility that is awakened: the Holy Ghost is loved and adored for his care of the church, and for raising up its true and devoted pastors. If the Episcopalian has communed with his God, within the inclosure of the English establishment, he may surely be allowed to vent his affection in figures of speech, and without reproof from us to call her his dear mother. And may not we be allowed a similar privilege? Methodism, in a long course of years, may become unfitted for the purposes of Providence, and in that case share the fate of all human systems: but it is healthful and vigorous yet; and if its spirituality remain, who that loves God or goodness would wish it to die? The writer of these lines reveres it as a pure and efficient form of Christianity: he has hung upon the lips of its ministers, many of whom had drunk both of the fount of learning and the fount of God: he has felt something of that holy influence which

has rested upon its assemblies, and which has subdued and overwhelmed the people before it, which no eloquence of man could produce, and no infidel rationale explain. Amid all the perturbations which have troubled its surface, he has known an under-current of deep piety to be flowing both strong and clear. To that current we have been commended. To say that there is no rock of danger, would be presumption: never to expect darkness or a storm, would be too much like heaven: but if we understand our scriptural chart aright, and if the blessed Spirit blow, the issue at the end of the course will be—God glorified, and everlasting life obtained.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE, AND ITS RELATIONS.

“Ye are the light of the world.”—MATT. v. 14.

IN order to have right conceptions respecting the nature of the Pastoral Office, it must be constantly remembered that ministers are in “Christ’s stead;” and that therefore their work must be a distant copy of their Redeemer’s, and that it must be performed in a spirit which approaches as nearly in likeness to his as it is possible for man’s spirit to do. “As thou hast sent me into the world,” said Christ, “so have I sent them into the world.”

The Father’s message of the Son was one of the deepest compassion: it invested the Son with the spiritual jurisdiction of man, but especially of believers. And the Son’s message of the apostles was to carry out the same design. The mind of Christ, in reference to the great work of his ministry, was made manifest on several occasions. “My kingdom,” he said, “is not of this world.” This was the law of spirituality; and sufficiently clear on

this point, that his servants have nothing to do with temporal rule: and the plain inference drawn from this emphatic sentence is, that the pastoral charge includes only the oversight of men in spiritual respects,—it takes cognizance of those interests which arise from the relation they bear to their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and which are infinitely weighty, because eternal. That desire of glorifying God, which was so evident in Christ, is the leading principle of the spirit in which the charge is kept, including, at the same time, an anguished longing after a divine influence to save, like that which vented itself in expressions like these: “I came to bring fire on earth; and what would I, if it were already kindled?” “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!”

Every delegate is a prototype of his sender; and therefore those who are in “Christ’s stead” are called to exhibit the reflected image of his perfections: and though we would not reiterate the unguarded sentiment of Ignatius, that the bishop is to the believer as Christ; yet the bishop has no claim to his office unless it be fulfilled with that spirituality, charity, and zeal, which qualities in our Lord were mediatorial perfections, and eminently distinguished him as the Anointed. The Pastoral Office is a mild and spiritual government, which is to be exercised over regenerate men, and under

which they are to be fitted for heaven ; but which, at the same time, qualifies them for an enlightened subordination to those temporal powers which preserve the social order of this world : so that it is, in a modified sense, a kingdom within a kingdom. But the unity of design shows, that both governments are of God : the one is gentle and non-compulsory, having no secular penalties, and referring all executive strength to Christ ; the other is supported by penal sanctions, which are temporally enforced, but which are less necessary in proportion as men are under the scriptural control of the other.

I. The Pastoral Office may be viewed as it stands in relation to the universal church.

Every minister who is truly ordained, according to the principles we have advocated, is connected with the whole fold. This is recognised in the communion of the English establishment : a priest, or presbyter, once ordained, may preach or administer the sacraments in any place. The last and most impressive prayer of Christ for his disciples, included the petition that they might all be one ; by which “all,” those who in all ages believe on him, through the apostles’ word, are meant. One they cannot be in uniformity of outward order, as has been said already ; for difference of climate and national habits will make modes of worship and the sacramental ritual to differ. Nor can they

be one as regards internal economy: the isolated colony requires one form; the inhabitants of the kraal another; and the land of crowded cities others still, which differ from either. The unity pleaded for in the Redeemer's prayer, was unity in that love which was to result from one Spirit's influence; it was a oneness founded upon the very principles which made men Christians. Although it was committed to the apostles, under the inspiration of the Spirit, to utter the oracles of New-Testament prophecy, yet the Word himself did not remain altogether silent as to the future condition of his church. He before had represented multitudes as flocking from the four quarters of the world unto it; and now, without merging those distinctions which had arisen from time and circumstance, and the bounds of their habitation, he beseeches the Father that they may be all one. He himself was the especial, but slighted, Pastor of the most highly favoured portion of the flock,—Jerusalem, where David and the prophets had preached, where the glory of God had brooded, and on account of whose guilt and danger he had shed tears in the midst of a triumph. But not all the recollections of the past, not all the hold which the peculiar people had upon his heart, could prevent his fervent aspirations on behalf of others. "Other sheep," he said, "I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and

one shepherd." In counteraction of this principle of the Redeemer's, nothing is more possible than that some ministers, from their peculiar circumstances, may have such a complacency in their own pastoral authority, and ministerial powers, as to regard with comparative indifference every part of the Christian community but their own; and sometimes to go so far even as to monopolize the distinction of "church" to themselves. O dark quotation from the man of sin, and which is worthy alone of him who was content with no less a seat than that in the temple of God! Episcopacy is considered the most dignified form of church order; and, by some, its ministers are considered to be invested with higher authority than other pastors are; that they are, in the present dispensation, what the priests and Levites were in the former; and that their ecclesiastical dignity is both ancient, and apostolically legitimate. It is, perhaps, very difficult, when we remember what is the human heart, for the minister of an Episcopal community to get rid altogether of these ideas of himself: weak efforts, and low piety, are far from being sufficient to banish them, especially if his church be established by law. He will require to aim at that elevated state of feeling, so finely depicted by Dr. Cudworth when he says, "No man is truly free but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such

an one doth not fondly hug this or that created good thing, and envassal himself unto it, but he loveth everything that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the several degrees of perfection in them. He enjoys a boundless sweetness, according to his boundless love. He enclaspeth the whole world in his out-stretched arms : his soul is as wide as the whole universe ; as big as yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The minister of Christ no longer acts in the spirit of his Lord than when he manifests solicitude for the church as a whole, and evinces himself related to it. His office is an elevated one : it is Pisgah compared with the plain : it requires a swelling heart and a far-searching eye. If there be a man who is so intent upon the dignity of his own order, that he cannot look abroad, and love as far as look, he is reminded by the Bishop of souls himself, that such a position, at least, is not dignified, even if personal authority be ever so valid : for the lesson taught to the disciples was, that angels, in heaven even, rejoice over converted men on earth ; and that, consequently, the upper church was not cold and heartless in reference to the interests of the lower. Thus, the higher the dignity the greater the glow of charity, and that sympathetic flame which could kindle intensely upon a spot, and yet run through every part of the spiritual universe. The inhabitants of the heavenly Zion are not unwilling to recognise

us; the interest which they take in the Christian community seems to deepen according to the height of their nature; and yet we, alas! are unwilling to recognise each other: the clergyman frowns on the Dissenter, and the Dissenter on the clergyman. Often those who lay claim to the highest ministerial rank, are the most exclusive, repelling, and cold. Charity vaunteth not itself, and yet it has a high elevation assigned to it by the apostle; for he says, it never faileth, having an existence and a sphere when prophecies have ceased, tongues are silenced, and uncertain knowledge has passed away. How much more, then, in the catholic spirit should we act, were every pastor to link himself in soul to the general elect! Who has not felt himself impressed with that sentence in the *Te Deum*, "The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee?" And shall we, then, confess no brotherhood with those who join in the acknowledgment? If this be the anthem, shall there be no agreement in the choir? No wonder that our moral dissonance should often send the philosophic infidel to nature for his harmony, which, according to his apprehension, yields deeper and richer music than the sanctuary.

If heaven shall not teach us catholicity, where shall we learn our lesson? Is it a greater stoop for angels to condescend to men, than for human dignitaries to stoop to their brethren? When St. John conversed with his glorious companion, that

holy one was so absorbed in the service of his Maker, he could receive no homage: "See thou do it not," he said; "for I am thy fellow-servant." And ought not this same divine service to swallow up entirely the thoughts of those who engage in the ministry; that they should exact no homage from a fellow-servant, but rather view his efforts in the same cause with deep complacency? The very thing which makes one minister higher than another, is that which makes one Christian holier and wiser than another; and besides this there is no rule or measure of comparison, as is manifest from the New Testament: but the higher and holier he is, the more fully will he admit, and act upon the admission, that the pastor's office is a department, not merely in a particular, but in the universal church.

How often non-conformity is more denounced than open sin! The non-conformist in the present day is not, perhaps, treated rudely; but his claim to be a minister, and the member of a church, is met with an apathy and silence, which is far more distressing than even ebullitions of anger.

Far different was the conduct and spirit of Barnabas. Multitudes, at the persecution which arose at the death of Stephen, fled from Jerusalem, into various parts of Asia Minor: they had received no special ministerial commission; many were Gentiles and strangers; and yet they preached Christ everywhere, especially at Antioch, and multitudes were

converted by their word. When Barnabas came, he inquired not by what authority their teachers had been commissioned, or what form of order they adopted. One object alone attracted his sight: "he saw the grace of God;" that was sufficient; he needed no other sight to arouse that grateful and holy feeling which began to pervade his breast: he saw the image of Christ in the converted; he recognised them as brethren, and part of the church; he was glad, and exhorted them that with full purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord:—and no wonder; "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." It is this repletion of the Spirit that enlarges the pastor's heart; not a fulness that excludes sympathetic care for the whole church, but the reverse,—a repletion which is at once fulness and capacity. St. Peter himself seemed at first to be influenced by the spirit of exclusiveness of which we are now complaining: he would fain have confined the Gospel and church privileges unto those of the circumcision, contrary to the intent for which he, with the other apostles, had received the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But he was taught to consider that nothing which God had sanctified was common; and when the Holy Ghost fell upon a company of Gentiles in his presence, and they were justified by faith, he saw that there was no difference, and, baptizing them, he acknowledged that they were brethren in the Lord.

If the apostle's mistake was rectified by a miraculous and visionic interposition, for the instruction of an after-age, why, alas! has it been so oft repeated? Thousands have been sanctified to God in undoubted conversion, and yet by many, who have represented themselves, in Oxford Tracts and other publications, as Christ's only ministers, they have been treated as common and unclean. He who began his apostolic life in preaching to a particular people, ended it by writing a catholic epistle to strangers, who were scattered abroad, and who were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." But bigotry is not the sin of the Episcopalian only: it exists in the Presbyterian and Independent as well: it may be fostered by him whose religion is merely tolerated by law, as well as by him who belongs to a national establishment. It may argue itself into complacency, from the very position which it occupies, as founding and maintaining a church without the assistance of the secular power, and standing apart from it. Bigotry, or sectarianism, which is schism, may often plume itself as having superior piety, purity, and spiritual discernment to that which is seen in others. The bigoted minister will secretly pine over the increase of other communities beyond his own: rather than see the sinner housed in a certain department

of the ark, he will behold him perish in the storm.

Beautifully is the catholic spirit displayed in the following passage from the book of God:—"And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My Lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" Moses in his day had nearer intercourse with God than any human being; yet here his enlargement of heart seemed quite coeval with his personal dignity. It was sufficient for him to see that Eldad and Medad spake in the Spirit: he objected not to the fact, that they were in the camp, rather than under his

own hand and eye: they were approved by God, and therefore by him. From what he had known of spiritual vision, and the strength and joy which it brought, he wished all the Lord's people were prophets, both for the sake of the world, and for the sake of the anointed ones themselves. Prophet as he was, and so great as to be like Him whom the Lord God should raise up, yet he rejoiced when others partook of the same grace with that which dwelt in him. He was not impoverished, because they were filled: he knew that God who created the desires of the human heart, could satisfy them; and that, had he called a whole church, or a world of prophets, and given unto each a soul as large as heaven, his Spirit would fill all still. It is this expansive love which constitutes the goodly fellowship of the prophets.

Isaiah seems to view the different divisions of the Christian church as so many waters pent up in their own separate and narrow channel; but he declares, "Thou shalt see, and flow together." He assumes, that those narrow channels are too true a type of the state of inward feeling; for the prophecy proceeds, "Thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

It would be curious and instructive for a pastor, of contracted soul, to descant upon the infinite

fulness and goodness of God, showing how it is illustrated in his moral government.—We should love to hear him preach from, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them;” for the text makes no mention that the two or three are specified as having any outward badge of opinion;—and still more should we be anxious to hear what exposition he would give of that deep and pensive feeling which filled the Redeemer’s bosom, when he said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his harvest.” Christianity in such hands suffers an unlovely distortion, and Christ himself is wounded in the house of his friends. Let the minister of the Gospel think, what are the relations he bears to his own people; and then see if nature and grace do not both prompt him to complacency with those who are placed in similar circumstances. Is the relation paternal? Does he say of several who are around him, “Ye are my children,” and feel for them that intenseness of regard which such a relation supposes? Then let him honour and respect every spiritual father, as one who is initiated into the same blessed mysteries of thought and feeling as himself; for not only is the ministry a brotherhood, but a fatherhood. Is the minister’s charge pastoral? and is he, the minister, incessantly occupied in feeding and

tending the flock? This Scripture simile, so often repeated, is not merely used to show the guardianship and fostering care which belongs to the office, but likewise to show the concord which subsists between the shepherds themselves. Are they watchmen walking around the walls of Zion, vigilant, and by night as well as day? There is yet cloud and darkness enough around Zion, to require from her watchmen, not only fidelity, but mutual confidence.

Night has the influence of softening and subduing the spirits of men, especially in seasons of affliction; insomuch that persons who pass each other in the dark, though stern at other times, will then exchange a word of peaceful import. The mariner hails his brother mariner at sea. If a man then be repulsive and sullen, he is supposed to be past feeling. Shall the ministers of God, then, commit themselves to a course which is rebuked by the courtesies of life? Shall each one hear his fellow call amid the howlings of the pitiless storm, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" and make him no reply, but stand aloof like an alien? Shall not, alas! the troubles of the church unite the hearts of its pastors, and lead each one to feel an interest in the whole? The besieged Jews could leave their domestic feuds, and fight together against Titus; and cannot we against Satan? If men of God do not acknowledge themselves

mutually to be brethren, and consecrated by deep responsibility to one great duty, the cause is betrayed, and the enemy ravages where God ought to reign.

No distance of locality interferes with the oneness for which we are pleading; for although they are separated to their different posts of observation, yet the watchmen "shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion, and together shall they lift up the voice and sing;" which prophecy of Isaiah shows that God considers them as one, whether they take that view themselves or not. Montgomery has referred to the rainbow, as a figure of Christ's cause on earth; and to its commingling hues, as illustrative of the harmonizing, though varied, labours of those who engage in that cause. This is a beautiful figure: there are many colours, but it is one bow; and we may observe, St. John tells us there was a bow over the Redeemer's head in heaven, and composed, no doubt, of as various rays as that which Noah beheld when God withdrew his wrath. Glory itself will not merge all distinctions, but rather preserve them, and blend them into one unbroken manifestation. The unity of heaven is not that of complete individual likeness, but of resemblance to God, from whose various perfections all holy variety in the creature is derived. The rays differ, but they form one light. Heaven loves to blend every thing that is capable of being blended,

without producing, at the same time, loss in individual excellence. The very sea of glass is mingled with fire; the stillness of rest, with the glow of love.

But figures are not arguments. Our appeal is to the word of God: and sufficient has been deduced thence to show, that a minister of Christ is pastor in the universal church; that he is no more exempt from feeling, and acting upon, his connexion with it, whether he be present or absent from his own domain, than the patriot is exempt from attachment to his beloved country, while he wanders an exile over the earth. Indeed, it were a matter of grief if the patriotism of this world were not exceeded by the affection we feel for that Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, and which Zuinger celebrated with his dying lips.

A pastor, then, whether a diocesan bishop or otherwise, must undoubtedly be the angel of the church, lofty and expansive in his charities. Whether he preach the everlasting Gospel, or instruct and tend in a more private manner the flock, or whatever ecclesiastical station he may occupy, he will never have gone beyond his divine commission, until his soul shall be fuller of longings for the reign of righteousness, than was that of his great Master. All ministers who combine their exertions and influence in promoting missions to the heathen, and who efficiently stand by them when established, are

those who imbibe the true spirit of their Lord, and of his chief apostle ; who could say of a church which he himself had not planted, and which he had never seen, “God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”

II. The pastor's office may now be considered as it stands in relation to a special congregation, society, or charge.

Although the minister's zeal has a wide circumference in which to exercise itself, yet this is the centre, and where energy and holiness are to be brought more fully into action. He may act through the medium of his character, or the power of his letters, at a distance ; but here he mingles with his people, and adds to the force of every qualification, by identifying himself with them and their interests.

Richard Baxter took for his directory and text, on this subject, the impressive and affecting charge of St. Paul to the Ephesian elders : he would fain have every minister copy the inspired paragraph in letters so large, that they might strike his eye even at a distance, and impress the heart with their weighty import. The sentiments which they express remind us strongly of the last discourses of our Lord, and of his valedictory prayer: they seem to exhibit a beautiful and divine conception, which was made in heaven, but never embodied on earth. But this is a mistake. The holy apostle laid open to view

his own heart; he appealed to his own course of conduct; glorified Christ by showing what Christ's grace had done for him; and, by speaking as a human being, encompassed with sorrows and weakened with infirmities, he showed that he was laying down a rule, not for angels, but for men. The apostle's words are:

1. "TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES." This is the preacher's first lesson. It would seem strange to ask a scientific or literary professor, if he had a thorough acquaintance with the subject on which he proposed to treat; and yet such is the deceitfulness of the heart, that St. Paul's charge can never be often enough reiterated. "Take heed" that no false fire is offered in your censer,—the glow of mere sentiment or genius; but the fire of the love of God. Think of Nadab and Abihu. See that before ye speak of salvation, you are saved; that before ye preach holiness, ye are pure; that before ye teach obedience, ye keep Christ's commandments; that before ye descant on privilege, ye have obtained the Spirit; and that before ye enjoin duty, you exhibit a bright picture of devotedness: otherwise there will be an incongruity between the argument and the illustration, the text and the comment, which will confound the ignorant, and lead to an abandonment of the truth into the hands of the infidel.

2. "AND TO ALL THE FLOCK." To the aggregate, and to every individual. To children; for Christ

has declared them members of his kingdom, and they have been baptized in the name of the Trinity. The covenant of God with them in baptism, was to supply all their need; and as they need nothing more than grace, God casts them upon the church, and especially upon the ministers thereof, to supply the means of their instruction, exhortation, encouragement, fellowship. The Gospel identifies the children of pious parents with their parents, as far as privilege is concerned; and, consequently, they are to be the objects of pastoral solicitude and love, and must be incited to seek for themselves the inward blessings and great salvation of God's covenant. What a field of happy toil is here! Youths, with warm affections and full of promise, are only awaiting a guiding hand; they are ready to leave the sinful world; but a heavenly messenger must lead the way, and quicken their pace. The children of the poor, too, are full of interest: their nursery is the Sabbath-school,—a vestibule of the church, and where the pastor's influence is as legitimately called for and bestowed, in its due proportion, as in the pulpit; and in the committees and amongst the teachers of which schools, his wisdom and counsel should ever be employed. Amongst "all the flock" are likewise the aged. Warn them, that the day is far spent, that the night is at hand; show them, that the last days of life are inexpressibly sacred. There are the weak: show them, that Christ breaks not the bruised reed,

nor quenches the smoking flax, till he has brought forth judgment unto victory. There are the penitent: lead them to their atoning Saviour; uphold the trembling hand of their faith; show them, that to doubt his love is to add sin to sin; chase their unbelief through every lurking-place in the heart, until it give place to a blessed affiance in his merits, and the desponding mourner becomes a happy believer. There are the tempted and suffering: sit down with them in the dust, listen to their plaint, and then show, in various ways, that the man is happy whom God correcteth. There are the prosperous and happy: ever inculcate that the world is not our home: and say, as Jesus in the garden, "Rise, let us be going."

3. The charge refers to the authority and majesty of the Holy Spirit, the great authorizer: "OVER WHICH (flock) THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS,"—*επισκοποι*. If Christ began his evangelical doctrine with, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," his servants should fear and tremble on reflecting, that the declaration, in a limited sense, is true of them. The Spirit is on them, not to inspire with prescience, but to impart light and power. That must be a fearful work, which is set out and appointed by so great and glorious a person.

4. "FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD." Not merely "enlarge upon the beauty and exuberance of the pasture;" but supply provision. Food is the support

of life; and if life is suffered to ebb away, while the imagination is excited and gratified, some sad hallucination has bewildered both the shepherd and the flock. The truth as it is in Jesus—not as it is in epic poems, or in geological lessons, or astronomical lectures—is that which must sanctify and save: truth may be found in those departments, but not in an authoritative form. Moral phantasms may please for a season; but the world of phantasms passes away, and the dying call loudly for truth.

5. “WHICH (church) HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.” An allusion, this, to the value of the flock, as argued from the price paid for its ransom. The church was bought, not by the sufferings of humanity merely; but, ah! mystery ineffable! he who suffered is in the first part of the sentence called GOD. “Are souls so dear to Christ, and yet so lightly estimated by us? Did they cost him his blood, and shall they not cost us our labour?”

6. A warning against dividers and deceivers: “FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTING SHALL GRIEVOUS WOLVES ENTER IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK: ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM.” These words are a standing and oft-fulfilled prophecy. Men are found at different times arising, after a course of unobserved deterioration, both in the ministerial and laic ranks of the church; and now, like the stormy petrel,

their joy is to be in troubled waters. The minister's care is to be directed to the sympathetic unity and intercommunion of the flock with each other. Diotrophes will arise some day, and present a temptation to schism and to change. "Provide, then, for the evil: throw around your charge and yourself the protection of New-Testament law, or the peace of the community is lost."

7. A call to vigilance: "THEREFORE WATCH." In the present state of the world, these words sound solemn and admonitory, as when similar were uttered by our Lord in the night of his agony. Watch! ye who tend the spiritual field: there is a spirit of philosophic sleep in the air, which instils a dreamy and feverish excitation, as some little recompence for the spiritual life which it paralyzes and eventually destroys.

8. A living exemplification: "AND REMEMBER, THAT BY THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS I CEASED NOT TO WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS." Nothing less will avail in winning souls, and in preserving them in faith and holiness. The effect of a public sermon may be powerful, but it will often be transient. When the law of God was first proclaimed, the people quailed with fear and awe; but when Moses was absent, and in the mount, they danced before a golden calf. Extraordinary ministers, such as Luther, Wesley, and Whitefield, are raised up for extraordinary times, and are sent

out to evangelize and toil through large districts ; but the usual ministers of the church, who enter into their labours, cannot scripturally hope for success, without this warning personally night and day, and this teaching from house to house, which was so conspicuous a feature in the labours of the apostle. Many a sinner may be subdued in private, who was proof against the most powerful and pathetic appeals possible in public. Besides, the private appeal will show more than any thing else can, that the public one was sincere. The man of this world lays down his labours with the day : but he who has the charge of souls, knows no intermission of his care ; it is interwoven with the very substance of his soul, and becomes a part of his existence.*

The term of the apostle's continuance at Ephesus was equal, exactly, to the maximum continuance of the Wesleyan minister in his circuit : and at no time, since the formation of the Wesleyan Connexion, has there existed a greater necessity that St. Paul's example should be imitated than now. The public ministry of our body has been powerful ; in many instances it has been unusually talented ; and the system of interchange has enabled the principal cir-

* Inexpressible offences arise, if the bishop visit not daily the houses of his people, more frequently than a mere idler. For not only the sick, but those in health also, expect to be visited.—CHRYSOST. De Sacerd., lib. 3.

cuits to have the labours of the most highly gifted members of the Conference one after another. This has silently excited a taste for novelty and variety; and a demand for change has been aroused: already it exists to a degree which seriously lessens the amount of pastoral attention in the domestic circles of the various circuits.

Charitable institutions, it is true, have multiplied; and great exertions have to be made to meet the financial responsibilities of the church: but why are we to run from east to west, for every sermon that has to be preached in behalf of a Sunday-school, or at the anniversary of the opening of a chapel? Why this hurrying to and fro, every pastor leaving his own people and going to another? Alas! while, on the one hand, this extra-itinerancy deprives the families of the society of their due share of intercourse with their own minister; on the other, it is stimulating that vitiated taste for excitement, which already is unnatural and feverish beyond degree. It tends to make public talent a commodity, estimated at a certain price; and men are led insensibly into the practice of giving money unto Christ's cause, not according to the degree in which their principles are actuated by a sense of duty and obligation, but according to the pitch of ardour to which their feelings, by the eloquence of the preacher or speaker, may be raised. Nothing can be lost by making a stand against this system of commotion and ever-

lasting change ; but much may be gained,—the sickly and undue love of variety will subside, and the union between the people and their own pastors become more solid and endearing. If there be a man who will not occupy his stated place in the sanctuary, and give his proper contribution, because the bill of the anniversary does not promise him a sufficient intellectual repast, let us leave him to mourn his want of grace, if haply he has spiritual tenderness to do so: the church will not lose by him more than it will gain in other respects, in accession to strength of principle, principle that needs no unhealthy excitement ; and in the good which will accrue from every minister using his chief influence in his own place, securing the affections and confidence, and promoting the piety, of his own people. There are a few honoured names in Methodism which, by peculiar providential designation, appear intended to stand upon the line of general evangelists, or of the messengers of the churches ; but, viewing the body at large, and, indeed, any ecclesiastical body, nothing is found to succeed like the regimen of the holy apostle : for “ the space of three years,” or whatever space it may be, warning every one night and day with tears ; or, as it is expressed in another place, teaching “ publicly, and from house to house.”

An eloquent man may sustain the reputation of being an admired lecturer ; but if he confines his efforts to the pulpit, while, at the same time, residing

among his congregation, he will never be deemed in earnest; nor indeed is it possible he should be so in fact. The department of labour referred to by the apostle is an infallible and indispensable test of a preacher's earnestness. The anxious sower of seed will not be content with scattering his grain "beside all waters:" he will visit every section of the field, and will watch the sprouting "blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear;" and if any thing blights or hinders the growth of the rising plant, his skill and toil are tasked to the utmost to remove the cause of the evil. He who preaches to produce a splendid effect upon his congregation, may for a moment succeed, without having had that kindly intercourse with the members thereof of which we speak; but not he who preaches to glorify God, and edify and save them. The deep and lasting impressions which are made under the sermons of some men, whose gifts are not of the first order, are owing, in a great degree, to that prepared state of heart, on the part of the congregation, which is produced by their own visits. The revered friend, and Christian instructor of the family, cannot fail to speak with authority and effect when he becomes the minister of the assembly. St. Paul knew the human heart, and what was likely to lay it open to the accesses of divine grace; and hence the power and pathos of his whole address,—an address with which the Epistles of Cyprian and

Jerome, and the most admired "Conciones ad Clerum" of antiquity, will not bear to be compared, even in the most distant manner. It is not, however, so much Paul, as Paul's divine Master, who is our authority on this subject. It is Christ who says, "Feed my sheep," and "Feed my lambs;" and now the inspired commentator shows how this command is to be obeyed, and causes us to feel that the text and comment are alike divine.

It has been objected by some Wesleyan ministers, that their time is so much taken up by the other duties of the ministry, that they have little or none to devote to this. In some cases this plea is undoubtedly valid; and indeed, upon the whole, no ministers preach so often as they, or have to attend so many public meetings, and guide so many movements of Christian duty and enterprise: yet there is a majority of cases, in which even from them the objection cannot be fully admitted. In several provincial towns, four or five, and sometimes more, ministers reside; and in these large town-circuits, it usually happens that the journeys to the villages around are not long, and that each individual returns home the same evening. Here, it is clear, three-fourths of the day is their own, to be allotted to those duties which do not include preaching and devotional exercises; and surely this allotment will allow a very fair portion to be spent in pastoral visitation. And even in country-circuits, where absence from home

is frequent, and the journeys longer, the societies are so much smaller in proportion, and the duties that devolve on the other minister so heavily, are here so much lighter, that the pastoral work cannot by any means be innocently neglected. To be faithful, however, in this department, will require system, diligence, and promptitude; and with whom are we to find these, if not with the minister of Christ? a man who sees in heavenly light the sacredness of time and its solemn relation to eternity. Let the beautiful and concise injunction of Mr. Wesley be acted on, and the objection, as far as grounded on the want of time, will cease. "Never be unemployed, never be triflingly employed, never while away time," said that great and holy man; and likewise set the example of its proper use in his own unparalleled ministry, the results of which are now before the world. All difficulties will fail before a conquering perseverance, joined to deep spirituality of mind. Only let our brethren so arrange their studies, employments, and recreations, as to make every thing refer to their great work, (a thing quite possible,) and there can be no doubt of their exercising a most efficient pastoral care.

It is, however, sometimes objected, "But this is the province of the leader." So it undoubtedly is, in certain respects; but the appointment of leaders was never intended to supersede the pastor's particular oversight of the people, any more than

it was intended to supersede the ministry of the word. Their work is supplemental; and it is not to diminish the importance of the office that this position is laid down, but rather to increase it. Besides, is the leader himself to have no pastor? And are there no cases occurring in the little societies which require the application of a knowledge and spiritual wisdom, which the leader, excellent as he is, may not always possess? Shall the sick be left to pine in their dwellings from week to week, without ever hearing words of peace from those whom the word of God points out as their friend in sorrow, the active agents of the Paraclete, the Comforter? Why does Methodism require the leader to inform the minister of any that are sick, if it did not intend that minister to visit them? Anxious for the spiritual welfare of the pastorate, as well as of the people, it prompts to the example of Him, and to the attaining His favour, who has said, and shall say again, "I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited me."

Shall the anxious and pious parent never have the high gratification of beholding a beloved son or daughter attracting our Christian sympathies, and awakening in our bosoms that affectionate interest in them which their youth and their need of vital religion ought ever to claim? Christ loved an amiable youth, even when he was worldly-minded; and shall more hopeful objects be presented us

while we pass them unheeded by? O, rather than commit ourselves to an indifference so guilty, let us learn, even from the abettors and priests of Popery, who would compass sea and land to gain a proselyte, a lesson of zeal and diligence.

Moreover, the objector must recollect, that if he resigns his pastoral labour to the leader, he must resign the proportionate part of his influence too; for no man can have extensive and lasting influence who has not obtained it by labours or character. The hold which one human being has upon another, is by the bond of the affections; and if the leader be the only friend and guide of the private member, he only will have that master-influence over him which arises from love. Is the objector prepared for this? Is he willing to be nothing but a public lecturer? If so, alas! how fallen from the apostolic model here exhibited, and how unfit for that very department of his Lord's work which he thinks is alone worthy of his intention! How much more dignified and enviable the position in which we can say, both to the leader and private member, like Paul himself, "Be ye followers of me!"

Neither can that objection be received as valid, which would urge, "But the members are met in the quarterly visitation of the classes:" for the case of the sick is not here included at all; nor that of the weak or wavering, who stay away through fear; nor, especially, the case of their unawakened relatives.

But the Wesleyan minister must likewise remember the sacred obligations into which he has voluntarily entered. Can he forget the earnest and solemn inquiry proposed amid breathless thousands at his ordination?—"Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word; and to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole within your district, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?" together with the distinct answer?—"I will, the Lord being my helper." Can he be unmindful of the earnest and devout recommendation of the unanimous Conference, formed with much prayer, embodied in the Minutes of 1820, annually read over at every district-meeting, and vocally or tacitly approved by every member thereof? "Let us, wherever we have access and opportunity, be diligent in pastoral visits to our people, at their own houses, especially to the sick, the careless, and the lukewarm?" (Sec. 16 of Ans. to Q. XXVI.) And again: "Let us pay particular attention to backsliders, and endeavour, in the spirit of meekness, to restore them that have been overtaken in a fault, and by private efforts, as well as by our public ministrations, to recover the fallen out of the snare of the devil." (Sec. 22.) Are all these unmeaning words, intended to be read and forgotten? Only let us be faithful to our voluntary obligations, as well as alive to our ac-

knowledge duty to Christ the Lord ; and seldom shall we have to mourn over cold and formal congregations, or societies diminished in number. And while the Minutes of 1820 are glanced at, let it not be forgotten that they continually bind us to the “ Christian instruction and government of our own families ;” to “ covet earnestly the best gifts ;” to “ encourage public prayer-meetings ;” to “ avoid a narrow, bigoted, and sectarian spirit ;” to “ establish weekly meetings of the children ;” to “ meet the societies for the purpose of addressing them respecting their peculiar duties, both personal and domestic, as professors of religion and as Methodists ;” to inspect the labours of the leaders ; to “ enforce on all our people a conscientious attendance on the Lord’s supper ;” to “ earnestly exhort our societies to make the best and most religious use of the rest and leisure of the Lord’s day ;” to act in the meetings of the church not as mere chairmen, but as pastors ; and to ask constantly “ a more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit.” To these injunctions we may add, that a sermon preached once a week, at an early hour in the morning, before the operations of the day are commenced, will ever have the happiest effect of promoting the union and spirituality of the society. The freshness of the morning air, the buoyancy of the mind, and the stillness of the world, are all favourable to devotion, and to seeking, in com-

munion with God, for strength against the trials of life.

All this is, however, only a detailed exposition of the apostolic charge, and is, therefore, invested with all the authority that the great Head of the church can give it. Every duty arises out of that relation in which every minister of Christ stands to his peculiar society or congregation. There must be an ubiquity in his watchful vigilance, as the steward of God, which shall pervade every department of the household. And, as bishop Burnet observes in his *Pastoral Care*, respecting his own priest, such an one "is not terrified with those words, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward;' he knows his reward shall be full, pressed down, and running over. He is but too happy in those 'spiritual children' whom he has 'begot in Christ:' he looks after those as the chief part of his care, and as the principal of his flock; and is so far from aspiring, that it is not without some uneasiness that he leaves them, if he is commanded to arise to some higher post in the church."

Grief, it seems, will be a concomitant of the course which is here recommended. The more the heart is freed from the malady of sin by sanctifying grace, the more that heart mourns over the malady in others; but who would be free from that sacred sensibility? It is rather a beloved affliction, which is valued in

proportion to the weight in which it lies upon us : it is of such a nature as would hardly disturb the happiness of heaven.

O, if all the ministers of the land were thoroughly chastened and subdued by this sorrow,—if it were to be cherished until the churches of England became one Bochim,—then the scene depicted by Joel would be realized: “The priests, the ministers of the Lord,” would “weep between the porch and the altar, and” would “say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them : wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” We want a baptism of tears, and then there would follow a baptism of the Spirit.

And now, to conclude the apostle’s charge, we have a valediction.

9. “I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP, AND GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED.” Thus is all labour, with its results, yielded into the hands of God: it is a devout reference to the source of all good. Here men of different theoretic minds, the evangelic Arminian, and the enlightened Calvinist, may join, both planting and watering, according to their ability, but both acknowledging that the increase is of God.

Nor in this charge did the apostle forget to name the great doctrines which formed the subject of

his teaching,—“repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;” nor are we to forget that they are of standing, as well as paramount, importance.

A minister, by teaching his people science, may do feebly what the philosopher can do better by fostering a literary taste; he may refine them, by leading them into the paths of physical inquiry; he may enlarge their mental sight, and strengthen their mental power; but by enjoining repentance and faith, he is instrumental in saving them,—a result compared with which, all knowledge and ethereal visions vanish into nothing. If sin makes a man an unrepenting rebel, a victim for the righteous wrath of God, these things only invest him with a more mournful interest, and make his eternal death a matter of acuter sorrow and distress.

The faithful enunciation of these vital truths, marks the true minister more than any other particular; and such an one will never for long labour without fruit. These truths have such an immediate reference to every person, and to every stage of Christian experience, that the illustration and expansion of them will be a work which must bind him to his flock as long as life shall last; and it is from the impression they make that he is enabled to cherish the hope of presenting them before the throne of glory with exceeding joy, when, through the mercy of his Lord, he shall arise to receive his

own crown. No one, who studies the charge of St. Paul to the presbyters of Ephesus, and especially who reveres and endeavours to obtain the spirit of the apostle, can long remain ignorant as to the true relation in which a minister stands to his people. Every one will see, that after all the poetic images which express this relation are exhausted, there is a particular in it which they none can express; there is a circumstance, which even the analogies of Scripture fail to portray. He is immortal himself, and the guardian of the immortality of others.

He must raise himself to his work; for it can never be subordinated, or made less awful than it is. He may be little in his own esteem, and indeed should be; but he must cast himself upon his office, and upon the promises and grace of God. A king is great, because of his relation to his kingdom; the rich man is reckoned great, because of his proprietary relation to his property; and the minister of Christ is great, because he is officially related to eternity and eternal things. There is, in some sense, under his inspection, an accumulation of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow, of moral emotions, struggles, agonies, felicities, so great that he can never bear to look upon his position, without first looking to his God, in order to be as fully acquainted with the sustaining power of his Spirit, as with that all-important employment which shall call his utmost powers into full exercise.

III. The Pastoral Office is now to be considered as it stands in relation to the world at large.

Our argument is with those who hold the Scriptures as a revelation from God; and if there be any force and beauty in the similes which Christ used, the position in which ministers stand in reference to the world, is fitly illustrated by the city set upon a hill, and by the uncovered burning light, which diffused its beams throughout the house. If the world be dark, they are placed to enlighten it; if it be guilty, they are to bring home the conviction of guilt; if it contain enemies against God, they are to call it to banish them and yield to Christ, and are to publish the terms of the proposed reconciliation, and seek to recover it to the dominion of their Lord, whose right it is to reign till all enemies are put under his feet.

“O righteous Father,” said the Redeemer, in his farewell prayer, “the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou lovedst me, may be in them, and I in them.”

Why did he utter this, but to show that although he left the world, yet he left, at the same time, his representatives behind him? All ministers are included here with the then existing disciples; for

the prayer is prospective, and looks forward through all time, unto that period, when the redeemed shall be with him, and see his glory.

Here we reason from the adaptation of the instrument, to the obligation of performing the work. They have heard from Christ the Father's name, and through him have tasted, or may taste, the Father's love; and all in order that they may make the world acquainted with both. When we behold a hand, we say, This is for grasping; a foot, we say, This is for walking; wings, These are for soaring: when we behold majestic rivers in torrid climes, These, we say, are to refresh and irrigate the earth; and when in similar places, we behold the clouds gather overhead, we expect, because of their conformation and arrangement, that they will drop fatness upon the earth. Thus the easiest processes of reasoning lead us to look for a certain effect, where we behold a certain arrangement of causes; and most legitimately should we do this, when the ministry is under survey. Why are ministers exempt from the care of providing for temporal sustenance, and from attending to the concerns of this life, but that they may have scope for the exercise of other care on the world's behalf? If the world supplies their wants, it has a right to their sympathies, whether it knows how to value those sympathies or not. There is many a sick man who slights, and even scorns, his benevolent physician.

Why do they pursue the most ennobling and delightful studies that can be engaged in, but that they may be prepared to unfold unto others the result of those meditations in which they have indulged? Why have they granted to them so many means of grace, so many ordinances of a spiritual nature, but that they might so attain heavenliness of mind and deportment, that their duty might become the law and the delight of their nature? Why have they such opportunity for communion with God, and for conversing with the wise and good of all ages, but that from experience of the sweetness of the streams of divine knowledge, they might stand, like Isaiah, and cry, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters?"

St. Paul's doctrine was, "We are ambassadors for Christ;" and therefore did he teach that ministers are everlastingly committed to an opposition of every thing in the world, which rises against the authority of Christ, and prevents his universal reign. Is it a rationalizing spirit which explains away every thing supernatural in religion, and darkens the powers of spiritual perception in the mind, like that which withered the religion of Germany, in the days of De Wette and Bretschneider? then, by asserting the supremacy of faith, and by revering the obvious and rational interpretations of the word. Is it covetousness, which, like the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up, is worshipped by infatuated

thousands? Is it the influence of fame, or honour, or dominion? Is it the call to guilty pleasure by which, and by all of these, the Spirit's voice is drowned? then, by proclaiming with the apostles Christ's deity, asserting his right to the sceptre of the world, and the sovereignty of every heart, and calling upon all, in his stead, to immediate and happy submission; showing that although these idols, mammon, reason, pleasure, self, may for a season have their worshippers, yet that they shall be cast down and broken, before the majestic progress of the Son of God.

The ambassadors of Christ can acknowledge no other reign than his; they cannot view with calmness any usurper of his throne; and while there is a pretender left, there can be no termination of their aggressive course. The glory of Christ, and the interests of men are bound together; for whosoever is an enemy of man, is considered by man's Redeemer as his own personal enemy. The prince of this world, the usurper, then, as long as the ambassadors of Christ are faithful, can meet with nothing but sworn and everlasting opposition: while, on the other hand, the state of the world presents to them a continual call to exertion and fidelity.

Mahometanism has erected its standard where the Lord once showed his glory and wrought his miracles. Hindooism has raised its darkly grand temples in the east, each of which is a portal to

the regions of eternal death. Atheism has denied his name, even where his creative hand has exerted its most glorious might, and where the oracles of nature, the elements of heaven and earth, in life and beauty, are only asking for an interpretation—the Bible, and an interpreter—God's minister. The nations of the civilized world are convulsed from centre to circumference, partly with infidelity, and partly with the desperate struggles of the man of sin. The unconverted millions of our fellow-men, even in England, the land of Gospel light, are passing along to hades in rapid procession, over every division of which some invisible demon presides as prince and leader. And, O Lord, shall there be no voice lifted up for thee?—shall ministerial silence connive at the general disaffection? Who is on the Lord's side? Are not the pastors of the church, above all men, arranged in aggressive order? Have they not the deeds in possession which show that the world is their Lord's by most just title? If there has been given unto them, or if there may be given unto them, the word of truth, the power of God, the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, does not the very qualification show what the service should be,—a militant embassy? Ought they not in person, and by representatives, and by doctrine, to penetrate into every dark and desolate place, like angels of light, until the Lord himself shall give them rest?

There are multitudes in the valley of decision, and the strife every moment thickens. Most important, then, is the office of minister: it bears a solemn and everlasting relation to the world around.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL AUTHORITY, AND THE GUARDS NECESSARY TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF IT.

“Let us pray that ministers may always remember, that whatever authority they have given them, it is for edification, and not for destruction; and may learn, from the moderation with which the apostle used his miraculous powers, in how gentle and candid a manner they should behave themselves in their far inferior stations, never making their pre-eminence in the church the instrument of their own resentment, or of any other sinful or selfish passion; but every way solicitous to subserve the interest of our great Lord in all, and desirous to keep up their own influence and character, chiefly for his sake.”—DODDRIDGE.

WHEN Satan and his angels have prosecuted any design for the misery and ruin of man, it has generally been by perverting some great and holy institution of God. They borrowed the divine conception because of its grandeur; and then imbued it with sin, that it might accomplish their purposes, and produce death and woe on a larger scale than could ever have been fabricated in their own original counsels.

Accordingly, the institution of the visible church, which, under the Christian covenant was intended to

be the greatest blessing to the world, which it ever enjoyed, has, in times past, been so perverted as to be a subject for horror and tears. Was it to be a "house of prayer for all people?" Popery and spiritual despotism have banished for centuries the blessed Spirit, whose habitation it was, and have made it a Bethaven, a house of wickedness, and the terror of the world around.

If we were asked for a personification of church-power, as it existed in the middle ages, we should speak of it as a dreadful unseen spirit, whose attributes were too high and awful to be understood by men, but whose influence followed them, and whose presence pervaded them like the omnipresence of God; whose voice within them was louder than that of conscience, and could bid reason be still; who could invoke into his train terrific shades, the REPHAIM of the other world, and could bring under his potent sway the health and strength, the wealth and influence, the thoughts and passions, the bodies and souls, of all on earth; who shook the thrones of kings, bore the keys of the kingdom of heaven, as well as those of death and hell; and when aroused into wrath, passed by like the destroyer over Egypt. Like this unearthly form was church power once; and church ministers were alike his delegates and vassals.

These times are past: and so will every time of darkness be past; but until they are, hell will

imitate heaven. If we mention this subject of spiritual despotism on the same page with that which explains true ecclesiastical power, it is only to show that the enemy, in perverting it, formed a high estimate of the importance of the institution. The power which Christian ministers possess ought rather to have an angel for its *prosopopœia*: it operates fatherly, gently, and mildly; and has the written word for its directive rule, charity for its secondary law, and, for its primary, the authority of Christ.

Ministerial authority, nevertheless, by persons who have had their minds prejudiced by worldly politics, has been smiled at as the mere invention of a superstitious age. A minister is by them considered as a speaking brother, and nothing else; an individual maintained to preach and to pray for the solace and instruction of believers, and for the awakening of sinners. All acts which are different from these, such as the admission of candidates for membership, and the censure and expulsion of offenders, say they, are passed and performed by the vote of the assembled church.

This is the other extreme, both dangerous and unscriptural, as we shall endeavour to show. When political republicanism is introduced into the church of Christ, and when the ministry is merely made the mouth of the assembly, without possessing any pastoral rule of its own, it is assumed that such a system is tested and true; whereas the past and

present history of the world shows, that governments of a more monarchical form have been as powerful, mild, and beneficent as any republic. Every government, however, has felt the advantage and necessity of having an official person to hold the executive power: the mind of the deliberative body is communicated to him; and in criminal convictions he punishes, mitigates, or pardons, as the case may require.

Such social systems as some speak of, can have only an ideal existence. God has established a real difference between men; and therefore a pure democracy could not subsist, except in name, for two days together; for the wisest or most talented of the assembly would soon become the leader, and virtually the monarch, of the whole. If then a man, by reason of superior gifts, and on account of the grace of God given unto him, be accounted worthy of a place in the ministry, may not that influence which he is allowed to possess above others, and which grace has given him, as is just said, be granted to have free scope? at least so far free that he may use it for the good of his people, in all respects in which it shall not trespass that boundary, where it is limited by the written Scriptures, and by the undoubted rights of others? But a truce to ethical speculations: no man of God would consent to adopt his views of pastoral authority from secular politics; and we are not anxious to secure the concurrence

of the latter, in order to show that Christ's yoke, as imposed by his servants, is easy, and his burden light.

I. Apart from the public devotional and teaching functions of the minister, his authority appears, from the New Testament, to extend to these particulars. 1. To receive candidates into church fellowship, having first judged of their fitness for that privilege. 2. To remove from the body the disobedient and incorrigible. 3. To inflict censures in cases of less flagrant transgression. 4. To appoint church officers. In all these cases it being understood that the mind of the church is consulted.

All this is implied in feeding and taking heed to the flock. These executive functions are lodged with the pastor, who is not the mere messenger who announces the church's decretals, but the official actor.

In support of this view, we will briefly touch on every text which may be supposed to have a bearing on the subject, whether directly or collaterally.

The first ministerial function spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, is the appointment of the seven deacons. It is true the apostles "called the multitude of disciples unto them" on this occasion, and desired them to "look out seven men;" but it was in order that *they*, and not the multitude, might appoint them to the deaconship. The general dis-

ciples were appealed to for advice, and not for authority; because when the seven were nominated, they were "set before the apostles," and by them were ordained through the imposition of hands and prayer. Here was an appointment of officers.—Afterwards, Philip, as evangelist, received a member into the church by baptism, after he had first instructed him in the faith. Here was the admission of a candidate into communion.—We next find a council called at Jerusalem, to determine the question respecting the liability of Gentile converts to observe the ceremonial laws of Moses. In the fifteenth chapter the sacred historian observes, "It pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch," respecting this matter; and that the letters which they carried bore this superscription, "The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting." Thus the people, in *some way*, were connected with their ministers; but it is evident, only by way of concurrence, and for the sake of peace and unity. They were not referred to as a separate and independent source of authority; for in the ensuing chapter, Paul and Silas are represented as delivering, to the Asiatic cities, the decrees which were "ordained of the apostles and elders" at Jerusalem, without at all mentioning the church. The whole was a pastoral act, performed by the conjunct wisdom of the ministry: indeed, it must

necessarily have been so; for if the people could at all judge in this matter, it was because their judgments were illuminated by the apostles, whose doctrine alone could decide how far ancient observances were abolished by the Gospel. The people were invited to concur, but not to decide the question by their suffrage. St. James decided it by his wisdom and moderation.

Next in order comes Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders, in which they, the elders, are exhorted not only to control the flock, but each other, as has been shown before.

Passing to the inspired Epistles, we have these particulars:—

1. An allusion to an instance of gross sin, committed by a member of the Corinthian church. The apostle, after reproving that church for not having mourned over the scandal, declares, "I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed." (1 Cor. v. 3.) He did not wait for the decision of the congregation when a positive and deadly sin had been committed. No unclean person could have a place in the kingdom of God: such was the law of Christ; and no congregational decision could either delay or reverse its execution, so far as the phrase "kingdom of God" has a reference to the outward church.

2. An assertion of authority against false and unholy pretenders to the ministry: "Though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed;" (2 Cor. x. 8;) which authority is again mentioned in the thirtieth chapter, under the term "power," and as being given for the purpose before stated.

3. An argument drawn from paternal rule: "A bishop must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 2—5.) The argument is from the less to the greater: if domestic government be not by vote of the children, or junior and other members of the household, much more is not that of the church of God. If there be a responsibility in the lighter case, much more is there in the heavier.

4. As we have before quoted, and for other purposes, 1 Tim. v. 17, in which the bishop or elder who "rules well" is enjoined to have "double honour." A minister who is the moderator of an assembly merely, cannot rule at all; and, therefore, in his case this scripture is written in vain.

5. Titus is left in Crete to "set in order the things that are wanting," and to "ordain elders in every city." (Tit. i. 5.)

6. He is required to "reject a heretic after the

first and second admonition." A heretical teacher is doubtless implied; and if his heresy be convicted by an appeal to the theological standard of the church, his expulsion becomes a matter of pastoral duty, the offence at the same time being proved to the people. A heretical congregation will, of course, harbour a teacher like themselves: but in an orthodox connexion this cannot take place; for such a congregation cannot exist within the church, by reason of the connexional power of discipline.

7. A proper obedience to pastoral authority is enjoined on Christians: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) Pure Congregationalism affords no scope for the observance of this apostolic injunction; for where all are governors, none can obey. The doctrinal code of every church explains how it understands every law of Scripture; and, when understood, the minister must enforce it; for even the act of enforcing a law, as well as submitting to it, is obedience to Christ, and cannot be omitted by the pastor without great personal guilt.

8. Peter enjoins unto elders, the bishopric of the flock: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but

willingly." (1 Peter v. 2.) He reproveth the *nolo episcopari*. Many would shrink from the bishopric in those times of trouble. As regards the mutual responsibility of his fellow-elders, his charge breathes the same spirit as that of Paul, before quoted.

9. Lastly: the bishop, or angel of the church of Ephesus, is commended in that he cannot "bear them which are evil:" a sufficient indication that his disciplinary power has been legitimately and properly exercised; for the speaker on the occasion was our Lord himself.

Proved, then, as we think it is from the New Testament, that the pastoral power resides in the minister, and not in the suffrages of the church, it is not necessary to refer, except by glance, to the pages of antiquity for additional confirmation.

Notwithstanding the primitive doctrine of "One bishop and one church," which is allowed on all hands to have been generally followed, there is not, from the beginning, any thing like pure and unmingled Independency; for not only was the bishop ordained by other bishops, but he had recourse to their counsel in doubtful and difficult cases of discipline. In judging in his own church, the people, or their representatives, sat with him, as we learn from Cyprian, and concurred in his sentence; but he was the sole executive.

In every thing he did, the minister solicited the acquiescence of the people: if they did not consent,

the matter was a trivial one, and such as he could afford to give up; or else it was the disputed interpretation of a rule, and in that case he could not act upon his own view, but appealed, if the matter was sufficiently important, to the authority of a general council; and this, as it convicted the one party or the other of heterodoxy, was generally binding in its decisions. Such was the regimen of the primitive churches.

It is objected by some, that the pastoral powers, which are exercised in the course we have traced of the New-Testament history, are in the hands of apostles; and, therefore, cannot be exercised by their successors, who are not so richly endowed. The answer is, that as the apostles were not infallible in every action and movement of their lives, but only in the Gospel revelation which they delivered, *they* are not to be viewed as beyond all comparison above other men, except in those particulars in which they were directed by the Holy Spirit. In announcing the will of God, and completing the system of new-covenant doctrine, they were great, unerring, unapproachable; but in other respects they were not unlike the holiest and wisest of the primitive converts. Had they miraculous powers, and gifts of tongues? so had many of the people besides; so that, as the ministers of particular churches, and their apostolic endowments apart,

they would bear the same relation to their flocks as those of the present day do to theirs. Besides, it is this infallible code of the apostles itself which lays down the rule of ministerial duty, and shows the extent of ministerial power. Their words are echoed from Christ: and the question is, not whether the apostles were almost infinitely superior to any who ever followed them; but, what is it they teach? This question we have just endeavoured to answer by a reference to their epistles. No church can lay upon the man of its choice such incumbrances as shall hinder him from standing fair in the sight of his Lord and Master: he must have as much power as shall enable him to keep his commands, to whom he is as much responsible as he is unto the members of his own charge.

Few object to remind him that he will have to give up his account at the last day. Let them, then, not object to furnish him with scope to finish the work which is given him to do, lest the account should have to be transferred from him to them. It is not, besides, reasonable that those who are devoted to spiritual pursuits should have no more authority in the church of God than those whose callings are temporal or commercial. The retirement of the study, the communion with God which is held in prayer, intercourse with the sick and dying, the increase of wisdom which is obtained by reading,—all are circumstances which qualify a man to be a

spiritual guide, if any such qualification can be obtained in this world, and are calculated to place him much farther from the influence of prejudice and passion, and sinister interests, than if he were a secular man. Such an one, in administering the laws of his Lord, certainly enters upon great responsibilities, and may, with Paul, ask for himself, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But the more awful and important is the office, the more careful the church should be in appointing the individual who shall fill it. Having once elected him pastor, let them make him such, and not the mere chairman of the vestry, or lecturer of the pulpit. Let the thought, that they are nominating not only a preacher, but a spiritual director, influence them in all their attempts to introduce persons into the ministry.

The great and good Richard Baxter, whose name has been before mentioned, and who will not at all be suspected of undue attachment to high ecclesiastical claims, thus expresses himself on the subject of pure Independency; though in quoting this we mean no disrespect to a system which, notwithstanding, may have its advantages in other respects: "In the Independent way I disliked the lamentable tendency to divisions and subdivisions, and the nourishing of heresies and sects. But, above all, I disliked, that most of them made the people, by majority of votes, to be church governors in excom-

munications, &c., which Christ hath made an act of office ; and so they governed their governors and themselves: and their making their minister to be no minister to any but his own flock, and to act to others but as a private man.”

Baxter saw the evil consequence of taking the executive power out of the hands of him to whom Christ, he considered, had given it, and giving it to the congregation ; and well he might: for if the whole church were as well instructed in the Gospel as he, and as pious, why was he made minister at all, seeing that he could not teach more than they had experienced and known ?

The very choosing him, implied that the people, in the mass, were less pious, and wise, and learned in the Scriptures, than he ; otherwise his ordination is invalidated ; for the scriptural rule is positive, that he shall be “ faithful ” himself, and “ able to teach others also.” If any other kind of person be elected, the ill consequences rest upon the electors, who ought to have consulted the Bible before they had asserted their choice: they cannot abrogate a plain and unequivocal dispensation of their Lord, who is Head over all things to the church.

For the sake of society around, and the peace and spiritual prosperity of families, it would be ill-judged to deprive Christian pastors of those powers which are essential to the discharge of the duties of their office, and give them unto others:

for it were better, in a case of misrule, to bring the despotic individual to trial, than to make any member of the vestry-meeting, individually, a governor; for each man would then be a centre of anxiety, perturbation, and storm, wherever he went; and if the circles should be in collision with each other, they would be far worse to reduce to order, than one single orb.

The Gospel requires, by its spirit, if not its letter, that ministers shall associate for the purpose of sympathy, mutual help, and the more efficient accomplishment of the great end which they have in view. And if they voluntarily bind themselves in a regularly organized union, the authority of the whole is of the same kind with that which inheres in the individual; it only admits of a somewhat more enlarged application. Such a union is the Wesleyan Conference: and such a union may devise regulations, which shall tend to the improvement of its own members in learning and in piety, and to the increase of purity and happiness in the people; and may, with their concurrence, form a body of connexional law, which shall provide for the removal of local heresies and contumacies, and shall be a standard of appeal for every part of the church. The law in such a case is like that which a father exercises over his family, and is administered more as the active expression of affection, than as a matter of claimed and vested right. The churches

of England and Scotland have legally defined the powers of their pastors ; so that whoever becomes a member of either of those establishments must reconcile himself to the system as he finds it ; but both of them acknowledge the great scriptural principle for which we are contending, although the original and canonical regulations of the communion have been guarded by national enactment. The Presbyterian may refuse baptism, or the sacrament, to improper persons, and deprive them of such church privileges as they possess, without any votes : thus do even established systems show in whose hands the discretionary power is considered to rest.

Wesleyan ministers, to whom we especially direct attention, are left, by the apostolic man after whose name they are entitled, in charge of the societies which he raised up. In the exercise of pastoral duty, they admit into special church communion, by ticket, such persons as are in earnest after salvation, and who are recommended by their respective leaders. It is theirs also to censure, suspend, and, in extreme cases, expel, those who have been guilty of open sin ; that is, after the offence has been proved, and the individual found unhumiliated. It devolves on them, also, to appoint persons to fill the various offices of the church, after they have been pronounced qualified by the various meetings from which they have been raised. The ancient, and as we think scriptural, usage is observed,—that the people, although they concur with

their minister, yet do not of themselves assume legislative functions. This is carried throughout: it runs through all the regulations of Conference, and tends to settle the real liberty and genuine privileges of the people, upon a much more solid basis than if every society were a distinct church, and swayed by its own official members; for, in the latter case, both doctrine, and discipline, and modes of worship, would have nothing to rely upon for steadfastness, but the faithfulness and orthodoxy of those members. If they ever change, the system changes. Although they may be wise and good themselves, they can give no pledge for the future, nor for their successors. And let it not be said that this is a libel upon good men. What has happened in the primitive days, may happen again. It is much more likely that one society should err, than that those with which England is covered should. Conference regulations are a digest of the wisdom of the Connexion, which is expressed through proper channels, and are framed with a view to the benefit of the whole, and do not pass without the consent of a decided, and even large, majority: every member is, in fact, a representative of the people. Thus ministerial power, when legitimately exercised, preserves the Christian and church privileges of a vast Connexion; preserves them against local aggression or calamity; provides for their restoration when interrupted; and although an occasional rupture will take place, when persons

of disappointed ambition arise and produce contention, and sometimes a separation from the body, with violent agitation,—yet, like as when there is a storm in the air, the agitation will soon cease, and the sky assume its former serenity.

From all that has been said, it is obvious, that if any thing can be gathered from Scripture, and from reason and experience, on the subject, it is this, that ministers have at least a right to such powers as shall qualify them to obey the precepts of the New Testament, to exercise the several functions of admitting persons into the church, of directing and teaching them when they are in, and, if they prove unworthy or unholy, of suspending or removing them; and likewise of appointing persons to fill all the subordinate offices of church discipline and service. Whatever guards against an improper use of authority are thought necessary to be imposed, it is manifest that all this they must do, or they cannot be pastors.

II. So far we have spoken of true and scriptural power: but now we advert to the abuse of it; for it may be abused, inasmuch as ministers are but frail and fallible men.

Indeed, it would little serve the cause of truth and righteousness, if we were either to avoid or to veil this particular. The frailties and sins of ministers

are written in history, as well as their deeds of love and zeal. Peter himself was to be blamed on one occasion; and no wonder that his uninspired successors should often be found wrong in judgment, and biassed by some unsanctified feeling of the heart. Ministers are supposed to be chosen from the wisest and best of the people; but even in the wisest and best, there is something which may corrupt and vitiate, as well as mislead, the man.

It is necessary, therefore, that guards should be established, to prevent despotism, from such considerations as these:—

1. A minister may be young, and not sufficiently acquainted with his own heart, or the hearts of others. “Days should speak, and a multitude of years teach wisdom.” ‘Although St. Paul said, in addressing Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth,” it only implied that his youth itself was no subject of odium, as long as he was faithfully enforcing apostolic precepts, and labouring under the apostle’s eye. Young ministers cannot always be under the eye of their seniors; and cannot always judge in what case, and how, an apostolic principle ought to be applied: their resources are only immature wisdom and experience, and, very probably, immature piety too.

2. The love of power is very insidious.* It is

* Before all stands that most fearful rock of vain-glory, more deceitful than the Sirens, of whom the fabulists tell. This

often almost unconsciously disguised, and called by another name ; but it is love of power still. The best of men are pleased in perceiving that they can influence the thoughts and actions of others; and as far as they are holy, so far their power is a benefit; but as far as they have error and infirmity, (and who is devoid of both?) so far extended influence does extended harm. It is impossible not to be complacent at the achievements of our own influence; and this pleasure, if there be not great self-jealousy, will lead to secret attempts to gain power of a higher character than has been realized before. There seems a moral sublimity in it: the higher we ascend the mountain, the more expanded is the landscape, and the more we wish to gain the summit of the ascent. There is a temptation in it too, as was intimated by the attempt of Satan upon our Lord, when he showed him from a high spot the kingdoms of the world. If the high place of any kind of rule be our object, the temptation is the same, and cannot be withstood but by the grace of Him who confounded the machinations of the wicked one. An intelligent man naturally craves dominion, and often in a way which is inconsistent with his own proper subordination to God; and it is one of the greatest victories of grace to destroy

many have been enabled to pass safely; but it is to me so difficult, that I cannot clear the danger, although no power forces me towards the whirlpool.—CHRYSOST. *De Sacerd.*, lib. 3.

whatever is guilty in this ambition,—and guilty it is altogether, when power is desired for its own sake.

3. There is a peculiar exposure to the influence of prejudice.

Ministers live very social lives, and have very extensive intercourse with those around them, and sometimes form many friendships. It would be matter of surprise, indeed, if their judgments were not sometimes tinged by the principles and opinions of their friends. It would not be an impossible case for one of them, if unchecked, to make a bad use of his authority, in order to conciliate some friend, to exclude from Christian communion a person whose fault did not require so great a punishment. And, to reverse the case, might it not be possible for him to do the same thing in marking his dislike to those with whose principles he had no sympathy? Feeling would give such an impression to judgment as would in him, and every mortal man who was irresponsible, render it incapable of attending to the administration of Gospel principles with a serene and righteous spirit.

4. They, in common with all Christians, are liable to declensions in piety. Exalted and spiritual employments are not sufficient to secure continuance and increase in grace; they may become habitual and spiritless; and if the individual has lost his fellowship with God, he is weak and like other men, and is open to the solicitations of worldly interest, and selfishness, and

pride. Many a mournful anecdote might be told which would prompt the exclamation, "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" In a case like this, the complaint has as deep an interest, as when it was uttered over the body of Saul.

All these reasons show, that there should be some guarantee for the proper exercise of pastoral power; and now it remains to evince what that should be; and therefore we may name in order,—

First, The vestry, or deliberative assembly.

All the way through, we have referred to the fact, that the apostles and primitive pastors consulted the church in matters relating to the interests and privileges of the people. And in modern times this principle is well applied, when the members of the diaconal body advise with the pastor in all meetings to which they respectively belong. In their presence should the guilt of every accused person be proved, so that no pastor can perform an act of excommunication covertly. If the unworthy person be no longer fit for membership, he may exclude him; but not without appealing to the judgment of all present, and showing full proof that the sin of the unhappy individual required it, as well as a regard for the peace and purity of the church. The meeting must concur in recognising the individual's guilt in such cases; but it belongs to the minister to exercise the act of censure or ex-

cision. This guard is sufficient to prevent any man from acting under the influence of sinister or unworthy motives; for, in the presence of many, questions innumerable may be and are asked, which lead to a full unveiling of the matter, and prevent either love or hatred, on the part of the minister, from determining it. Besides, as all cases of delinquency are brought before the deacons of the church, the judgments of those persons will undoubtedly direct the minister himself, as to the infliction which the accused and guilty one must suffer, whether reproof, suspension, or actual expulsion; especially when we remember, that those deacons, leaders, or representatives of the people, are among the wisest and most spiritual of the lay-members of the church. In all cases is their judgment, even respecting the sentence of an individual, to be sought for; and if it is ever opposed, it is only when the higher duty of obedience to Christ, and the law of purity and fidelity, leave no other alternative.* This last case can only happen when the vestry consists of but few and inexperienced individuals; or when they are so visibly prejudiced by local interests, or by fear, that they would fain screen the guilty person from punishment or blame. In the presence of the judicious and pious members of a meeting, too, no improper person can be introduced into the

* Who can express the grief a bishop feels when obliged to cut off a member of the church?—CHRYSOST. *De Sacerd.*, lib. 3.

offices of the church: any nominee, who is unworthy of the trust, or who is deficient in piety and ability, may be declared unfit; and there the matter ends. The same may be said of admitting any one to simple membership: if a minister, for selfish purposes, designed to receive an improper individual, the vestry may declare him unfit, and then he cannot be received. When we reflect, that a minister's comfort must greatly depend upon the mutual confidence and affection, which should subsist between him and all his diaconal assistants, we shall perceive that the presence of these latter, and the free expression of their judgments, will be an effectual check against misrule; and that, in their midst, no man will be able for long to transgress that line of duty which is laid down in the Bible, and to continue practising the usurpations of those who make themselves "lords over God's heritage." It was for want of this co-deliberation that Popery and spiritual thralldom advanced so frightfully. After the time of Cyprian, and before the close of the fourth century, deacons were reckoned among the clergy, contrary to the intent of the apostles, who appointed them to assist the clergy in taking charge of the poor and to serve tables: thus a check against arbitrary power was got rid of, and the people were left without representatives; that is, without any who would advise, consult, or expostulate with their pastors. When this link of communication

between the clergy and the flock was severed, the unholy claims of the Papacy rose higher and higher, until it held in terror and bond the kings and great men of the earth.* But let us not dwell on Popery: we are speaking now of churches composed of spiritual and believing men, united together by Christian bonds, and seeking each other's good, without dreaming of any form of spiritual ascendancy. Of all this, Popery is hardly the caricature, it is so far and so foully gone from the representation. If the pure ministry implies elevation in any sense, it is elevation in care, labour, and responsibility.

Second. Another check against the abuse of authority is imposed when the ministry is voluntarily supported, and when the income is properly limited.

We are not asserting here, that establishments are unscriptural or inexpedient; but simply this, that where other and voluntary churches exist, the stated and positively limited amount of their remuneration to ministers, is a preventative, on the part of the ministry, of overbearing and despotic conduct.

* The deacons, beholding the presbyters thus deserting their functions, boldly usurped their rights and privileges, and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order. . . . When the honours and privileges of the bishops and presbyters were augmented, the deacons also began to extend their ambitious views, and to despise those lower functions and employments which they had hitherto exercised with such humility and zeal.—MOSHEIM, 3d Century.

Establishments stand upon their own merits, and the ministers of them receive their privileges and restrictions according to law. Establishments may provide for the good of the people, and, under certain circumstances, prove a blessing; but exception is to be taken against the unholy practice of trading in livings, and thus making a gain, not of the substance, but of the form, of godliness. The profits of godliness are of a widely different character from those which are obtained in such speculations: they are holiness and joy on earth, and glory in heaven.

A limited income is a good human security against ministerial deterioration. By limited, we do not mean a scanty and insufficient one, but such an one as no ambition can augment; for here is a guard against covetousness, which of all sins, to the purity and efficiency of the ministry, is most destructive. Paul mourns over Demas, who had left him, having loved this present world: and having, in another place, described the various forms of sin, of which the love of money was the darkest, he calls unto Timothy, in a most passionate voice, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things." The voice of an angel of God, who had suddenly revealed himself for the message, could hardly be more startling. Paul had lost his once-devoted companion, and had seen others pierced through and through with many sorrows, by means of this detested gold. If idolatry was rebellion against God, covetousness was idolatry.

With the apostle every thing was sacrificed to ministerial usefulness: he could make the lofty assertion, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel;" and the wonder to heaven and earth is, that the church should have preserved his sentiments, and have professed a venerated friendship for his character, and yet, for centuries, have been as far from his self-denying course, as it is possible for one extreme, on this side of the grave, to be from another. What availed it that it was called the church of Christ? The book that testified of Christ, was hidden as effectually as was the Pentateuch in the days of the Judean king; and the pseudo-pastors of the church were serving under the god of this world; and doubtless, were it not for the love of money and of grandeur, the well-known infidel exclamation would not, amongst some of them, have been so blasphemously uttered, "*Quantas divitias nobis peperit hæc Christi fabula!*"

Wealth is considered now, by common compact of society, to be the principal criterion of difference between men; but it is not a compact to which a minister of Jesus can be a party. Woe to him if he looks for a single line of his dignity from anything that earth can give! His honour must be character; it must be holiness; or otherwise his shining wealth will, by its gleams, exhibit nothing but the faded and ruined form of a servant of God. Let those who would make the ministry a portal

to the temple of mammon, look with Spenser into the interior of the temple itself.

“ Both roofe and floore and walls were all of gold,
But overgrowne with dust and old decay,
And hid in darkness that none could behold
The hew thereof: for vew of cheerful day
Did never in that house itself display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light:
Such as a lamp whose life does fade away,
Or as the moone, cloathed with cloudy night,
Does shew to him that walks in feare and sad affright.”

Such is the dark locality of the worshippers of lucre. Heaven fades from their eyes, and every moment has less influence upon their motives; as though the evidences of its existence in their earthly sphere were too dim to be perceived. If the hands of no less an one than Aaron were employed in fashioning a golden calf, it were no wonder that the multitude should become foul idolaters. Balaam might have been a prophet of the Lord, and his lofty imagination have been sanctified to the service of his cause; but he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and fell. Judas was one of the elected twelve, was present at the sad and solemn scene of the last supper, and heard the heavenly discourses of our Lord; but, for the sake of silver, he arose up and betrayed him.

Instances like these show that worldly ambition, and the love of money, establish a communion with

the great enemy of man, which fearfully endangers the church, and puts the salvation of individuals in jeopardy. We would, with all humility, register a warning to all concerned in this subject, and reiterate, in their hearing, the affecting charge of Paul to Timothy.

There is not, however, much temptation to despotism, arising from this source, in voluntary churches. The minister receives his support from free offerings,—he cannot increase their amount: to preserve his own influence and happiness, it would be necessary to secure the love and esteem of the offerers, and rather to be an ensample to the flock than a lord over God's heritage. What interests can he have apart from theirs? Here is a check against overbearing conduct; and when the human heart is well considered, it will be acknowledged an effective one. Let those defend pluralities who deem them defensible; but let every true Christian pastor turn away his eyes from beholding such vanity. Let his claims for the things of this life, whether they come from endowed sources or otherwise, be founded on character, and upon the value of personal services; and then there is a double end promoted,—the fidelity of the man, and the purity of the church. He cannot tyrannize who has to be supported by a free people.

A third check against the abuse of authority is established, when the trial of an unworthy minister

is at the call of those who have been aggrieved by his conduct, and that it shall speedily follow the commission of the fault.

Sin in such an one is especially sinful: he breaks the law of the Lord; violates his compact with the church, which was, that he would be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and he becomes at once the joy and scorn of the infidel. In cases of gross transgression, no false tenderness should be exercised to the accused party: the whole church suffers and groans; and therefore sin ought to be estimated as God estimates it, by its consequences. Fearfully does St. Jude describe false or fallen ministers: "They are spots in your feasts of charity," like as a blot is visible on white paper;—"they are clouds without water, carried about of winds;" no rain falls, no refreshment for the earth;—they are "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;" the success of their labour ceases, their own vitality is gone.

In establishments there are too many secular incumbrances in the way of judging ungodly pastors. The incumbrances cannot be too few; for to wink at their transgression, is to set up impure examples, and to seal the degradation of the church. In judgment, God begins at his own house; and so ought we, if our intentions are in unison with his own.

There is no such thing in the Christian system, we have already seen, as conventional holiness. A man cannot be holy in his office, and impure in himself: his personal unrighteousness is public sin, and as such calls for judgment. O let us have provision made for the purity of the ministry! How would all who are now in England, whether in the established church or others, stand the test of a scriptural ordeal? If another Council of Triers were to be appointed, and if, instead of having such scrutators as were appointed by Cromwell, they should be Paul, Peter, John, Timothy, Titus, and their contemporaries, how many ejections would take place? Alas for us, if every spiritual person in the land were brought before such a bar!

The very circumstance, that it is possible, after every care has been taken, that false men may intrude into the church, and that men who are good and faithful, at present, may subsequently sin and attempt to tyrannize, ought to lead to a standing provision, for bringing them before a judicial bar, even if the possibility of their fall were ever so little and remote. Ministers are not exempt from an obligation to be "moved with fear," any more than Noah was. That fear ought to regard the standards of true religious opinion, and the tribunals of the church: it is, in fact, a part of the fear with which they fear before God, in return for the covenant which he makes with them of life and peace;

as in the case of Levi. Not to stand in awe of censure or expulsion, is a proof, not of moral courage, but of a ruined conscience and spiritual death. Servile dread has nothing to do with Christianity; but a dread of sin and disgrace has every thing to do with it: such a feeling is a check against pastoral misrule; and where trial will follow delinquency, it must operate.

These then are the guards which prevent the improper and despotic use of ministerial authority:—the co-deliberation of the deacons or leaders, or by whatever term the members of the diaconal body may be called; the control exercised by the people over the temporal supplies; and the certain judgment which impends over those who have sinned.* And these guards we think abundantly sufficient; that is, if they cannot absolutely secure the abstract purity and efficiency of the pastorate, they will undoubtedly preserve the true balance of influence which subsists between that and the laity: and pre-

* Seldom would formal guards against despotism be needed, if our Lord's divine rule, laid down in Matthew (xviii. 15) were observed: First, tell a pastor of his faults privately, between himself and you alone, before you mention them to two or three witnesses, or the elders of the church. Such a course would counteract or destroy the despotism of any man. It is secret misrepresentation, and retailing of slander, which produce exasperation,—popular disaffection on the one part, and self-will on the other. Let a society of a thousand or two thousand members, as well as the smallest one, act thus, and the evil is killed in its germ.

served in this relation, they both will rise and fall together.

In the Wesleyan Connexion the principles are illustrated, which in this chapter we endeavour to establish.

Its ministers have everywhere power to admit new members, to remove immoral and schismatic ones, to sanction or refuse admittance to the Lord's table, and to appoint the various officers of the church; and in connexional assembly, or Conference, to exercise the general oversight and government of the societies. And, lest this power should be abused, it is accompanied by the following guards:—

1. The leaders'-meeting sits with the pastor; and in case of an accused person, requires proof of the person's guilt; and when a new leader is proposed to be appointed, assents to his fitness for the office, *sine qua non*. The meeting of local preachers sanctions every newly proposed preacher; and judges as to the disciplinary or official faults of any member of that meeting who is accused of such: though, if the individual be immoral and contumacious, he is liable to be judged of in the leaders'-meeting, as a private member of the church would be. 2. The quarterly-meeting has a veto in the appointment of the steward, who holds the local finances and disburses them; and a veto upon all recommendations of candidates for the ministry, as we have

before seen. 3. The majority of the trustees of any Wesleyan chapel, or the majority of the stewards and leaders of any society, who believe that the minister appointed to them has become heretical, immoral, contumacious, or deficient in ability, shall have authority to summon a local court to try the case; which court shall be composed of the chairman of the district and the district ministers, together with the chapel trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit or society in question. If the charge be proved, the minister so accused is removed from his circuit, and referred to the district-meeting and Conference, to be further dealt with. Before a jurisdiction so erected, a guilty person could not possibly escape conviction, without collusion on the part of the local office-bearers.

And, still further, the circuit-stewards have a sitting afforded them in the district-meeting; and, through the medium of that meeting, as a committee of Conference, they have a right to communicate to the Conference the wishes of the various and multiplied societies on connexional subjects; and thus, while the quarterly-meeting is preserved from being the arena of debate, the mind of the Connexion is represented.

If lay-delegates, or lay-elders, were to sit in the Conference, as some who have not closely studied the system have proposed, what beneficial end would thereby be secured? Is it needful to have the suffrage of delegates, to determine

whether intemperance, dishonesty, or impurity be sin? or whether such sin should be visited with censure and excision? Could they judge better than the regular convened members, what stations were fittest for ministers, whose talents and qualifications are as various as can be imagined? Can the societies be more than represented? Not unless they become their own pastors: and this would be transgressing the Scripture line, and very soon would be the destruction of order, efficiency, and peace; and then, immediately after, the destruction of the church itself.

Mr. Welch, in his work on the Wesleyan Polity, has demonstrated the impossibility of establishing with equity, to say nothing of benefit, the delegation plan; and in his excellent book throughout, with minute and philosophic exactness, has traced the harmonies and collateral bearings of the present system, which, we think, like some great law of nature, grand and simple, is nevertheless capable of ten thousand applications. The Conference is a hierarchy, it may be granted, if men will contend for a term; but it is not an irresponsible one. It did not create its own power, but received it as a legacy from Mr. Wesley, who himself received, without seeking it, from the providence of God: and, indeed, after the Conference had received it at Mr. Wesley's hands, every thing, by the Act of Pacification, was given up to the people, except

the spiritual pastorate of the societies. The jurisdiction over the Wesleyan people was first an autocracy: this continued during Mr. Wesley's life, from 1738 to 1791: it was, at his death, left to a ministerial aristocracy, unamenable like the former government. This lasted from 1791 to 1797; and then, to suit the changing circumstances of society, it became, by the measure just mentioned, a limited and amenable government, in which state it continues to this day. It is responsible on every side: it is responsible to the voice of the societies, as expressed by their stewards, and echoed through district-meetings; it is responsible to their official communications by document; it is responsible to the tone of feeling which pervades the body,—to respect and to sympathize with it,—or how could regard for its own members be secured? It is effectually limited in power; for all its funds are virtually yielded to the management of committees, which chiefly consist of lay-gentlemen, whose talents and piety are much better employed thus, than they would have been in spiritual and synodic consultations. Such are the committees of the Missionary Society, of the Schools, the Contingent Fund, the Children's and the Auxiliary Fund, the Chapel Fund, and that of the Theological Institution. To attempt a tyrannical act, in the face of men like these, would be as useless as it would be sinful. The Conference has no power over a penny of pro-

perty, save that of the Book-Room ; and although that is the fruit of the literary toil of its own members, yet scrutiny is invited to the fact, whether or not the profits of that establishment are applied to the cause of God. This is an extended application of the check of financial surveillance.

That which is left the ministers is the spiritual oversight of the Connexion, as has just been said. And every good and unbiassed man must confess, that if this be their claim, it is confirmed by the will of the deceased founder, the practice of the apostles of our Lord, and the uniform tenor of the word of God. If the provisions against misrule have not all the form of positive enactments, they have more than the force,—it is moral force. It were unseemly to introduce the refinements and subtle distinctions of civil law into the church of God: such a procedure could only be founded on the assumption, that there was no holy and uniting influence in the Connexion. No; the Wesleyan ministers, and their societies, agree to be guided by Gospel principles, knowing that they all have the same hearts, and are all liable to their several peculiar temptations; and whilst the former are exercising that just authority which the Bible gives them, and which is necessary to their integrity, they are made to feel the force of the opinions and desires of their people, although those opinions and desires may not assume the form of stern and

unyielding canons. It would be mysterious if it were otherwise.

They are placed, though not by their own seeking, in an absolute and immoveable relation to the societies. Whatever changes take place as regards the purity of the body, the equilibrium of power goes along with those changes; and the improvement, or deterioration, of the ministry is coeval with that of the laity.

The Conference may be considered the concentrated Connexion. Every measure it brings forward has been considered and approved in numerous circles, before it is approved and ratified there. Every great enactment may be considered as the result of the expressed or tacit opinions held by the majority of the Connexion. Some providential opening has led to the discovery of a new want; which want, year after year, has become more painfully felt, and has become the topic of general conversation: the subject has undulated from circle to circle, gaining accessions of wisdom all the way, until it has reached the ministerial house; and then has led to a measure which, if not rescinded at the following Conference, was made connexional law. Thus arose the settlement of the sacramental question, which was, in fact, a separation from the church of England; and thus the establishment of the several funds, the Theological Institution, and the imposition of hands in ordination.

Let the Wesleyan code be examined with as philosophic an eye as ever beamed, and its structure will be found astonishing. The successive waters of friendly strife have subsided, and have left at each subsiding a deposit of clear truth, which now, in the aggregate, exhibits, with many moral veinings, a solid substratum of Christian law. It is thus that one of the highest acts of the Conference, the forbidding unconstitutional meetings, is, as Mr. Welch strikingly shows, a high compliment paid to the good sense of the societies: the greater the requisition which is made, the greater is the honour of those of whom it is made. The ministers rely on the people for supplies, and yet they legislate against private debate: they presume that the societies are satisfied with their long-tried system,—the system in whose details they have acquiesced; and, therefore, by such orders as these, with dignified friendship and confidence, they preserve it from destruction. The Conference, we have already allowed, may, formally, be a hierarchy; but it is *sui generis*, and is limited and made responsible on every side.

The subject, as far as Methodism is concerned, is not exhausted, and scarcely could ever be; but we have now considered the checks which may be properly imposed upon pastors, in order to prevent a tyrannical use of the power with which they are invested. Such checks are necessary because of

the deceitfulness of the human heart, and because the wisest and best may err, and even fearfully depart from simplicity and righteousness. At the same time, they are only legitimate when they preserve the true relation between pastors and people; not when they destroy it. The persons who are under care, and who are the subjects of this spiritual government, are themselves likewise subject to pride and love of power, and to spiritual defection. The liability to err is not all on the minister's side: and this shows, that as both parties are fallible and imperfect, and are both under a higher discipline for eternity, how necessary it is that on all great matters the word of God should interpose; and that in all minor questions, and in cases of doubtful interpretation, charity, and fine Christian feeling, should settle the point by mutual concession.

Pastors are assumed to be intellectually, morally, and religiously superior to their people: if they are not, it is their people's fault; for they ought not to have recommended them. But, whether they are superior or not, no greater injury could be inflicted upon the church than to strip them of all authority, and make them like other brethren. On common principles of wisdom, it would be ever desirable, that to them should be confided the quiet and unostentatious discharge of a duty which the many could not discharge without much agitation and debate. Hooker, on this very subject, says,

“But we must note, that it is in this case as in a ship: he that sitteth at the stern is quiet, he moveth not, he seemeth in a manner to do little or nothing, in comparison of them that sweat about other toil; yet that which he doeth is, in value and force, more than all the labours of the residue laid together. The influence of the heavens above worketh infinitely more to our good, and yet appeareth not half so sensible as the force doth of things below. We consider not what it is which we reap by the authority of our chiefest spiritual governors, nor are likely to enter into any consideration thereof till we want them; and that is the cause why they are, at our hands, so unthankfully rewarded. Authority is a constraining power; which power were needless if we were all such as we should be, willing to do the things we ought to do without constraint. But because, generally, we are otherwise, we all reap singular benefit by that authority which permitteth no men, though they would, to slack their duty.” All this is justly urged, even on the supposition that the spiritual director engages in no active and physical toil, which in these days is never the case. Take, then, his proper authority away, and questions are opened which have been long settled by our Lord and his apostles. The management of the church resembles the stormy politics of the temporal state; the character of father, or shepherd, disappears; the sacraments

become common things, administered by any man, or at any time or place: whatever may remain of piety, every thing is opposed to its growth and continuance; every one will clamour to be heard, and will feel more concern for what he strangely and ignorantly calls his liberty, than for his soul.

Whatever would tend to make the meeting of the church like a house of Parliament, cannot be too carefully excluded; for those who dwell in the sanctuary, are supposed to be under the remedial influence of divine grace, and are capable of a higher and holier freedom than is found to exist in secular society. It is not a freedom which dispenses with obedience; that would be anarchy: but a freedom in which obedience is nature and pleasurable, and in which rule is accounted a blessing. Christianity operates by gentle but powerful motives; not by fear, or by clothing its mandates with terror: the Holy Ghost, the life of the whole, moves upon faithful ministers, and a faithful people, in mild love: whoever governs, governs as he in heaven, by giving light, and then by goodness making that light conducive to acquiescence: whoever obeys, obeys as the angels, who are not coerced by fear, but prompted by affection. At least in every true church this is attempted; and

“There is much need: for not as yet
Are we in shelter or repose;

The holy house is still beset
With leaguer of stern foes ;
Wild thoughts within, bad men without,
All evil spirits round about
Are banded in unblest device
To spoil love's earthly paradise."

CHRISTIAN YEAR, p. 136.

An eminent minister, who, in reply to a question which was put to him, as to what was the subject of his present meditations, said, as has been referred to in a former chapter, "I was meditating the nature and number of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace cannot be in heaven; and O that it might be so on earth!"

The mind which cannot respond to this wish, has yet to learn what the spirit of the Gospel is; for whatever is clear in truth, tender in love, binding in authority, or pure in holiness, is all its own. The church ought to be exhibiting some marks of its heavenly destiny; the people active and efficient in their enlightened subordination; and the pastors at once mighty and meek in the exercise of their influence. May it be our lot to hear rehearsed in heaven, over every one of them, the eulogy uttered by the divine Spirit over Levi, through the mouth of Malachi the prophet, and which has glancingly been alluded to: "MY COVENANT WAS WITH HIM

OF LIFE AND PEACE; AND I GAVE THEM TO HIM FOR THE FEAR WHEREWITH HE FEARED ME, AND WAS AFRAID BEFORE MY NAME. THE LAW OF TRUTH WAS IN HIS MOUTH, AND INIQUITY WAS NOT FOUND IN HIS LIPS: HE WALKED WITH ME IN PEACE AND EQUITY, AND DID TURN MANY AWAY FROM INIQUITY."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRIT AND CONDUCT OF A MINISTER OF CHRIST.

“ We see how these ambassadors have need to be friends, and intimate friends, with their Lord. For if they be much with God in the mount, their returns to men will be with brightness in their faces, and the law, both in their hands and in their lives and their doctrine, shall be heavenly.”—LEIGHTON’S Sermon to the Clergy.

IF Nadab and Abihu were consumed for presuming to approach the altar of God with false fire, and if Uzzah was stricken dead for stretching forth his hand to the ark, then the sanctuary was a most fearful and holy place; for the altar and the ark were the symbols which hallowed it,—the one indicating propitiation for sin, and the other the provision of the Spirit and the Word.

Those who ministered in this abode were dignified men; for the law of consecration was so framed, as to lead to the introduction of such. But the glory of the latter house is greater than that of the former; and therefore the spiritual bearing and demeanour of its ministers ought to exceed that of the Jewish priests, as far as the “ministration of righteousness”

exceeds the "ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." Being stewards of the mysteries of God, every look and word and work should be instinct with the spirit of their charge. The Eleusinian mystagogue, or keeper of the *αποόρητα*, "things ineffable," was one who seemed to live in another world from the multitude, in so much higher a key did he think and speak than they; and if this were an influence of Satan, made seemingly bland that it might the more surely ruin souls, of which there is little doubt, then it were a subject of grief and shame, if those should not be elevated men, who are professedly overshadowed and led by the Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. The rationalist cannot feel the force of our appeal; for of what mysteries is he the steward?

When, with the awe-struck Moses, we cry, "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah," and bow before the Trinity, as much with our souls as actually and formally, we feel the dread importance of our position. But we are told that there is another throne of judgment within us, which declares it impossible that three co-equal persons should exist in an united source: and thus it is assumed, that the reason of man is identical with pure, eternal, and divine reason; that it has received no hurt, or stain; and that it can see as far into the possibilities of existence, and non-existence, and their modes, as its Author.

God cannot reveal a contradiction; and while we adore, the man of reason denies one part of the doctrine, that he may find no difficulty in the other. There are many things in this world, which cannot be brought to view, without extraordinary and scientific light; a light which is distressing, and almost destructive, to the eye. How much more, then, are things in heaven, and in the mind of God, invisible, and as to their mode of existence, mysterious! and how oppressive additional revelation would be!

Rationalism can see no extremes of glory and meanness meeting in Jesus Christ; cannot with all the angels of God worship him, and at the same time see him not know where to lay his head: it can resolve his death to a martyr's courage; the promise of his Spirit into a poetical prosopopœia, or an emanation from God; original sin into a theological fiction; faith into mere credence of truth, a "siccum lumen;" and regeneration into a mere transfer from one dispensation to another. Thus, in the system of doctrine, mystery is got rid of, that the understanding may not have to stoop; but it is only shifted to other objects: the mingled mercies and miseries of man are all unexplained; and the struggle between conscience and will, the unalleviated sense of guilt, the everlasting craving after a refuge and rest for the soul, notwithstanding a dread of God, can all find no exposition or relief.

O let mystery belong, and be referred, to Him

around whom are "clouds and darkness," as we learn from his own word; and let not me be left to become my own oracle, when I have imposed silence on his own,—let me neither be my own heaven nor my own hell. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Those, however, who are called to the Christian sanctuary, and to the stewardship of Christ's Gospel, have to do with profound and enraptured truths,—truths which made St. Paul cry, *O βαθος!* and yet which are uttered back from every believing heart. They speak of hereditary and of wilful sin, and of the deep and thorough stain with which it imbues every man's soul: they show how grace is coeval with it; how there is a constitution of mercy established for the whole world, through the atonement of Christ our Saviour; and that every one who believes is interested in its special provisions, is reconciled to God, dealt with as though righteous, is accounted a child, and the fact of his adoption is immediately witnessed to him by the Holy Ghost, who likewise is the strength and life of that new existence which the pardoned sinner now realizes. The Spirit intercedes for him *σπενναγμαις αλλαητοις*, helps his infirmities in prayer, pervades his soul, and hallows and purifies its powers, like as a pure stream cleanses a polluted fleece: and hence the process in the soul is called "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost:" the original stain is removed; and as believing has opened the foun-

tain, it may flow from above for ever. They speak of Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, as the apostle; and as Ignatius before the emperor spoke of being filled with the fulness of God, of a spiritual temple, of which believers are the component parts,—the Spirit, the inhabitant,—and love, the ever-glowing altar-fire.

They speak of a Providence which is awful in its comprehension and sweep; and yet whose little circles are as illustrative of God as the orb which enfolds eternity. They tell of decrees which ensure the final conversion and happiness of the world, and the triumphs of Gospel truth, although fulfilled through the instrumentality and contingencies of men. And they publish, not merely the promise of immortality,—for that is only a negative blessing, and if it were sorrowful might not be a blessing,—but of eternal life; which implies far more of happiness than any comment can explain, meaning not only a freedom from death, but the enjoyment of God. In its course from the fountain it is compared to a river, (Rev. xxii. 1,) which makes glad the city of God, “the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High:” and how sweet when its subsidiary streams are conveyed by ordinances in this world! The Greeks talked of their Helicon; but he that drinketh of that stream shall thirst again: not so here; whosoever shall drink of the water that Christ shall give him, shall never thirst, but “it shall be

in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life."

These are the mysteries committed to their trust. Plato and Socrates never dreamed of such in all their aspirations; and yet the poorest and least-gifted of men are admitted to the fellowship of them. They are not hidden from the community, or it would be a matter of condemnation; the book of God is open to all: but they are given to ministers, who are to defend, to guard, to explain, and to employ them for the salvation of men, and fulfilling the work of Christ. If this be their charge, what manner of persons should they be? If it be said of Christians in general, how much more ought it to be said of ministers,—

“How far above these earthly things!
How intimately one with God!
A heaven-born race of priests and kings!”

In enumerating the graces which adorn the spirit and conduct of the faithful, we would place first,

LOWLINESS; or what is more frequently inculcated in the New Testament by the term humility. It is not meanness, nor servility, but that prostration of spirit, which is produced by a sense of the majesty and love of God resting thereon. Such a frame of mind will prevent the ostentatious assumption of authority, and the utterance of proud words; such

as, "I am your spiritual ruler, and will be obeyed." None but untaught and unsanctified minds can be continually resorting to such a method of preserving the position they occupy in the church of God; for it argues great ignorance of the human heart. Let the pastoral office with all its responsibilities be taken up as a matter of obedience to Christ; and what ground for self-complacency is here?

The obligation to administer discipline should be calmly assumed: for the same Bible which gives the minister his commission, is referred to, and believed in, by all who have any part in the Christian inheritance. The matter is supposed to be taken for granted; and therefore reiteration is needless; and not only needless, but hurtful: it will be considered a sort of substitute for innate dignity, and would only irritate those whom the Bible could not convince. Endeavour, in some given instance, to act upon some great scriptural principle, and do as Christ has commanded you. Your conduct is objected to and opposed by some one: tell him you are God's minister, and have a right to his obedience; and you will find that the haughty sentence will drive him, as he cannot deny the Bible, to deny your commission, because of the temper in which you assert it. But continue to act tranquilly, without saying a word about power, and only appealing to your holy book, and you will gain that soul. He will thankfully part from his cloak, which no gust could have

torn from his back. Lowliness makes a man free from the love of office for its own sake, and helps him to place a proper value on its externals: no self-exalting thing will he say or do because his place is a pulpit, his dress a gown; for such things have no more to do with the real man than the windows of the church have to do with religion. Lowliness makes the heart accessible: it can enter into the temptations and sorrows of the people; it can understand their cases: and is not this a point worth gaining? Ministers are usually wise; but "let not the wise man glory in his wisdom." Indeed, he who is truly wise will not feel a disposition to glory: desire after the future and unattained will destroy those vain and self-complacent thoughts which others cherish. An income which would raise a common citizen to splendour, would be only sufficient to make a monarch pine and mourn; and in like manner a mental store, which would cause some to vaunt themselves beyond measure, in a truly noble and capacious soul, would only be a cause of grief and shame.

No men have better opportunity than ministers of seeing how much remains to be attained, and how far from God we on earth are, and what riches of grace are yet unpossessed; no men see, or ought to see, farther into the perfection of heaven and things divine,—the illimitable light that shines over head: and therefore no men ought to be more dissatisfied with every thing that claims to be great

and lofty in this world; and, notwithstanding their endowments, none have greater necessity for being clothed with humility as with a garment.

Official vanity is a source of perpetual disquietude. Whatever has the appearance of disrespect, or whatever may be construed into a slight, inflicts a secret wound in the vain man's soul. He may, for the sake of peace, impose silence upon his lips, and utter no angry word at the time; but he retires, as Haman, depressed to his house; the guilty conflict continues; and, ere long, the spirits fail, and the health sinks,—a sufficient indication of the suffering within.

Men in public stations are not exempt from mental agony, especially if they are Christians; but much may be avoided by cherishing lowliness of mind. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, compares it to walking in a peaceful valley; and Isaiah calls it a way of holiness, and that no lion is there, and no ravenous beast shall go up thereon. It qualifies a minister to be a fit companion for a child, and yet an instructor of the intelligent and aged; to listen to the weakest prejudice, and yet establish the profoundest truth; to condescend unto the meanest men, and yet be imperturbed in the presence of the great.

The wisest heathen knew nothing of this grace: their *ταπεινός* usually referred to something low or contemptible; and the disposition in which it was scorned was evidently Satan's own. But this is part

of the "wisdom that is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." It is first mentioned in our Lord's sermon on the Mount; and called forth the first benediction, to show, that amid all the qualities which adorn and sanctify the character, it takes the precedence. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," did he say; "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Whatever may be the exact meaning of βασιλεια τῶν οὐρανῶν, this is no low destiny. It may mean the reign of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, within them; or it may mean the possessions which await them in glory; or it may imply both. To be a member of the kingdom, in any sense, is to be blessed beyond conception; and to be "poor in spirit"—which is the reverse of being self-complacent, or confident in mental strength—is to be in a position which shall call forth the deep and holy yearnings which accompany a Saviour's blessing: it is derived from learning the lesson of his cross: it is the result of a penitentially broken and contrite state of heart.

2. DIGNITY. We had this qualification in view, when we spoke, at the commencement of this chapter, of what was congruous in those who were stewards of divine things; endeavouring to intimate that those who had so sacred an employment should be sacred themselves. No two virtues subsist so well together, or require so little trouble to reconcile, as humility

and dignity: by the one we show the estimate we form of ourselves; by the other, the use we make of grace. By the dignity which is now pleaded for, we mean that seriousness of deportment, and that refined outward bearing, which are due to the office, and necessary to the influence and success, of the ministry. It does not consist in making high claims, or even in taking refuge in the undoubted privileges of the order, except there be necessity: this, we have already shown, is contrasted with, and opposed to, humility. This was the conduct of the Jewish Scribes; they sat "in Moses' seat:" but when our Lord came, "he taught as one *having* authority, and not" *asserting* it "as the Scribes." It sat upon his face, and produced conviction by the spirituality and majesty of his teachings. There was no need for him to preface his discourse by asserting it: his preface was himself. And it is by a distant walking in his steps, that his servants exemplify that course of conduct which we think both he and the church requires of them. Ministers are little in themselves; not so in their work: as sinners, they loathe themselves before God's purity, and repent in dust and ashes; but, as having a dispensation of the Gospel committed to them, they are raised by their theme: as men, they have self-hatred; as pastors, self-respect.

Let the people of Israel, in a maddening crowd, dance and shout around the idol which their hands

have fashioned,—Moses is never beheld in such scenes: Moses converses with God; he says, “of their laughter, It is mad: and of their mirth, What doest thou?” It is not for him who is panting to behold the divine glory, to have any sympathy with such petty passions; it is not the finite and tangible which attracts his adoring gaze, it is “the living God;” and while his soul yearns after the Infinite, it seems almost to imitate infinity itself. No wonder that he was accounted king in Jeshurun; no wonder that there was no prophet arose like unto Moses. O, may the joys of our pastoral leaders be such as entranced his amazed spirit! Theirs, in some distant degree, be that lustre of character which marked him as faithful in all his house; that moral dignity, of which the beams of glory shining from his face were but the symbol! Then would the churches glorify God in them.

If some will so far forget themselves as to join in the obstreperous laugh, to become the retailers of low and hackneyed witticisms, the centre of a circle which is all satire and glee, and lend themselves to any man or any company, for the sake of fleeting social popularity, can they complain of their loss of solid influence? What a guerdon have they found!—the acclamations of trifling men, but mingled with the awful and reproving voice of the Spirit of God. This is indeed selling a birthright for a mess of pottage. Samuel the prophet was said to be an “honour-

able man," (LXX., *εὐδοξος*), and when he came to the town of Bethlehem, the elders trembled as he drew near, and said, "Comest thou peaceably?" How thrilling and far-extending was his influence! It is impossible to contemplate such an one, without instruction and awe. The ministry is a sacred inclosure; but if any one shall place himself upon a level with any trifler who is without, does he not break down the fence, and expose his brethren to contempt? Who then can prevent the incursions of the wild boar of the forest? Assuredly he will advance, and the inclosure, once fruitful, and beauteous in order, will become a desolate common.

Popery labours to confer upon its ministers a dignity: it gives them a gorgeous robe, and surrounds them with white-robed youths; allows to them alone the wine, the symbol of Christ's precious blood; and, by the help of the "spirit of fear," makes them nearly omniscient, in the confessional and the chapel, and among untaught people. Who would remain unawed with such associations? Yea, the man of learning and of taste himself, being captivated by the balmy poetry of Popish hymns, and melted by the gushes of dying harmony in which they are sung, will feel his own phantasy aroused, and will mistake his genius for holiness, and under its influence will look upon those men, who have come down, as it is said, in a regular succession from the holy apostle Peter, with veneration, and

say, from mere imagination, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these!" But how is this illusion dispelled by the light in which every truly good man walks! He will compare spiritual things with spiritual; a spiritual person with a spiritual Bible.

God has not eyes of flesh, nor seeth he as a man seeth. The worst of men may have a dignity like this: Satan himself (though far be it from us to liken even Papists in general unto him) may put on the garment of an angel of light, although he is worse ruined and damned every hour. The true dignity of a minister of Christ consists in the unction which he receives from above: this, like as when it was poured without measure upon his Lord, raises him in his measure above his fellows. It is the "unction of the Holy One," the richest gift of the Comforter; and in other words than these it is difficult to explain it. St. John meant, by using such language, to intimate that as the sacred chrism in ancient times dignified the individual on whom it was poured, and shed a rich fragrance all around, so the Spirit imparted a heavenly influence to fervent and maturing Christians, which should attend them in every place. He who preaches the word, and tends his charge with this endowment, will need no epistle of commendation; he will be above these earthly things, though at the same time in the midst of them, and not insensible of their presence: no

vulgar levity, no grovelling amid the toys of the worldly, will spoil the unity of such a character; his conversation will be in heaven, and his words like the manna that fell on the camp of famishing Israel. And yet we have not told all: he goes forth like Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, of whom there are many things hard to be uttered; and many are attracted to him, as Elisha to Elijah, on the way to the scene of translation.

We say not, that the cheerfulness and suavity of the Christian may not be fully developed in him; nor do we assert that he is a stranger to the innocent recreations and mirth of private domestic life:—no. Wesley enjoined on his ministers to be ashamed of nothing but sin: and Watson, the late and revered, could lead the devotions and contemplations of an assembly to the very verge of the highest heaven; yet he who writes these lines has frequently been over the spot where he played with children. Uncion in a minister is like a crown to a king, in point of meaning; but it is only seen in its effects. This is his true dignity: the people know that they are with one who is a friend of God; and may, in a subordinate sense, say of him, what was once said of One higher, “They shall shut their mouths at him,” and “that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” (Isai. lii. 15.) A still small voice shall say, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect,

in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him."

3. MORAL COURAGE. "God hath not given us," said Paul, "the spirit of fear, but of power," *δυναμεις*, of inward strength; and of this his own conduct affords an illustration.* It was of the dark future, (dark at least as far as the grave bounded it,) and of the utmost enmity of man, that he spake, when he said, "None of these things move me;" and such an expression did not evince stoicism, for he was incapable of it, but fortitude.

It would be, indeed, anomalous for them who declare the doctrines of the New Testament, to shrink under the influence of servile fear. They show, according to their Gospel, how a weak and suffering person "may be so strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man," as to be fearless and happy in the most luring aspects of life; and that, afterwards, he will take up his undaunted position, before the presence of his God, although surrounded by the ruin of all things: a more vivid picture this, than that of Horace's just man,—

" Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ."

Can those who show such things, allow the strong

* Utitur autem hoc argumento, quod Deus ministros suos gubernet Spiritu potentiæ, quæ contraria est timiditati.—CALVIN in loc.

man within them to bow himself, and make the grasshopper a burden? No: there is no fear in love; and love is the vital spirit of the Gospel, and at once the fortifier and sanctifier of all believers.

Courage is requisite when duty requires ministers to declare an unpalatable truth, to exhibit the deformity of sin, and then, fixing the eye on the especial sinner, address the voice to him, and say, "Thou art the man." In a public sermon, a man may hide himself in the generalities of his subject, though a public sermon does not comprehend the whole of his work, nor even ought this to be a screen for moral cowardice; but "in season and out of season," the ministers of Christ are as much enjoined to "reprove and rebuke," as "to preach the word." Charge them that are rich in this world not to trust in uncertain riches, and you offend their avarice. Go, like John the Baptist, to some one in the pursuit of a guilty pleasure, and say, "It is not lawful for thee to have her," and you call forth the enmity of his lust. Break in upon the worldly services of the children of folly, and, pointing to the eternal state, cry, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and no one may thank you for the intrusion. Tell the formal professor, that instead of being "rich and increased in goods," he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and that, if saved at all, he must be saved as a broken-hearted sinner, and his heart will often rise against your doctrine.

And thus on every hand you will find the battle in array against you. Steadfastly to advance in the line of duty against all this spiritual opposition is not in nature; nature recoils, and fears to offend and give pain; but fidelity, a stern grace, urges from behind, and cries, "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men."

Sometimes the feelings of the heart may interfere; friendships, affections, and many ties, may plead for one who is going far from God, that he be not reprov'd with an alarming voice, or rebuked sharply; but such emotions are not to prove traitorous: if they do, they are neither correct nor deep. True pastoral courage is like the tendency of a mighty stream, which urges on its current course, notwithstanding the veering of the waves, which ruffle the surface when driven by various winds. Courage is requisite in administering Christ's discipline. In the first formation of churches, there is usually much of that charity which is so nobly eulogized in 1 Cor. xiii., and which is at once the "bond of perfectness," the bond of union, the source of purity, and the spring of vital godliness; and in such a state the strictness of Christian order is no hardship; but, notwithstanding every precaution, persons will sometimes gain admission who are so far worldly as to desire a latitude in trifling with a Christian profession, and with sacred things, which no pure ministry can allow.

The world allows the sabbath to be broken, the practice of family worship to be unobserved, the house of God to be neglected, the bodies of men to be enslaved, and all things and all men to be just subjects of debate; and when worldliness can get into the interior of the church, it will agitate for this latitude until spiritual discipline is so far expanded, circle after circle, upon the wild and troubled surface, that it becomes at last nothing. Without a firm and resolute course of discipline, we must expect to stand by and see the ancient and divinely established landmarks removed; the rules and precepts of the written word explained away by glosses; and there are times when nothing less than a Luther-like spirit, as far as boldness is concerned, will avail for the prevention of these and similar calamities: and never does it avail more than when the Luther and the Melancthon meet in the same individual,—a mingling of lowliness and undauntedness. St. John, who leaned on Jesus's breast at the last supper, and whose principal theme was the love of God, was no self-willed imperious ruler; and yet, in reference to his management of the church, was ever the unshrinking advocate of the order which Christ had established: he did not scruple to say, respecting the ambitious and turbulent Diotrefes, "If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth." Ministerial firmness, when free from pride, is a rare and inestimable quality, and has often

proved the salvation both of connected churches, and their individual societies. Often has a timid policy permitted self-interested and ambitious men to remain in the midst of the faithful for years, corrupting them by their influence, until the general deterioration has become painful and manifest: at length, and perhaps on the eve of a general disruption, some one, in the strength of grace, has dared to do his duty, by bringing the individuals to humiliation, or in a proper manner by ridding the church of them; and thus, casting his care and all consequences on God, has preserved the purity as well as the existence of the body.

In the famous siege of Gibraltar, which was defended by General Elliott, it happened that a shell, which had been thrown from one of the Spanish floating batteries, fell into an apartment in the garrison, in which were placed a quantity of cartridges, and where a number of men were employed in making more: one of the company, an Englishman, seeing the fearful missile lying, and conscious of the awful consequences of an explosion, paused not a moment, but caught the hissing shell in his arms, and bore it, to the terror of his comrades, into the garrison-yard, and cast it on the ground, where it harmlessly burst, for not a man was killed. This shell is too true a type of many an evil thing which Satan has lodged in the church; and blessed is he who, at a personal hazard, like the veteran soldier, endeavours

to remove it to a distance to explode and die. God raises up his master-minds for his special exigencies; but the spirit of power can never long remain untested in any of his true servants.

4. LOVE is next to be mentioned. This Christian endowment does not destroy the severer virtues of the character, but rather blends them together, and hallows the whole. In St. John love was as deep and calm as his own contemplations; in St. Paul it was a fire which burned for ever; but in both it was co-existent with the sternest fidelity. The love, *αγαπη*, spoken of in the New Testament, is not made manifest, as a mere human passion, by floods of tears, or by other external signs of sensibility, such as the utterance of tender words and speeches: it lies deep in the heart; it regards the eternal welfare of its object; it pierces with its searching eye through the mists of sin; it arouses to action, and by action it is made manifest, although often, when vocal, its words are words of solemn and impressive reproof. A minister, therefore, imbued with love, is most terrible to sin, but most compassionate to the sinner. "It suffereth long, and is kind:" without it, patience is extinct at provocations, and the soul kindles into wrath. "It envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up:" without it, men are uneasy at another's honour, and jealous to defend their own, and seek, by unholy devices, to magnify themselves. "It doth not be-

have itself unseemly :” without it, what could be expected but want of courtesy, an austerity and roughness of deportment, and a disregard of the feelings of those among whom they mingle? The prominent virtue shines in the parlour and in the pulpit. It “seeketh not her own:” it is disinterested, triumphs in self-sacrifice. Paul, who spoke so in the tone of authority, yet said to the Corinthian people, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” Of this noble anti-selfish love the world knows nothing: it is indeed a Phœnix burned by its own fire. It “is not easily provoked:” Stephen, being filled with it, wears a radiant and angelic countenance in the midst of a band of raging and blood-thirsty bigots, for whom he prayed even when dying under their hands; the rugged stone could not arouse a moment’s anger when this affection reigned within. It “thinketh no evil:” suspicion is lulled to rest, and therefore covert designs and intrigue can find no harbour; the soul is in the face. “Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth:” mourns over sin in an enemy, and exults in righteousness when it is found among another people and in another place. It “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;” and thus it prepares the soul for sustaining its load of trial, for receiving the fulness of God, for cherishing the brightest views

of man, and for persevering in holiness to the latest hour of life. Well might Paul say, "Follow after charity." Angelic eloquence, prophetic knowledge, mental insight unlimited, almighty faith, even when joined with the philanthropy of a martyr, he declared were nothing without it. "Above all things put on charity," reiterates the apostle in his epistle to the Colossian church; and informs Timothy that it is "the end of the commandment out of a pure heart." Does a minister sigh for a happy immortality above his companions? this ensures it: it "never faileth," but survives the fulfilments of all prophecy, the distractions of human tongues, and the imperfect knowledge of the present state; and consequently escapes from this uncongenial world, and lives and flourishes in heaven. It prompts him during life, equally to hasten to the abode of wretchedness, and to the house of the prosperous; to warn the impenitent sinner, and to soothe the penitent by references to Calvary; to check the ebullitions of physical excitement, and to quicken and inflame the cold-hearted: it makes his object to be, a soul to be won, an evil to be averted, a good to be imparted, and God in all things to be glorified through Jesus Christ; and with such an object in view he can answer the questions, What am I, and for what created? (questions distracting to the infidel) with promptitude, declaring that "of him, and through him, and to

him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

5. WISDOM is, too, an important feature in the conduct and bearing of a minister of Christ. Wisdom, as the late Mr. M'Nicoll once remarked, is a Saxon word, and means the home, or dwelling-place, of knowledge, and is used to imply the right use we make of knowledge. There is many a learned man who is far from being wise. When an architect would proceed to raise a porch, or construct an edifice, he has to do with senseless stone, and therefore all means, however rough, are lawful, which can accomplish his object: but the wise master-builder in the house of God is a moral being, and must use moral means, for he has to do with souls; and therefore needs to study, not only what end to secure, but *how* to secure it. Wisdom in God is an infinite perfection, in which lie hid all the mysteries of spiritual influence, and the modes in which he works with free agents, and the exact manner in which all causes, both physical and moral, are adapted to produce their desired effects: here is something far beyond the reach of man; yet the wisdom which cometh from above, and which has been mentioned already, is an emanation from it, and brings a special boon unto ministers. If wisdom and knowledge, according to Isaiah, should be the stability of Gospel times, and strength of salvation, then they are especially expected to exemplify it.

It will lead to order, and to the principle of doing every thing at the best season. It guides as to the promulgation of doctrine, and to the mode of illustrating it; leaves those topics which would merely interest or entertain an audience, for those which would convict and save them. It turns to the Bible first, and to the book of nature after; appeals to the text for authority, and then to the visible world for additional and subordinate proof; it gives the highest place to the most important and to experimental things,—such as the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, the privileges and duties of those who are in Christ Jesus, the indispensable necessity of practical holiness,—and then subsequently, and with lessened earnestness, attends to the claims of taste and genius, and the offers of illustrative science. It shields itself in the infallible decisions of God; never leaves its exalted place to argue in any circle, either infidel or Popish, but rather points, with mingled pity and triumph, to the humbled temples of ancient philosophy, and the ruined altar at Athens “to the unknown God.” It has to do with the proper proportioning of doctrine, and does not allow one to destroy the influence of another. It does not so dwell upon the majesty of God, and the wrath which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, as to excite despair or recklessness; nor does it speak of Christ’s dying love in such terms as to encourage

any, but the consciously weary and heavy laden, to approach him. It speaks, in glowing words, of the joys promised to all believers; but does not at all hide from them, that their obligation to do the will of their Father who is in heaven is not suspended, but rendered more binding, by their faith. He who is qualified with this grace, does not build with untempered mortar, and therefore no stormy wind shall rend and scatter his work: he speaks not to the broken-hearted and tempted with reproof, but with encouragement, and in such a manner as to excite faith and hope; nor does he blandly and meekly address the vain-confident, but, like one who wishes to save them, in tones of alarm, even at the risk of giving a momentary offence.* Wisdom is requisite in making the best use of circumstances. There are times when men's minds are tender and docile, and may be easily led to what is reasonable and holy, both in the church of God and in the domestic circle: this happens usually after some great mercy, or some great affliction; it is an oppor-

* If a contemner of popularity offer not instruction with grace, and seasoned with salt, he will be despised by the many, and his greatness of mind will be of no avail; but should he fairly succeed in this matter, and be vanquished by the glitter of praise, he will be injurious both to himself and to others, desiring, through his love of applause, to speak more for the sake of approval from his audience, than for their benefit.—CHRYSOST. De Sacerd., lib. 5.

tunity to be improved. There are times when men are otherwise; and those should be suffered to elapse. Why should the ministers of God be exceeded by military tacticians, in seizing on peculiar circumstances, and deriving important advantages therefrom? Have they not an equal inspiration? O, if the leaders of God's host are not to be found wiser, or more deeply intent, than the children of this world, it is their own humiliation, and a cause of grief.

In the management of the church of God, "wisdom is above rubies:" a single act will often preserve its order and purity in times of extreme danger. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

6. ZEAL is next to be enumerated. It was a distinguished feature in the ministry of our Lord; and on a remarkable manifestation of it, the "disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." In him it was sometimes mingled anger and love, and sometimes pity and love; but in either case it aimed at the glory of the Father, the order and sacredness of his church, and the good of men: and if it were a part of that baptism of fire which he received, he bequeathed a portion to his apostles; for, on the day of Pentecost, flaming tongues sat upon them while they were sitting, symbolizing at once their

own need of purity, and the fervent spirit with which they should now be endowed.

With this emblem before him, Cudworth nobly says, "True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those which differ a little from us in their apprehensions." And again: "Our zeal, if it be heavenly, if it be true vestal fire kindled from above, will not delight to tarry here below, burning up straw and stubble, and such combustible things, and sending up nothing but gross and earthly flames to heaven, but it will rise up, and return back, pure as it came down; and will be ever striving to carry up men's hearts to God along with it. It will be only occupied about the promoting of those things which are unquestionably good; and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sin."

Such is the principle; and there are not wanting incentives to bring it into practice. We live in a world which is crowded with unsaved men; and in a little while they will be out of our reach, unless they are awakened and brought to God. What was said of the rich man will be true of every one of them: "In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." The pleasures of sin, the applause of men, the honours of the world, will soon and suddenly be exchanged for a dark abode, an avenging God,

and everlasting sorrow. When Jonah preached at Nineveh, his proclamation ran, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" but there is no licence to assure a sinner that forty moments shall elapse before his overthrow,—so uncertain is life, and so unfathomable is Providence. But is there not here an incentive to ministerial zeal? The echoes from the abyss reach us,—no "tenués voces;" they call on those whose office it is to warn others, lest they also reach that place of torment. Thousands are approaching the verge, and O for a hand to save! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" but into his hands multitudes around must fall, unless their conversion intervene: should it not, farewell to the Father's love, the Son's grace, the Spirit's fellowship; the soul is bereft of help, and only becomes the object of wrath; it bears into that world unknown its vital emotions, and grapples with infinite despair! The unfaithful minister is damned with the rest, only unutterably deeper.

Here is a call, we repeat, for the zeal of pity. Sometimes it is called to manifest itself in defence of the truth. Christianity enrols on its records martyrs and confessors; men who, rather than sacrifice the honour of God, and the interests of his church, sacrificed themselves: they shared the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and were made "conformable to his death;" they believed their Bible, and acted upon the conviction that the "sufferings

of this present life are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." And have not we the same Bible? And is the disparity between a moment's sorrow, and the glory to be revealed, any less? The noble army of martyrs, indeed, teach us a lesson which we, of the present generation, are slow of heart to learn; that, if we have a zeal for God, it is not, at least, according to that knowledge which is derived from an unclouded view of pure revelation.

"Thou Spirit, who the church didst lend
 Her eagle wings to shelter in the wild,
 We pray thee, ere the Judge descend
 With flames like these, all bright and undefiled,
 Her watch-fires light,
 To guide aright
 Our weary souls by earth beguiled."

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Zeal is concerned for all the institutions of religion, and for the order of God's house. It will not in any minister tolerate improprieties in public worship, but will reprove the literal trifler, and the literal sleeper, in the pews; will prevent the introduction of light and irreverent music, as well as worldly and immoral persons, into the choir; constantly abiding by the principle, that every thing connected with the sanctuary ought to be done in the best way possible, and in the spirit of Aholiab

and Bezaleel, who themselves were filled with the Holy Ghost.

He who is richly and truly endowed with zeal will not be reckless of personal health and strength, and consume both in a rash course of violent and unintermitted toil. That would be passion, and nothing else; passion that blinds itself, as to the end it would gain. But the pastor of enlightened zeal looks forward to the magnitude of his object; measures his efforts by his strength; and labours, and lives to labour, when his pious but mistaken brother has been compelled to lay down his commission, and retire prematurely to the grave, where no man can work, and at a time, perhaps, when he ought to be in possession of his full vigour.

These are the principles which mark the spirit in which these exalted duties should be discharged; and they are required to have a uniform operation, not manifest in fits of excitement, but in calm, constant, and unwearied strength. Because they meet in the same individual they show that they are of God; some of them opposite to each other, yet all harmonious, which is not the case with worldly virtues. They are to be borne into all places, and all departments of employment. Into the pulpit: there lowliness prevents affectation and egotism; dignity guards off all vulgarisms and low conceits, and adopts, in connexion

with disciplinary culture, a simple, chaste, and impressive diction; courage presents an unshrinking front against sin, and the opposition of sinners; love secures that one object be kept in view, whatever tone is adopted,—the everlasting welfare of the people around; wisdom takes care that the right doctrines are dispensed to the right persons, and at a time when they shall accomplish the greatest good; and zeal leads every minister to preach as “a dying man to dying men.”

Nor ought these principles to be less manifest in the administration of the sacraments. In approaching the table, the pastor brings himself, in thought, to the last meeting of the Lord with his disciples before his passion, and remembers, or ought to remember, the mediatorial prayer, which was then uttered in behalf of all his ministers: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth:” that is, separate them from all unholy uses. Here again lowliness, dignity, and love ought as much to prevail, and to guide them, as though they had lived and acted with Peter and James and John. There is a great difference between the artificial and idolatrous gestures of archbishop Laud, and the loose carelessness of many of the Puritans, in celebrating the eucharist:*

* Many bishops found a secret genius of rusticity and rudeness, of familiarity and irreverence, strangely prevailing among country preachers and people, so far, that they saw many of them placed much of their religion in affecting a slovenly rude-

the first is a "will-worship," reprobated solemnly by St. Paul; the other is a neglect of doing every thing "decently and in order." The way to guard the scriptural observance of this sacred institution, is to bring the graces which we have enumerated, the fruits of regeneration, within the railing. Let lowliness sink before the Lord in penitential grief; dignity warn off the trifler, and abolish the inventions of man; and courage, arising before a scoffing world, declare itself the Lord's; let love glow in every sentence and every look; let wisdom decide who are proper to communicate; and zeal earnestly direct attention to that great atonement which is here symbolized.

Baptism calls for the same reverent administration. It is a covenant act; an act in which God is a serious party, and therefore man ought not to be a careless one. It is these principles only which make the work of the ministry practical: many a one may roam over the rich fields of theological science, form splendid conceptions,

ness and irreverence in all public and holy duties; loath to kneel not only at the sacrament, but at any prayers, or to be uncovered at any duty; enemies to any man, and prejudiced against all he did, if he showed any ceremonious respect in serving his God. They saw some were grown so spiritual that they forgot they had bodies; and pretending to approve themselves to God, only as to the inward man, they cared not for any thing that was regular, exemplary, orderly, comely, or reverent, as to the outward celebration, in the judgment of the church of England.—GAUDEN'S Tears.

and utter them both in the pulpit and on the platform; but no man is true to the purpose of his ordination any longer than when, instead of wasting his life in dreams of theory, he is endeavouring to seek and to save the lost, and thus acts a subordinate though important part in carrying on the designs of his Lord and Master.

7. **TEMPERANCE** likewise is a grace which is indispensably required to adorn the ministry. And here the word is used in its popular sense, to signify moderation in the use of food and beverage. And this is the more to be insisted on, as one of the crying sins of the present day is luxury in eating and drinking. We have, in the prophet Elijah, an example of noble superiority to those sensual pleasures. Mr. Shrewsbury, in his Sermon on the Translation, says respecting him, "When the brook (Cherith) was dried up, and he went to sojourn with the widow at Zarephath, we see he did not desire very costly fare. As she was 'gathering of sticks,' he called to her and said, 'Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.' And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in thine hand.' (1 Kings xvii. 10, 11.) And on the plain food which the 'barrel of meal' and the 'cruse of oil' supplied, he subsisted in her house for many days. And a few years after this period, when his

wants were miraculously supplied by an angel, as he slept under a juniper-tree in the wilderness, nothing more was brought than 'a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water.' (1 Kings xix. 5, 6.) This was enough. The prophet had 'learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content.' Being fed with the hidden manna of divine love, he could joyfully forego the luxuries, and even the comforts, of life."

Large quantities of food, or various kinds of food elaborately prepared, together with "strong drink," not only injure the health, but are inimical to intent and sacred meditation. No efforts of mind that are worth anything, are put forth under their influence; and the whole man becomes more literally than ever "of the earth earthy." Not that we are required to be ascetics, for even Timothy is guarded against this by the apostle Paul; but that we should, in honour of our adorable Creator, preserve both our minds and bodies in that state of elasticity and vigour, which he has naturally implanted in them; and should live in the spirit of Him whose meat and drink it was to do the will of the Father, as well as by our example rebuke the growing voluptuousness of the age. A little diluted wine is generally the strongest restorative or stimulant that any minister need take. The accumulated result of these principles is beautifully portrayed in some points of view in the words of Spenser:—

“ Thenceforth all world’s desire will in thee dye,
And all earth’s glory on which men do gaze
Seem dirt and dross, in thy pure-sighted eye,
Compared to that celestial beauty’s blaze,
Whose glorious beams all fleshly sense doth daze
With admiration of their passing light,
Blinding the eyes and lumining the sight.”

But the author feels a fear lest he should have been drawing up articles which are unsuited to mere men. O that all were indeed what the preceding lines have been imperfectly endeavouring to depict! Solomon’s prayer would then be answered: “ Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy people shout for joy.” The archetype, however, is not too fair and good, because not fairer than the Bible makes it; but the resemblance is, alas! too incomplete. Often have men of God uttered complaints like these:—“ O that we could weep and groan for the sins and unfaithfulness of the ministry! The study of theology has too often, instead of the means, been the end; and preaching, instead of the instrument of the world’s conviction, a stepping-stone to personal honour and renown; the coldness of love and zeal has been strangely contrasted with the momentous realities of our subject; unseemly and unstudied trifling with the solemnities of the inspired word of God; and the tenor of our life, so broken has it been and inconstant, that there have been many

hours spent in a way which none ought ever to imitate, if they value their hope of heaven. Heavenly Father, forgive thy servants their manifold sins; and let, O let, the mantle of the prophets, and the fiery tongues of the apostles, be on us all!"

Enough has been said to show that the tone of mind which has been described, cannot be attained from any human source, or at any earthly university: it is not the result of study and resolute self-government, but of being born *ανωθεν*, from above; the work of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to raise up and perpetuate a living ministry; the fruit by which men know them. Every tree which our heavenly Father hath planted, that is, every private Christian, ought to bear similar; but pastors should be as a tree of life, healing the nations. And this conviction leads us, lastly, to consider,

8. The deep and uninterrupted **PIETY** which is indispensable to the efficiency and fidelity of such a stewardship.

Christianity is their principal study; but it must be taken up otherwise than as a mere science: it is not only something to be known, but something to be felt; it furnishes not only a supply for their intellectual wants, but for their yearnings after good. God created man with a heart as well as head; and the one is as much appealed to as the other in the economy of redemption. In fact, the evidences of Gospel truth which are proposed to the intellect,

depend for their force upon the state of the heart ; and thus the man of God is represented as “ holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,” and only in a pure conscience. The love of sin in Gibbon, Hume, and Voltaire was sufficient to cloud to their apprehensions the clearest light of testimony or proof in favour of Christianity ; whereas the least degree of humbled feeling in Rochester was a crisis, a turning-point, which led to the emancipation of his miserable and benighted soul. To use the sentiment of Tholuck, “ a human being must be known in order to be loved, but the Divinity must be loved in order to be known.”

It is Christianity which in these last ages of the world has created a thirst for intellectual delights, and it alone can satisfy. No scholar or sage among the ancients ever yearned for rest and joy as we do, because the expanse of immortality, which to them was veiled, is now thrown open before us, and its light either disturbs or animates the soul. In vain do you widen the field of knowledge, if you cannot hallow and fill the heart : unless it can find its God in every place, and can delight in him, it is homeless in the universe. How then shall men teach a religion of the heart, who have not learned it in the school of experience ? Any sculptor might make a Prometheus ; but whence comes the vital flame, if not from heaven ? The tones which reach us from the world are expressive of a misery which is within

men, which they bear about with them; and how are ministers to relieve it, unless practically acquainted with the process of cure? They certainly might, without the experience of religion, take up the words of its sacred theories; but those words would be mere "cabbala," and without any ideas or emotions answering to them; and, besides, where would be the love to prompt, the courage to sustain, the zeal to inflame, and the wisdom to guide? Convinced that inward religion is the very soul of the ministry, let the work of individual self-examination be conducted in some such way as this:—"I am called with the apostle Paul to represent the whole world as guilty before God, and to convict the sinner of sin and its consequences, his liability to condemnation and the wrath of God. Have I then ever felt the rising of my nature against the holy, just, and good commandment under which I was born? Have I felt the bitterness of pride and passion, even when strangely clinging to them, and when the light of revealed truth broke in upon me, convincing and arraigning me? Have I ever experienced that internal strife, that battle between flesh and spirit, carnal nature and aroused conscience? Have I ever struggled like a chained captive to be free; and, finding all personal endeavours hopeless, groaned at last, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Has this soul felt the sorrow of having fought against

God most high, and been made to drink the cup of its own mingling? Then can it sympathize with the woe-worn and heavy-laden sinner, and be sensible that he speaks the things which he does know.

“ I am required likewise with the apostle to declare the authoritative doctrines of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Have I then, whilst bemoaning my want of God, bowed before him, adored the perfections which condemned me, and honoured his righteous law, and, cherishing the first tenderness which the Spirit inspired, mourned before him with as much sorrow as I could feel? Have I hated, and almost cursed, the evil heart of unbelief, which could so depart from the living God? striven to find the lowest place in the dust; and desired to be lower still, if even it were in the opened earth? Have I evinced the reality of these apprehensions of the evil of sin, by breaking off its practice according to my power, and showing that my loathing of it was not mere sentimentality? Have I been agonized at the thought of sinking eternally under its load, and pined for salvation as the hart desireth the water-brooks? Then I can understand the penitent's prayer, and tell what passes in his soul; see what is godly sorrow; and what, on the other hand, the complaint of a proud, presumptuous, or wilfully despairing heart. Have I in such circumstances been led to understand what is the *δικαιοσυνη του Θεου*, the righteousness of God, or God's

way of justifying? viewed the great atonement, Christ suffering, the just for the unjust; human, that he might be a victim; divine, that he might be an infinite one? Have I been attracted by that great sight? Has my guilty heart yearned to receive the application of one drop of that vital stream that ran down from his side; and has that yearning produced an effort to come nearer still to look and love? Did I then receive the testimony which the Father gave of his Son; and assent to Isaiah's declaration, that 'he was wounded for our transgression, bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed?' Did desire and prayer draw me to Jesus thus lifted up? Partly in hope, and partly in agony, did I endeavour to repose my soul, according to the invitation of the Gospel, upon that all-atoning merit? Did I come away from myself and my fear, and taking only my guilt with me, and laying hold of divine strength for a final effort, throw my all on the uplifted sacrifice? That was believing in his name, that was faith in his blood! it brought me, in that glad moment, the remission of sins that were past through the forbearance of God. O how the dread

' Invisible appear'd in sight!
And God was seen by mortal eye,'

no longer frowning in wrath, but smiling with a Father's face. And the very holiness which made me

tremble, seemed now to prompt a shout of joy; and having but just asked how I might be delivered from my enemy, casting from me the burst shackles of sin, I exclaimed, 'I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ!' The Comforter, in that hour, witnessed and ratified the act of pardon, (for I never could in my guilt and fear have inferred it,) began to help my infirmities, groan for me in prayer, and to make me a new creature. I know to whom to direct the penitent soul, and am well acquainted with the believer's joy; for having myself believed, I therefore speak.

“ It devolves on me to lead forward the believer in the pursuit of holiness. Am I then acquainted with the means of its attainment? Have I experienced the pains of temptation, and those risings of corruption which are subsequent to pardon? Do I know the devices of Satan, and the fearful difficulty of making way heavenwards against the stream of earthly tendencies? And have I felt the power descend, by which in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us? Do I know the meaning of fellowship with God? Does faith in my Saviour lay this once-guilty soul open to his communications? and am I enabled to lean on him, even as I wish my own sick child to lean on me? And, notwithstanding my great unfaithfulness, can I look up, and hope to have ere long the brighter and better vision of heaven?

“ Then indeed I speak not like a theoretic physician, but one who himself has been ill, and who has passed through all the symptoms intervening between life and death. Let me by a solemn personal scrutiny be led to the discovery of my own state : and, O fearful anomaly, if while I and my brethren seek to be the guides of souls, we ourselves should need a leader ! Throughout the whole creation, I shall find nothing to resemble it ! Whoever are placed on the vantage ground of the ministry, it is in order that they may survey heavenly things more clearly, and live in a holy familiarity with them, and report to those below the result of their contemplations. They are ‘ called to be saints ;’ are required to be ‘ elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus ;’ thus being numbered among God’s chosen ones, on the foundation of faith and holiness, to take heed that diligence be given to make both calling and election sure, lest both should prove unavailing ; to continue the moral struggle until the final victory shall ensue, and the soul takes its place among those who are ‘ called, and chosen, and faithful.’ ”

But the piety of ministers should exceed that of their people ; otherwise they cannot, in any important sense be exemplary to their flocks ; for an example in this case must be continually presenting, even throughout life, something to be imitated : as their

people's excellency increases, so should their own become in proportion more manifest. It is not, then in the common walks of Christian experience that they should be found, but rather pressing higher; engaged as Moses and Elijah were, on different occasions, at Horeb, the mount of God; or as the favoured three were, when they listened to the voice from the excellent glory. It is in such circumstances that the soul is hallowed and fortified. Whoever would have the unction of the Holy One, must constantly aspire to the presence of the Holy One. How else are they to be the leaders of God's host? The other host has its leaders; men who are fitted for their bad eminence by being deeply imbued with the spirit of rebellion against God: and may we not learn from their policy, then, the need of purity of heart, and of a soul most thoroughly sanctified by inward religion?

There is such a state of grace. The apostle besought God that his Thessalonian brethren might enjoy it, and enjoy it too unto the coming of Christ. What was that "land of uprightness" into which David expected to enter under the guidance of the "good Spirit?" Was not its literal type described by another writer as "a land of corn and wine," and where "the heavens did drop down dew?" that the "fountain of Jacob" was there? And was not this typical land of Canaan, then, descriptive of the highest church state of believers on earth, as well as

of their state in heaven? Do we not here recognise the *σαββατισμος* of St. Paul, the sabbath state of believing men in this world,—a rest which he showed was another Canaan? Well might it be accounted the glorious office of the Spirit to lead us here!—and well does it suit the goodness, the kindness, and benevolence of his nature to be so employed.*

* Heb. iv. 9.—This is an argument within a parenthesis, and arises from the rapid conceptions of the apostle, which refuse a less vivid and concentrated form of expression. It is in brief this: There was a call made upon the church to seek a promised rest; and seeing that that rest was not the sabbath which commemorated creation, nor the rest which Joshua gave the Hebrews in Canaan; and seeing, further, that no event has happened since which even appears like a fulfilment of the promise, it remains yet to be fulfilled; and the people of God have to look for their rest, which rest can imply no less than the glorification of the body and soul in heaven. Hitherto in this discourse the apostle has used the word *καταπαυσις*, and which, while his attention was confined to figurative rests, would be highly suitable to his purpose, for it signifies repose or cessation from labour; but now, having arrived at the ultimate destination of the people of God, he calls it *σαββατισμος*, a Hebrew word with a Greek termination, which is intended to imply a sacred rest, or sabbath state; a holy, and not inactive, condition of the soul in its final enjoyment of God the supreme good. The apostle was a remarkable writer, and frequently would adopt a word on his own authority for the purpose of expressing his meaning with force; and the treasures of Hebrew learning, which he evidently possessed, would enable him to do this with facility. *Σαββατιζω* is used in the LXX. to express the celebration or observance of a sacred day of rest; and therefore *σαββατισμος* is here well put for the endless joy and happy service of the heavenly world. Indeed this mode of speaking would not be unaccordant with Jewish phraseology in

To bring up an evil report of the land is idle; for those to whom these lines are addressed have not surveyed it, although they may have overestimated the force of the opposing foe, and underestimated the might of the great Leader. The word of inspiration, however, runs, "He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them." Why, then, shall we not go up and possess this inheritance, this sabbatic state, this rest in God? Supposing the enemy has stretched out his wings, through the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel! yet it is thine, and bought by the blood of thy covenant! And shall it have no attractions for the ministers of the new covenant? Will they not pine for it, though apparently far off, and long to "see the King in his beauty,"—the privilege of the pure in heart? How, if they possessed this salvation, might they indeed be "the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ!" (2 Cor. viii. 23.) Then would his angels (messengers) be spirits, his ministers a flame of fire; the Pauls and Peters of the modern church would arise, and be witnesses for Christ in a slumbering world. Holiness must be a positive possession, and not something conventional or imputed; and must be attained in this

general; for in speaking of the earthly festival, in connexion with the heavenly state, they would often say *shabath ilaah*, the "sabbath above," and *shabath tethaah*, the "sabbath below."

life; as the eloquent author whom we have before quoted says of the Christian: "Neither can he be willing to put off till the hour of death, for a divorce betwixt his soul and sin; nor easily persuaded, that though sin should rule and reign in him all his life long, yet the last parting groan, that shall divide his body and soul asunder, might have so great an efficacy as in a moment also to separate all sin from his soul." Thus did the great Cudworth interpret the Scriptures, on the subject of being saved in this life; for in another place, and in his usual style, he observes: "Salvation itself cannot save us, as long as it is only without us, no more than health can cure us, and make us sound, when it is not within us, but somewhere at a distance from us; no more than arts and sciences, whilst they lie only in books and papers without us, can make us learned." "Nothing can be more evident than the fact," say Christ's true servants, "that whoever amongst us are strangers to this department of Christian experience, then there is one mystery of God of which we are not yet stewards, and are in personal respects only as babes in Christ, that is, if we are in him at all." Thus do they endeavour to show the solemn and paramount necessity in their case of vital piety, and that Christianity must not be a collection of *notional credenda*, but, as Fenelon said of God's Spirit, "soul of our soul."

The Scriptures nowhere more fearfully denounce woes, and God's just judgments, than when the objects of them are unfaithful pastors. The prophet Eze-kiel seems to arise from the shades of Sheol, from visiting Meshech, Tubal, and her multitude, and all the idolatrous dead; and now, terrible as a spirit himself, he utters his warning to slothful watchmen, and brings the blood of every ruined sinner upon their heads; calls to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, and cries, "Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them. And they are scattered." "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds!" If ever the word "woe" was reiterated again and again from the lips of Christ, it was when he singled out the hypocritical teachers of his own day, who considered themselves holy from their office, but who were the wretched slaves of sin: and these woes have lost none of their emphasis. The good Shepherd has not ceased to care for the sheep, and therefore he has not ceased to judge unworthy under-shepherds. Unless the soul be borne up to its high duty by inward religion, nothing remains but for a hopeless struggle against God, and then a still more hopeless immor-

tality. In the epistolary parts of the New Testament, the most dread imagery is employed to depict the guilt and doom of false teachers; and is not every unconverted and unsanctified professor a false teacher, if his vocal doctrine be ever so true? Such as he “profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.”

The church of Jesus Christ, when compared with the world, is, we know, “fair as the sun;” but if these maculæ were purged away, it would be fairer still, and infidelity would lose one of its loudest jests. A holy ministry is the greatest honour and safeguard of the church. It is a blessing devoutly to be pleaded for, both in private and in public: it was mentioned in the prayer of Solomon, king of Israel, as the last crowning gift of God to be vouchsafed to his people.

Holiness, in the minister himself, is the source of the purest joy and the greatest moral might; it brings the best evidence for the truth of our religion, and the best and most powerful motives to disseminate it, and to suffer for it; because it is a reward which is not only coeval with the work, but which is indefectible and eternal when that work has ceased. It is better than logical light, or philosophical acumen, or elaborated learning, or rhetorical eloquence, or mental power, as considered in themselves; yet, when added to these gifts, it in-

vests them with its own heavenly lustre, and makes them what they would not otherwise be, deprives them of the sorrow they often infuse, and presents to faith a world of deeper joy and fairer forms than genius has ever feigned, or the unsanctified amongst its sons have ever known.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEARNING, A QUALIFICATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

“It is true God may (and sometimes, especially in extraordinary times, does) make use of unlettered and low-qualified men; but then, he inlays their defects by singular supply; therefore, that is no rule for us in the ordinary vocation.”
—LEIGHTON’S Sermon to the Clergy.

EVERY Christian acknowledges that whatever is yielded or consecrated to God should be of the best possible character, the fairest and most valuable of its kind. In Old-Testament times this principle was joyfully conceded: the sheaf which the high priest waved before the Lord, was the first and most mature corn of the field; the lamb which was offered was a male of the first year; or if doves, they were without spot. When Hannah had obtained from the Lord a child of unusual promise, he was gladly dedicated to the sanctuary: nor was the act a sudden one, and performed without reflection; it was done calmly and resolutely, though with deep emotion; and from year to year the vow of consecration was virtually renewed. It would be strange indeed if this righteous

principle should have less force in Christianity than in ancient Judaism; for in Christianity the love of God is more developed, and therefore all sacrifice for his name's sake appears more reasonable and fitting.

There are, however, many persons who seem to think, that the least gifted of their youthful friends is abundantly well qualified for the ministry. If there be in a family youths of aspiring and ardent minds, they are directed to a commercial, literary, or political career; and if there be another whose half-dormant soul seems to think and act with labour, and who moves along the vernal paths of life heavily, the latter is usually assigned to the church. By this the church is foully insulted, and the ordinance of God desecrated. A single glance at the ministry made St. Paul cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and should the parents and Christian friends of youth think that any ordinarily endowed character may meet the requirements of the cause of Christ? The ignorance of such a supposition is only exceeded by its presumption. Those who are given to God should righteously be of the highest order of mind, and should possess the greatest and best gifts. Nothing is too valuable or good to be presented to him. It is the Holy Spirit who calls and endows the ministers of Christ, we devoutly and gladly own; but it is usually one part of his plan, in this process of endowment, to gird

and strengthen the mind in its pursuit of solid learning, and to sanctify such learning when acquired.

But some good though weak men have spoken of the Spirit's influence and teaching as though it were to supply the place of mental culture altogether; and, blinded by this miserable error, have vaunted the inward grace of the illiterate, to the disparagement of many who were profoundly learned, even while they were deeply devout.

Solomon, the king of Israel, was undoubtedly and profoundly wise; and, at the period when he wrote his Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, under gracious influences too. His exhortation is, Cry, seek, dig, for wisdom; which abundantly shows that, in his view, (and he was an inspired writer,) grace was not intended to supersede effort, but to help it. The gifts of the Spirit are manifold. He is the author, not only of holiness, but of mental power; and often does he make this power subservient to holiness. In the very commencement of Christianity, he miraculously made the apostles both learned and eloquent, that they might accomplish his design of glorifying Christ; and although they were originally unlearned, yet their case proves that the Spirit does not usually employ illiterate ministers, but rather that, by miracle, or steady illumination, he makes them far otherwise than illiterate. As, then, the foundation-miracles of the Christian system have ceased, we may look for his usual and continued aid

in directing and fortifying those minds which, by providential designation, appear destined to the service of God's church: it is the might with which they are strengthened in the inner man.

Not a syllable can be extracted from the Scriptures but what enjoins a well-endowed ministry. St. Paul's numerous exhortations to Timothy all show the importance which he attached to sanctified erudition: "Give attendance to reading,—Meditate on these things,—Give thyself wholly to them;" and thus he entreats him, in the use of those means, and not independent of them, to seek for the Spirit.

Christian ministers are, or ought to be, conversant with theology; for they have to dispense its doctrines: and theology is the master-science of all others; standing in relation to the rest, as the sea does to rivers. He who lanches forth here should be impressed with the awfulness of the domain around him,—it is the ocean of God.

To pursue learning for its own sake, or as our end, is sowing to the wind, and reaping the whirlwind; but to pursue it for Christ's sake, and for the advancement of his cause, is one of the noblest employments out of heaven, and cannot be neglected without great personal guilt, and great injustice to the church. If it be required of a physician, that he should deeply study physical science, in order that he may be entitled to our confidence, if life or health be in danger, much more should it be

required, that he who has to do with the word of God, and with our everlasting interest, should be a master in every point of view of the subjects under his attention.

1. Learning is requisite in order to a clear statement of Christian doctrine.

Had there been no error in the church; and were all minds equally unprejudiced, then it would be somewhat less necessary, so explicit and minute are the Scriptures. But truth lies so near to error, and the use of a principle approaches so closely to the abuse of it, that it often requires no small knowledge and wisdom to guard the right and expose the wrong. A doctrine of the Gospel may be taught or preached with fervour by a man of humble ability, and God may bless and succeed the effort, and all may be well as long as the doctrine is uncontroverted and rightly represented; but it ought never to deter those who have the power from searching into all its relations and bearings, and unfolding its harmonious connexion with the system of redemption, and the principles of the government of God. Paul did not exhort his friend to avoid learned questions, but foolish and unlearned ones.

The justification of a sinner before God is a solemn and important question,—the master-theme of revealed religion. A minister of devout mind, who has learned it aright, both from precept and experience, may declare it successfully to others, and

bring men to God, even if he should have no peculiar mental accomplishments, such is the honour which God confers on his own truth ; but the sphere of such a man must necessarily be narrow, for he will not be able either to confound or convince gainsayers. What profound and absorbing subjects of contemplation may be found in this doctrine! —justice glorified ; the divine throne upheld ; a constitution of mercy raised ; faith made a condition of pardon, and moral government thus continued ; the believer cast on God, and thus provided for ; holiness grafted on love ; and a sphere opened for the work of the witnessing Spirit, who in every believer's heart incessantly cries, Abba, Father.

Luther, it cannot be doubted, had piety to walk with God, and this gave him unction and fervour ; but had not he, as well as Melancthon and Zuinglius, been deeply versed in all the controversies which, had reference to the “ article by which the church stands or falls,” the Papal power would not have so quailed as it did at the Reformation. And still it is to be maintained, that justification in the sense of St. Paul is pardon, and not the revelation of a blind and pre-existent love, as Antinomianism would teach ; or as Popery, that it is forgiveness and holiness blended ;—that it is by faith alone, and not, as the mystics teach, through attrition and contrition, or rather through the grace of congruity and that of condignity, the first of which is a stepping-stone

to the second. And justification by faith alone, has, alas! even in this day, to be defended against a class of papalizing divines, who contend that baptism, *ex opere operato*, is pardon, full and free; and that the forgiveness of sins which are committed after, can be obtained only through a long and bitter course of repentance, watered with floods of tears, and is but doubtful at the very best!

In order to clear apprehensions of this subject, the principles of law and government must be understood, and the history of the heresies of the church, in order to see where the sins and prejudices of the human mind may lead to the adoption of darkness for light and light for darkness, and where the inclosures of truth may, with the greatest plausibility, be broken down. All this implies learning.

In stating the doctrine of evil, and its origin, much confusion, both of language and of thought, has often arisen from want of mental discipline. Sin, and its consequences, have often been classed together under the general name of evil; as though the transgression of the law, and the pain which follows it, were one and the same thing. The fervid discourses of many represent evil as personified into a positive and individual existence. When glancing at the moral universe, they have asked, as one in Milton,

“ Whence and what art thou, execrable shape?”

and have endeavoured in this way to discuss the

misery of the world. No learning, how profound soever, could show the mode in which it arose in bosoms originally pure; but it can show that sin is not a positive and personal existence, but an abstract and accidental one,—a departure from, or opposition to, the law of God; and that, therefore, it is not to be personified, or confounded with the pain and death which are its wages.

If God's holy law be broken, his moral aspect changes with regard to the transgressor; for he is free, as well as the transgressor himself; and the pain which he righteously inflicts, instead of being an actual evil, becomes a relative good, and is a blessing to the universe. If suffering be called evil, the term is only correct when the healing benefits of the Gospel are disconnected from it; and the sufferer has no pardon, and no intercessor or intercession to interpose between himself and his unreconciled God.

In some species of discourse on theological subjects, figurative language is so used as to blind and mislead the hearer; and nothing but patient thought, and considerable knowledge and acquirements, can reduce this loose and vague system of teaching to a severer, chaster, and more correct mode.

2. In the correct exposition of the holy Scriptures, learning is indispensable.

In all ancient books critical skill is called into exercise; and the Bible, being the most ancient, requires the greatest. The correct translation of

the languages in which it was written, and the explanation of all its allusions to manners, circumstances, and opinions, long passed away, are matters of the first importance. The sacred books are, and have been, before us in our own tongue, for long; but many, as in the days of Peter, wrest the Scripture to their own destruction: and who shall prevent or confute them, but those who have some degree of solid learning? It is to the indefatigable labours of Griesbach, Wetstein, Mill, and Kennicott, that we owe our knowledge of the fact, that we possess the unmutilated writings of the prophets and apostles,—that all the manuscripts of the word of God, being collected, are found to agree, except in unimportant readings, and to teach the same truths under the names of the same writers. Sanctified talent still needs to stand ready to show the folly of Socinian, Arian, and Popish glosses, and to expose the uncandid, and even licentious, manner in which, by one or the other, the Greek text has been trifled with; and, by the adoption of sober rules of interpretation, to bring out the meaning of the Holy Ghost.

“No scripture is of private interpretation:” that is, no passage is self-interpretative, as bishop Horsely explains it; but is to be correctly learned by being collated and compared with others, and by being viewed as a single star in a hemisphere of light. From the internal matter of the Scriptures, and from the external arrangements of Providence re-

specting them, it is clear that they are intended to be a subject of study to the scholars of all time.

3. Learning, too, is often instrumental in forming and refining the taste of the minister.

And a sanctified taste is a valuable possession. It opens to the soul a thousand delights; and suggests a thousand thoughts, which, being expressed, may tend to edify and save others. It makes the sacred record, which is so plain to the wayfaring man, to reveal its veiled and heavenly fulness; not only affording food to the soul, but manna, angels' food. It brings to light the calm and epic grandeur of Moses; it revels in the wild sublimity of Isaiah and the Hebrew prophets; it opens the adoring eye upon the still and moonlight beauty of St. John, and gives the soul to feel a communion with his holy melancholy; it entrances it with the profound thoughts, the tumultuous and triumphing emotions, of the apostle Paul, which, like billows over billows, roll along until all is ocean; and, what is better than all, it fixes attention to the discourses of Christ, especially the closing one, and to the scene of the last supper,— a Saviour on the eve of his agony, surrounded by a band of awe-struck disciples, and yet uttering words of life and joy. Learning and genius combined in the pulpit, may find abundant scope within the circle of the truth as it is in Jesus. The power of analysis and generalization then becomes developed and mighty; and it is as easy to deal with, and

dwell amid, great principles, as it is for an inferior mind to deliver single and obvious lessons. Besides, before a person so endowed, heaven and earth, time and eternity, lie opened; and whatever form of beauty or power, whatever typical glory or shadow may arise, it soon stands arranged, in his eye, as an illustration of some chapter of eternal truth: the soul glances from the things of man to the things of God, and raises the humbleness of the one by the power which is drawn from the other, and then again searches into the sublimity of the other by means of the resemblance found in the one. The Canaan of the Jews and the country above, the sabbath on earth and the heavenly rest, the righteousness of saints and the garments of the glorified, the light of this world and the purity of that which is to come, are all subjects of reciprocal illustration. It requires, indeed, a Pauline spirit to run up from gradation to climax, in every sphere of theological progression: and yet, if a man gain the high elevation of the apostle himself, achieve the highest labours of mind, and be filled with the fulness of God, he is still within the scope and intentions of the Gospel revelation. O let no one think himself sufficiently qualified, even in point of intellectual culture, for preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ! *

* The divines who flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the most accomplished men, next to the apostles,

It is true, St. Paul declared that he came not with "excellency of speech or of wisdom," when he became an apostle to the Gentiles; but the wisdom which he declined, he explains in the same connected passage as being "man's," or the wisdom of this world. A wisdom he did, however, declare, which was formerly hidden,—“the wisdom of God in a mystery;” he declared it among them which were perfect, which were fully instructed in the principles and design of Christianity.

That excellency of speech, too, which he despised, was rather a language of artifice and euphony, which the heathens loved, than one which was luminous in expression, and energetic and impressive with thought: the latter he always used; and yet often does it seem to falter under the weight of the conceptions with which it is inspired.

4. That kind of knowledge which we would advocate is subservient to love, the presiding grace of the Christian, and especially of the ministerial character.

Aquinas, and others of his school, make the vision or knowledge of God to be the highest part of man's felicity. It was, doubtless, because those contemplative writers considered that the fa-

that ever preached Christ, and yet they all mourned their want of light and of power. Well would it be if there was a greater zeal to imitate Usher, Bedell, Hooker, Chillingworth, Howe, Bates, Baxter, Owen, Cudworth, and a host of others, who made the word of God their delight and their study night and day.

culties of the soul were so co-equal and inseparable, that the acts of any single faculty might be the means of action to another; and that, in fact, the fruition of one, by immediate and thrilling communication, became the fruition of all. Without going so far as, with them, to establish an analogy between the blessed Trinity and the three faculties of the soul,—power, intellect, and will,—which at best can be but dimly illustrative of the subject, we may allow the truth of the position, that there is in our figurative mode of speaking a kind of inter-communication between those faculties; and, although it is the whole soul which at the same moment acts, or wills, or knows, yet it is knowledge which prompts the will, and will is the spring of action. Thus it is, that knowledge tends to and increases love; it unveils and enlarges the object of love's complacency; it brings into clearer and clearer sight the divine perfections, and provides for love a wider sphere of action: the knowledge leads continually to a delight and complacency in them; and unless the soul be unduly and morbidly affected by its connexion with the frail flesh, the complacency will increase with the knowledge. Indeed, knowing God, in Scripture phrase, implies not merely the illumination of the understanding, but the action of the affections. And this complacent love, which is so strengthened by knowledge, will have a reflex influence on faith itself. There are many unsanctified persons who

can bring cogent reasons for the truth of revealed religion, and religious experience, and eternal life, who are but little impressed by their own arguments, for their earthliness prevails against their belief; but, as Baxter says, "holy love, when it is the habit of the soul, as it naturally ascendeth, so it easily believeth that God, that glory, to which it doth ascend. The gust and experience of such a soul assureth it, that it was made for communion with God; and that, even in this life, such communion is obtained in some degree; and therefore it easily believeth that it is redeemed for it, and that it shall perfectly enjoy it in heaven for ever. Though glory be here but seminally in grace, and this world be but as the womb of that better world for which we hope, yet the life that is in the embryo and seed, is a confirming argument of the perfection which they tend to."

Thus to be fortified, is to have the strongest safeguard against a cold philosophy, and against fanatic error and the storms of temptation. The man is a moral Teneriffe, though all around him is wind and storm.

5. Very much depends upon diction.*

How often pure and Christian doctrine has been

* No observations are offered here respecting manner and gesture: let all affectation be put away, and nature is the best guide. Correct pronounciation is the concomitant of purity of diction.

clouded by the words and manner in which it has been expressed! Sometimes hackneyed phrases, in one instance, are used, until the terms of the sentence lose all their force by their frequent and matter-of-course repetition; and in another, a mass of verbiage is produced, in which the meaning is so loose and confused, as hardly to be a meaning at all. Patience struggles to bear with this chaotic burden, but too often tires and faints oppressed with the task. O, if every minister of the land did but give a lucid, unencumbered statement of the simplest truths of the Gospel, and zealously apply them, how great and lasting would be the results! And yet it requires learning to do this efficiently, and so as to stop the mouths of gainsayers. And, likewise, is it required to gain a clear perception of the meaning of words in general, inasmuch as the issue of arguments often depends upon such meaning. The *ὁμοουσιος* of the orthodox was nearly like the *ὁμοιονσιος* of the Arians; but the doctrine inculcated by each of these terms was different,—the difference was even infinite.

Pure and expressive words can only be obtained by an insight into the science of language, and an acquaintance, in some degree, with other tongues than our own; for without such acquaintance, nice shades of difference are entirely lost sight of, and terms are counted synonymous that widely differ in their signification. Chaste and luminous forms

of expression are chiefly derived from patient and well-digested thought: they are indicative of the order which is within, just as the index of the chronometer bears witness to the exquisite arrangements of the interior mechanism. It is deeply delightful to listen, with a mind under holy influence, to a man whose every word, clear and full of meaning, shall be as a separate ray of the light which he casts upon his subject. Many in the audience of such an one have been ready to say, as Adam to the angel in Milton,

“ While I converse with thee, I seem in heaven ;
 And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
 Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
 And hunger both, from labour at the hour
 Of sweet repast ; they satiate, and soon fill ;
 . . . But thy words, with grace divine
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.”

Such men have been listened to ; and, in proportion as learning is in request, their number will be greater.

6. The devotional employments of the ministry are not at all encumbered, but rather assisted, by those acquirements in literature which the diligent make.

He who prays in public, does not merely engage his own soul in fellowship with God,—he engages others ; and their profit in this solemn exercise

will greatly depend upon the spirituality of his own sentiments, and the manner in which they are uttered. Deep thought is almost inseparable from deep piety. The spirits that are around God's throne think intensely; and yet they are represented as flaming fire, to show the ardent character of their affections. The most highly cultivated mind, if it be sanctified too, (and this we are all the way supposing,) will see God the most clearly, and will consequently feel the deepest abasement before him, and will voluntarily choose the language of adoration and humility, as well as that of intense desire. Simplicity need not be compromised; nor among the truly great is it ever,—it is as much an attribute of such, as it is an attribute of light. How often, when coarse and vulgar terms have escaped the minister, and when a colloquial as well as vulgar and loose style of expression has been the medium of his addresses to his God, has the heavenly feeling of the congregation subsided, and the hearts of many have become cold, and the spiritual sensibilities of others disgusted! We rejoice to be informed in the word that the Spirit helps the infirmities of all believers in prayer; and such help is indispensable; but still, knowledge and wisdom, on the part of the worshipper, will rather be an allurements than a barrier to that blessed Spirit.

The records of the church contain many instances which show that they who had the greatest learning,

had often the greatest simplicity. The great and the good abhor affectation, not only because God abhors it, but because it is uncongenial with their mental tone and personal bearing. Little minds may seek to fill up the void in their discourses and prayers with light and airy pictures, which please but little, and teach nothing; but those who rise into proper ministerial dignity and culture, present the simple and grand realities of eternal truth, and breathe the free aspirations of our nature. And if an accomplished mind tends to raise the value and importance of an individual, then, to repeat a sentiment with which the chapter began, and on which we would lay stress, such a mind should be sought for as a proper offering for the church to present unto God.* All are not similarly gifted: there is a wide difference between genius and no genius: but any

* It is said, to the disgrace of Jeroboam, that he made priests of the lowest of the people. What, in such a case, would his high place avail? Let those alone stand forth who are immeasurably pre-eminent; those who as much excel all others in the virtues of the mind as Saul did the whole nation of the Hebrews in the greatness of the body.—CHRYSOST. *De Sacerd.*, lib. 2.

On 2 Cor. xi. 6.—St. Paul does not say he was unlearned: he was, on the contrary, such a distance from being so, as no man is under heaven.—*IBID.*, lib. 4.

He who has been pronounced to be fit for such a ministry, should not only be thus pure, but intelligent in the extreme, and of great experience; and not less conversant in the affairs of life than they who are publicly engaged in them.—*IBID.*, lib. 6.

state of intellectual power may be improved by culture; and because such a power is destined to so sacred a purpose, that culture should be exercised.

The stones of the ancient temple were all polished and beautified before they were laid in their place. "Cursed," said the prophet Malachi, whose words we may quote in resuming the idea of sacrifice, "cursed be the deceiver, and he that hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing:" that is, if we understand the prophet aright, Cursed be he that has it in his power to present something which is comparatively fair and good, and yet is satisfied to offer that which is either secondary in value, or utterly worthless. How fearfully does he incur this condemnation who appears before the Lord, and yet with a sacrifice which is no sacrifice,—it costs him nothing!

7. *Uction*, as an endowment, and which has been before referred to, is a peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost; the immediate effect of which is, to impart to every good minister of Jesus Christ an authority and power, mingled with suavity, which does not fall to the lot of ordinary Christians.

That Christian knowledge, in general, is not inimical to this grace, is evident from the apostle John, who shows, (1 John ii. 20,) that "they who had an unction from the Holy One, knew all things." And that all sanctified knowledge tends rather to augment than

diminish it, is evident from a moment's consideration. Whatever tends to enlarge the soul and clear the faculties, tends, at the same time, to increase our capability of receiving divine influence and enjoying God; because the communications of the blessed Spirit are diversified according to the kind of mind that receives them. Howe, in his characteristic manner, thus enlarges and illustrates this view: "The divine influences may be diversified terminatively, according to the subjects in which they are received. Nature is various in this, and that, and the other creature, (speaking of the *natura naturata*, as, for distinction's sake, it is wont to be called,) and the influences are diversified according to the divers natures in which they terminate, and according to the different purposes which the exigency of those natures doth require should be served and complied with. And so that influence, which originally and in the fountain is one and the same, according as it goes forth, to beget and continue a variety of productions of this or that or another kind, is an influence that gives and that preserves being to things concerning which it can only be said that they are. It is a vital influence to things that live; it is a motive influence to things that move; it is an intellectual influence to things that are capable of understanding; it is a holy influence unto what is holy, unto what it hath made holy, and is to continue and keep so; it is light as it terminates in light, and love as it ter-

minates in love, and power as it terminates in power, and holy gracious action as it doth terminate in such action." No writer deserves more attentively to be heard on this subject; for no man than Howe ever had profounder or more reverential views of it; and we may be assured that his own great and capacious mind had rich experience of the fact, that enlarged faculties brought new acquisitions of strength and joy, and that the more there is of intellectual life and power within us, the more scope there is for the sanctification of the Spirit which, when fully wrought, attaches an unearthly force and sweetness to all our discourses. The receptacles of feeling and thought, which are possessed by such gifted ones as he, are filled with the divine influx; and natural power becomes allied to supernatural, and natural light to the illumination of heaven, and natural life and love to the sensibility and yearnings of an angel mind. At the same time, unction, though not hindered, but rather promoted, by mental culture, is a gift inseparable from the habit of constant and fervent prayer.

It is the eternal tendency of the Spirit to search "all things, even the deep things of God;" and therefore the learned preacher, who is engaged in the same search, cannot be, and never has been, deemed an unfit object of his blessed operations; and we only need revive the memory of such names as Walsh, Fletcher, Clarke, Benson, and Watson,

to be convinced of the truth of this assertion. He who is truly learned, cannot be content with skimming on the surface of things in general, much less on the surface of divine revelation; but will rather, in the spirit of humility and prayer, adventure to find out the whole depth of that truth which the Holy Ghost hath recorded. This is, in fact, preaching the word, which we know, on scriptural authority, is the grand instrument of converting the world and edifying the church; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" (Rom. x. 17;) and men are regenerated and saved by "the word of truth," "the engrafted word;" (James i. 18, 21;) and it pleases God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.)

There is something more here than

"A few calm words of faith and prayer,
A few bright drops of holy dew,"

(CHRISTIAN YEAR, on Holy Baptism,)

which the Oxford-Tract writers speak of; and while the preacher is thus engaged eliciting the mind of God, and fervently applying the Scripture to every individual case, there falls an influence, a "baptism of fire," which is not only glorious in its immediate effect, but which is proved divine by the effects which are lasting. Expository preaching, without doubt, requires the greatest amount of knowledge, and the most vigorous exercise of the understanding; and

this mode has, in all ages, been confessedly fraught with the richest unction. So highly has God honoured those who "preach the word" above those who preach any thing else, whether the religious phantasms of their own creating, the doctrines of what is called natural religion, or to eulogize the frame-work of the church. He who has attained to respectable learning is most likely to lean, childlike, upon revelation, inasmuch as he beholds, in a far higher degree than others, the unsatisfactory character of the opinions of men; and therefore he appeals to infallible truth, invests himself with its authority, imbibes its impassioned vitality; and if the providence of God should call such a minister to be a writer, of how great a value are both his acquired attainments, and the sacred pathos which imbues them! That value is enhanced when the erratic tendencies of the individual mind are corrected. The mental constitution of Baxter led him to love the metaphysical theology of the schoolmen, as is evident from his "Catholic Theology," and his "Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ,"—immense works, where the disquisition is chiefly metaphysical. Whoever was a stranger to Baxter's spirit might expect, from this announcement, to find the heathen coldness of the Stagyrite diffused throughout his pages. But no: even here the logician frequently forgets himself, and pours forth his heart in passages of the utmost devotional beauty,—passages which discover the ardent believer in the

Lord Jesus Christ: so visibly is the tendency of nature controlled by grace.

But in his practical works, when controversy is forgotten, and where his mind, unoccupied with the doctrines and systems of men, is all open to the influence from above, nothing can be more heavenly. The "Saints' everlasting Rest," and the "Dying Thoughts," can never be read by a Christian without emotion; for there is something in them which mere genius could never elicit, and which no worldly theory could ever account for. There is here and there a touch of metaphysical inquiry, sufficient to establish the identity of the man; but it is overborne by a strong and steady flow of enraptured thought. An unconverted and moderately gifted man might try to imitate the chaste and nervous style which, in the last production, is such a prominent beauty; he might take all his terms out of Baxter's lexicon, and attempt to frame his sentences in the same mould; but, after all, it would not be Baxter. There would not be that insight into divine things which gives a lucidness, and that "knowing all things" which imparts a majesty, to every page, and a life to every illustration; that ceaseless embodying of heavenly truth which extensive knowledge could alone prompt; and, especially, there would not be that rich and deep-toned spirituality which, as the efflux of a sanctified mind, owed its richness, next to the Holy Ghost, to the deep and elaborated fountain whence it sprung.

And, as regards language, such minds as Baxter's have a language of their own. "Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una."

The church of God in this country has had a noble array of builders: Hooker, Chillingworth, Waterland, Barrow, Pearson, and others. But Baxter, and those who resemble him, are more properly the ministers of the interior, whose pen is like that of David, and whose lips are touched, like those of Isaiah, "with hallowed fire." The unction of the writer and of the preacher comes from the same source, and is greatly enhanced by learning; inso-much that we may, with this view, say as Milton, taking care to connect his words with evangelical truth, "The end, then, of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright; and, out of that knowledge, to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection."

8. Institutions for the education of young ministers, when conducted in the spirit and according to the tenor of Christianity, effect incalculable good.

That kind of education which is received at universities is not now altogether the subject of remark. It may be a great blessing, if connected with the sanctifying influence of vital religion; but if not, it

is of too general and secular a character to become a positive qualification for the ministry; and in those cases in which it is substituted for the wisdom which cometh from above, it becomes, on that account, a bane to the soul.

An institution which proposes of itself to raise preachers or pastors, and one which undertakes to train and more fully qualify those who are already raised, are two different things. In the first case, the call of God is presumed upon, and often in the face of evidence to the contrary: in the other, the call is ascertained, and the great end of study is kept in view, and the spirit of the ministry runs through the entire system of means.

The Theological Institutions of voluntary churches act upon the principle of maturing those who already, by the providence of God, and the vocation of the churches, are set apart for the sacred office: they dare not, and do not, anticipate the divine vocation, and therefore receive only those who, as far as man can judge, are called. We said they effect great good;—sometimes they have effected evil; but the evil has resulted either from mismanagement, or from losing sight of the simplicity and spirituality of religion amid its cherished forms. In such instances, a gaudy and inflated rhetoric has supplied the place of the core of the Gospel; and dead formality, mingled with much affectation, has been observed in the students, instead of a keen relish

for the ordinances of grace, a searching into the sanctuary of light, and a heart glowing with the love of Christ.

These evils are removed as far as human wisdom can remove them, by requiring conversion as a condition of admittance; the judges of which conversion are the ministers and deacons of the church: and this guard is doubly strengthened, by securing tutors and governors, whose piety is ardent, and experience deep. The Academy, in such a case, may be a paradise indeed, delightful to the soul as the ancient Grove was to the sense.

The sons of the prophets, in old time, had their schools, whose president appears to have been usually an inspired man of God. These sons of the prophets were found at Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal, but were spoken of first, in 1 Sam. x. 5, as at “the hill of God;” a spot which, no doubt, from the name it bears, was visited with divine influence, and was viewed complacently by the Almighty. And why may not each of our Christian institutions become another **גבעת האלהים** hill of God? How full is the promise of the word of truth uttered by the inspired forerunner, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire!” And if any men have a right collectively to claim its fulfilment, it is those who, in preparatory institutions, are waiting to be endued with power from on high.

In the Wesleyan Connexion this promise has

been claimed, and its truth realized, although the Theological Institution is comparatively new. Those who amongst us are proposed for the ministry, usually come from the active concerns of life: if, therefore, the individual has not had the benefit of a previous education, his admittance here is productive of a good which throws a shade of higher interest over his whole life. It has been asserted, that the association of young men together, so tends to augment the buoyancy of youth as to impede and even destroy their spirituality. Thus should we speak, if it were true that the academies were left without those spiritual means of grace which the rest of the church enjoy, and if there was a corrupt leaven, or an unfaithful minority, amongst them. This not being the case, they are left to reap a benefit from association, which invariably results, in all circumstances, from the communion of saints. The worldly, by communing together, become more worldly; but saints, through fellowship, are more holy. The sacred flame pervades them with the rapidity and intensity of electric fire. The Wesleyan students are accustomed to attend their class-meetings, and to observe all the devotional and Christian exercises of the body; to rise early, to preach on the sabbath, not only in chapels, but in rooms and in the open air; and in every way show, that the most rigorous attention to study may be made to blend with the utmost simplicity, and

with an ardent desire for the salvation of men. Every thing is still to be hoped for from a pious and spiritual presidency; especially if it shall include tutors as free from affectation, and as holy, as the church would fondly wish its best ministers to be. Then the nursery of the church will continue to send forth hardy and well-trained sons, who will equally serve in aggressive or defensive warfare. The piety of the presidency in a Connexion like ours, where opinion rules, must of course be the fairest sample of that of the body. And O might the Spirit of God, through the colleges and halls of learning in the land, breathe an inspiration of his own, so hallowing the pursuits of literature and physical science, that they all, like vital elements, might become the pabulum of our hopeful youth! What ministers should we then behold! the Re-phaim of their day! Gifted in understanding, and sanctified in heart, they would stand in the spirit and power of Elias, as witnesses for their God. And can the church dispense with this mental affluence and might? Do we meditate the destruction of heresy, which entrenches itself in antiquity? Do we array ourselves against the hoary gnosticism of the east, and the sophisticated neology of the west? Then we must not only have the sword of the Lord, but chosen men to wield it. We entertain no enthusiastic notions of divine influence: we dispute not but that the power of God might accomplish

the conversion of a heathen country without the intervention of any man; but this is not the plan which is revealed by the word. Power goes hand in hand with wisdom; and wisdom has something to accomplish in reference to the church, as well as to the world; influence, equally supernatural with that which made Israel conquer Jericho, must be sought, to prepare the mind of the student while in his retirement, to nerve his efforts in searching after knowledge, to prompt him to secure bright armour, and to give his spiritual weapons a most keen and piercing edge, and then to follow him to the field and to the victory.

Our sense of dependence upon the power of the Highest is not lessened, but rather heightened, by a conviction of personal duty, and by using all legitimate means to gain our object. Divine influence manifests itself nowhere more illustriously than in the missionary institutions of the church. There it unites learning and love, blending them together, or at least conjoining them like the first pairs of disciples. The missionary toils at his grammar in the academy, prompted by a warm and throbbing heart; and then, when on the field, that heart is saved from sinking and despondency by reason of the acquisitions—the vantage ground—gained by the head: for he has not to consume his present powers in gaining others, in learning languages, mythology, customs,—they are gained already.

9. But if we view the aggressive, or even the defensive, efforts of the church in general, whence, it may be asked, are we to obtain leaders for the Lord's host? Are they to be taken from the half-educated or illiterate, and then, without any training, to be entrusted with a post of responsibility and danger? Are these the men to stand with unquivering lip and undaunted front before the bold sceptic? Are they the men to contrast the light of truth with the wretched, flickering, fitful gleams of a semi-infidel philosophy? Are these likely to follow dauntless in the track of Howe, Paley, Watson, Newton, Campbell, and Chalmers, exhibiting the glorious evidences of Christianity in the almost blinded faces of the unhappy bands who deny their Lord? Are these to be looked up to by our aspiring and ardent youth, as their intellectual and spiritual guides,—guides to the Siloan waters for which they thirst? Alas! if they ever seem to promise satiety, the disappointed people find that they have come to an Arabian brook, which is dried up: the apparent water turns out to be misty air. "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed." (Job vi. 19, 20.)

If we do not mistake the scope and genius of Christianity, it will continue to raise the moral and intellectual character of man, as long as he exists on the

earth. It is raising it now, fulfilling the prediction of Isaiah, who, in reference to the spiritual Zion, declared, "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation." (Isai. xxxiii. 6.) The tide has set in which bears all things onward; and if the ministry, like a swamped vessel, lag behind, it will be an obstacle rather than a help, especially when the tide of the times goes counter to the gales of the Spirit. Unless ministers know more than their congregations, they will not excite great veneration, or secure much influence. There is something in mental power which often, insensibly to the individual himself, produces other and external power, and awes and impresses those with whom he has to do. All this may be used, and by every good man is used, for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. He it is in whom is realized the ideal of the apostle, a man "approved unto God, a workman which needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 15.) When this great end is kept in view, learning is venerable, and greatly to be desired. Both means and end are nobly depicted by St. Peter: (1 Pet. iv. 11:) "If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." All this oracular teaching and ministering has, then, in view an

exalted object. "Here we have," says Leighton, "like that of the heavens, a circular motion of all sanctified good: it comes forth from God through Christ unto Christians; and, moving in them to the mutual good of each other, returns through Christ unto God again, and takes them along with it in whom it was and had its motion."

Fervour of soul, even without the endowments we speak of, has its sphere and its successes; there will always be room for its exercises in some departments of the church; but the efficient pastor can never be otherwise than has been represented,—that is, well endowed, and sanctified too.

Then may he enter, in the spirit of prayer, on such labour as this:—to unfold the treasured fulness of the written word, and from that to assail the heart with sacred jealousy for the truth; to lay open the material systems of sceptics, whether formed from the ancient materialist doctrines, or the modern editions of them; to defend the moral government, special providence, and immediate interposition of God; to draw lessons from the moral scenes of church history; to enter, when needful, into the fields of sacred criticism, and maintain the claims of honest and candid interpretation; to make the republic of letters tributary to the kingdom of Christ; and to evince the truth of an isolated proposition, by pointing out its position in the complete argument, as you would that of a displaced stone from the

Urim and Thummim whose lights and perfections are only complete when united.

In accordance with sentiments like these, are those of a profound writer, who was a bright example of sanctified learning : “There is, indeed, a *ψευδοπαιδεία*, as the philosopher tells us, a bastardly kind of literature, and a *ψευδώνυμος γνώσις*, as the apostle instructeth us, a knowledge falsely so called, which deserve not to be pleaded for.

“But the noble and generous improvement of our understanding faculty, in the true contemplation of the wisdom, goodness, and other attributes of God, in this great fabric of the universe, cannot easily be disparaged, without a blemish cast upon the Maker of it.

“Doubtless, we may as well enjoy that which God hath communicated of himself to the creatures, by this larger faculty of our understanding, as by those narrow and low faculties of our senses ; and yet, nobody counts it to be unlawful to hear a lesson played upon a lute, or to smell a rose. And these varied improvements of our natural understanding may be as well subservient and subordinate to a divine light in our minds, as the natural use of these outward creatures here below, to the life of God in our hearts. Nay, all true knowledge doth of itself naturally tend to God, who is the fountain of it ; and would ever be raising of our souls up upon its wings thither, did not we *κατεχέιν εν αδικία*, detain it

and hold it down in unrighteousness, as the apostle speaketh. All philosophy to a wise man, to a truly sanctified mind, as he in Plutarch speaketh, is but *ὑλητης θεολογιας*, matter for divinity to work upon; religion is the queen of those inward endowments of the soul; and all pure natural knowledge, all virgin and undeflowered arts and sciences are her handmaids, that ‘rise up, and call her blessed.’”

Howe, whose sentiments we have had occasion to quote, was one of the most learned divines of his day; yet his works, and in particular a single manuscript passage, show that his piety was not on that account the less ardent and pure. We are informed from the memorandum in question, which was written on a blank page of his Bible, that one morning he awoke “out of a most ravishing and delightful dream,” and that a “wonderful and copious stream of celestial rays, from the lofty throne of the divine majesty,” seemed to dart into his open and expanded breast. And that on October 22d, 1704, he received something of the same kind, which far surpassed the most expressive words his thoughts could suggest. “*Per quam jucundum cordis emclitionem expertus sum fuis præ gaudio lachrymis, quod amor Dei per corda diffunderetur, mihi que speciatim donato in hunc finem Spiritu suo.*” It was said of Richard Blackerby, an eminent and learned Nonconformist minister, that when he awaked in the night, he was ever in meditation and prayer: he would oft at

midnight make Greek, Latin, or English verses, exalting the praises of God, his attributes, the acts of Christ, or the graces of his Spirit, or the like, and give them in the morning to his scholars. Thomas Walsh, one of the first Wesleyan preachers, was a prodigy of liberal learning; but he died in early life, consumed by the glow of his own zeal. But the book might be filled with instances.

Thus is it ever with the true and faithful preacher: the influence of the Holy One falls on him, not as it did on Balaam, to abide but for a moment, on account of his rejecting its sanctifying efficacy,—Balaam who

“ Watch’d till knowledge came
 Upon his soul like flame ;
 Not of those magic fires at random caught,
 But true prophetic light,
 Flash’d o’er him high and bright,
 Flash’d once, and died away, and left his darken’d thought.”

It comes not, we say, thus ; but rather as the light of life, the every-day illumination which is the result of union with Christ. Light and love meet together, like the angelic forms recumbent over the mercy-seat,—there is enough there to attract the gaze of both, to make them join wings, and stay, and look for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESPECT AND TEMPORAL OFFERINGS WHICH ARE DUE TO MINISTERS.

“ Love to him is the sum and source of all obedience : when the whole soul and mind is possessed with that, then all is acceptable and sweet that he commands.”—LEIGHTON.

WHEN the Gentile centurion applied to our Lord on behalf of his sick servant, he mentioned it as an illustration of his influence, that although he himself was “ a man under authority,” yet he had soldiers under him, and could “ say to one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to” his “ servant, Do this, and he doeth it ;” evidently showing, that although he was amenable to a higher authority, yet he was not thereby prevented from exercising a lawful power of his own : and, indeed, if all the truth were told, we should find that a principal part of his responsibility lay in obtaining from every man a ready obedience to the commands he might issue. The ministers of Christ are placed in a similar position,—responsible to their Lord, but the teachers and guides of the church. It is very

difficult, in these days of strife and contention for power, to advocate the doctrine of obedience to pastors, without being laid open to the charge of ecclesiastical arrogance and pride. There is, however, such a precept in the word of God, as that Christians should "obey" their pastors; and another, that they should "highly esteem them in love for their work's sake." These precepts have some meaning; and knowing, as in some degree we do, the deceitfulness of the human heart, we would not distort that meaning, so as to favour ultra-clerical assumptions.

Scriptural obedience is not an arbitrary law, founded on reasons which are hid in the mind of the lawgiver. It commends itself to the regenerated individual as most reasonable; and upon such a mind, in its best state, it would impose no constraint: it is the cheerful offering of the pardoned sinner, who owes it to the ministry that he has been brought to God: it is perfect freedom, a branch of the law of liberty; and if it assumes the form of commandment, in keeping such commandment there is great delight. Gratitude is its spring; and, of all the affections of the human heart, there is none more energetic in its strength, and more delightful in its exercise. It is one of the thousand instances which show, that the will of God, as an object in which to acquiesce, is, in fact, the element of the soul's delight;—the greater purity the greater pleasure.

The judges of the land are the servants of the king ; but no one thinks of awarding them less honour because they are under the sovereign. Pastors of the church are called servants, and servants of all : and such, by implication, are those blessed spirits whose abode is above ; but when they have showed themselves on earth, they have received as much homage as man can lawfully give. Notwithstanding the frailties and infirmities of ministers, they are called of the Lord, and as such are entitled to honour. If there be anything sublime or holy in the Redeemer's government ; if any thing exalting in God's service ; if anything heavenly in Christian worship ; if any beauty in holiness ; then such honour is legitimately bestowed, and no people can slight or degrade them, without taking a low and unworthy view of the ordinances of religion, and degrading, in fact, themselves. There is too much of a disposition, in the present day, amongst certain classes, to consider them as persons who are mercifully taken from the vexations and cares of secular life ; and, because the community has conferred upon them so great a kindness, it is thought that any state of vassalage may be endured by them, and any kind of maintenance received in return. There is, however, not so much mercy in this matter as many suppose. Chrysostom, Basil, and Nazianzen did not consider it any, even at a time when temporal emoluments were

greater than in voluntary communities they are now. If secular cares are abandoned, others are inherited instead, and such as are more corrosive, often, to the soul,—a heavy, accumulating, everlasting load; for when once taken up, they are only to be laid down with the body in the grave.

I. The honour which is due to ministers should manifest itself, first, in respectful deference and demeanour.

This should be something different from the usual courtesies of life. If the pastor be a man of irreproachable character, then, whether his extraction be high or low, he cannot be disconnected with his office. He is the man of God, and the impression ought to be made accordingly. It is a bad sign when an individual can play off a low joke with him, or in his presence discuss his most worldly themes, and exhibit his coarsest manners: the mind of such a person is not in a state to receive good from the ministry; it is darkened with ignorance and pride. He cannot make his pastor altogether such an one as himself, or view him merely as a public-speaking brother, and nothing else, without leaving himself bereft of an instructor, exemplar, and guide,—a friend who is deeply interested in his spiritual welfare.

It may suit the purpose of the mere unhumbled professor, the political religionist, to be without either exemplar, instructor, or guide; indeed, not

one of these can he endure; but it will not suit the man who is concerned for his own salvation and that of his family. He who receives his spiritual instructor with marked respect, and who teaches his household to do the same, has opened a way to the profiting of all: there are no unreasonable prejudices on his part, and no painful suspicions awakened in the breast of the other; respectful conduct produces confidence and affection in return, and, besides this, it affords a comfort and encouragement which no benevolent mind would ever wish to withhold from those who find in it their chief earthly solace. Rudeness, when actual, deliberate, and intended, is almost beneath reproach: the little soul which could commit such a meanness, has far to rise before it can breathe the pure air of Christian feeling.

Some of the early bishops were attended by persons who were termed acolyths, doubtless from ἀκολουθῆω, "to follow." They attended the person of the bishop, and performed certain unimportant offices for him in the church,—offices of mere empty ceremony, such as carrying insignia, opening doors, and conducting him to his place. An honour like this, so toyish and Papistical, is not to be pleaded for; it is so unworthy the simple dignity of a Christian pastor. Let him have the fixed eyes and death-like silence—or, as Jerome would say, the tears—of his congregation when engaged in public, their fervent prayers in private, the respectful and kind recognitions of

the social circle, whose feeling gladly takes its tone from him; and let there be a reasonable and affectionate attention to all his well-judged suggestions; and then pomp and show may be left to those who are consoled by its glitter, when the glow of feeling is no more.

But some will ask, "Shall not this respect and deference be withheld, if the minister be guilty of immoral conduct?" If the inquirers be of the established church, and are not able to have the guilty person removed, then it becomes a question whether they should remain under such a minister or not, but no question whether the office itself should be respected or not. Paul magnified his office, (a man who considered himself less than the least of all saints,) even when popular prejudice was excited against him.—If, on the other hand, they who ask should be the members of a voluntary church, the answer is still obvious. The unworthy minister, being elected, or at least proposed, by themselves, should by them be brought to trial; but until he is impeachable at the bar of his brethren, the man of their choice is entitled to their respect: having made their election, they have entered into the compact which the New Testament supposes to subsist between pastor and people, and therefore it behoves them to keep it.—Does the Wesleyan say, "But he who is now my minister is inferior in abilities, and is far from meeting my requirements, or those of my fellow-

members, and, according to my judgment, is totally unfitted for the work of his present station: may I not then, in this case, withhold that respect which is so urgently recommended?" By no means: for although the entrance of this individual into the ministry was not sanctioned by you individually, it was sanctioned by some part of the church with which you are connected; and, therefore, by all of you collectively. If you receive him at a local sacrifice, in consequence of deficient ability, it is what may occasionally be expected: this is the price you pay for a connexional benefit. Sometimes you have better ministers than ever you proposed yourselves: no wonder, then, that sometimes you have one worse. If the ministerial disability be extreme, there is a connexional law to remove the individual; but as long as the constitution makes him pastor, so long there may be found for him a station where he will be useful, and so long he has a right to that deference and respect which is due to the brethren in general.—Hooker himself allows, that of two alternatives, in which either multitudes of souls must go untaught, or otherwise unlearned persons be employed to preach to them, the latter must undoubtedly be chosen. Not that we would argue, that all should be honoured alike: this is both impossible and unscriptural. There are some men whose intellectual and theological attainments, or whose usefulness and holy lives, place them at

a great distance from others: the works they have done, the posts of danger they have honourably occupied, the sacrifices they have made, and the privations they have undergone, all require that they should have a richer meed of respectful attention than others. Whilst the least of Christ's servants are recognised, the greatest may not improperly have a superior distinction; provided that care be taken, when such are placed together, that no invidious comparisons be drawn so as to occasion pain. Such deportment should not merely be the expression of Christian courtesy, but should be in every respect sincere.

Many persons discuss, in the presence of their children, the failings and infirmities of their ministers, who would be shocked and angry if those children should offer them any slight or manifest rudeness, and who would reprove such a fault with the utmost severity. This hollow kind of respect abounds amongst the aristocratic and the worldly; but it ought to have no place in the church. "Let your love be without dissimulation." Let not the manifested regard be belied by the private satirical witticism or half-whispered innuendo. If you profess to give your heart, give it indeed, and with as much warmth as you can command. It is most inimical to the interests of the young, to canvass, in their presence, the private characters of their pastors. If their tastes should happen to take disgust at what they discern

or hear, farewell to any rational hope of their receiving good from the ministrations of the persons thus scrutinized: whether their prejudices be well founded or not, the result is the same. A minister's secret faults are judged by God; his public delinquencies are judged by the church: for in cases where opinion should be expressed, as to those blameable acts which are not exactly impeachable, the way is by private interview, or by vestry conversation. Let him not be convicted in his absence, in the parlour, and by a jury of young people. There is a Gospel rule on this subject; and, when it is acted upon, no other check against pastoral misrule is necessary: a fault is to be mentioned to the offending party, first, in private; next, if without effect, in the presence of two or three witnesses; and, lastly, to the church. Let none fear that this world is bereft of a tribunal, before which he may be arraigned, if his sin be open and palpable; but, as long as his failings are such as are common to Christians, the exercise of a charitable tenderness towards his character will always be the most dignified and profitable course: the most dignified,—for who is so low as the common detractor? the most profitable,—for to whose words do we so much attend, and whose influence do we so much feel, as theirs whose characters we revere and cherish?*

* *Neque enim mirum est si multos habeant hostes, quorum officium est, omnium vitia reprehendere, pravis omnium cupid-*

II. Respect for ministers further manifests itself by an affectionate attention to their temporal wants.

It is needless to refer to the decisions of the word of God on this subject: they are too well known to require minute repetition. St. Paul was not a man to receive support in the light of a gratuity; he had loftier views of moral right: no wonder, then, that he should reason thus, "Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?" Am I arguing on the principles of human justice merely? or is not the same thing recognised in that divine rule which is indicative of the intentions of the divine mind? It is written in order "that he that plougheth should plough in hope, and that he that thrasheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." (1 Cor. ix. 10.) He that labours in the Gospel, should do so with a mind undiverted from the great end and object of his labour, with mingled desire and expectation, and unalloyed with secular anxieties; and, having toiled through every kind of exertion,—from breaking up the fallows, to gathering in and thrashing the ripened harvest,—from preaching Christ to the world, to building up the

tatibus adversari, severitate sua cohibere quoscunque errare vident. Quid ergo fiet si promiscuè audientur quæcunque de illis sparsæ fuerint calumniæ?—CALVIN, in 1 Tim. v. 19.

church,—then to be partaker of those fruits of faith which he has been instrumental in raising. Unless Christ had left his servants to be dependent upon the church for their pecuniary support, he had deprived that church of its fairest and principal opportunity of showing its love for him. The strict righteousness of such a return is most obvious. In this money-loving world, the claims of the enterprising merchant, or manufacturer, or tradesman, or agriculturer, to his profits, are much more readily recognised than those of the toiling pastor to his salary: whereas, the latter are no less valid than those which refer to trade and commerce; in fact, they are more legitimately established,—they are founded on individual sacrifice. Let every candid person turn his attention to the subject, and examine if there be not, in the ministry of voluntary churches, a larger infusion of disinterestedness than in any body of men whatever. The more religious is the public mind, the more this is acknowledged; and so natural, said a wise and good man once, is the union of religion with justice, that we may boldly deem there is neither where both are not. We are speaking of individual sacrifice as the foundation of claim for pecuniary compensation; and,

1. Let the expense of physical strength and vital energy be considered.

Enlightened medical science has demonstrated that those complaints usually termed nervous, a fearful and

multiform train, take their rise from the disordered functions of that vital organ, the stomach. Their immediate manifestations are, diminished energy of the brain, consequent diminution of power and muscular strength, excitement on the most trifling occasions, and, what is still worse, a feebleness in the volitions of the mind, a loss of the soul's elasticity, and a suspension or destruction of its power of receiving happiness from either internal or external sources. Who are more subject to these sufferings than ministers? and who more frequently fall under them? O what a tale might be unfolded of days and nights, yea, of months and years, spent in the deepest prostration! Prudential motives, and a regard for the public good and for the honour of the ministry, have often prevailed to draw a veil over distresses which, nevertheless, have been hard to bear, and from which the worldly and despairing have often rid themselves by suicide. Every thing in a minister's work tends to derange the healthy functions of the vital organs: the confinement of the study, the habit of close and unceasing thought, the pressing cares of public responsibility, the anxiety of fulfilling the wishes and reconciling the minds of many and differently-constituted men, the feverish excitement of preaching to large congregations, breathing at the same time in heated air,—all are circumstances which lessen the vital force by which the digestive organs and the cerebral system are connected, and by which the man

is kept in beautiful vigour. An overloaded mind communicates by this nervous medium (mysterious enough, it is true) its oppression to the body; and then the body, like a weakened and frightened companion, alarms and depresses the mind.

Nor is all this theoretic speculation. Let us consult the bills of mortality appertaining to the church. Who are they whom paralysis has enfeebled in the meridian of their age,—paralysis, the most humiliating form of nervous disease? Its victims are found in sedentary life, but chiefly in the ministry. If the extended age of man be attained, how often does life, when by itself considered, become a burden long before the term arrives! and the sufferer survives to remember what his powers of usefulness were once, but which, until he is clothed upon with his nobler house, he is conscious are irrecoverably lost! But, debilitating as is the toil in which our brethren of the ministry have to engage, the incessant demands upon their time make it impossible that sufficient easy exercise and air can be taken to ward off the evil: at least, this is the case with Wesleyan ministers. If the day be spent in the study, or rooms of the sick, the evening is spent in the chapel or the meeting; and very frequently the distance which has to be travelled on foot, in order to reach that chapel or meeting, makes the effort a fatiguing one, and not a healthy and invigorating walk.

The students in Germany engage in hard gym-

nastics, in connexion with academical exercises; and in America, the young men of the colleges are often trained by manual exercise, as well as by lecture; and thus their health is preserved, and with it the buoyancy and strength of the soul. Plans like these, or such as are equivalent, cannot, amongst us, be adopted: if there were even time for them, it would be accounted egregious trifling. It was different with the first race of Wesleyan ministers. Their journeys were frequent, but chiefly undertaken on horseback; which mode of travelling, above all others, contributes to sound health. Their preaching toils were great, yet undergone without that feverish mental anxiety which belongs so much to the pulpit now; for they had not to furnish a supply for that theological thirst which with us is so insatiable; and their doctrines, being newly revived, were ever interesting to the numerous congregations which they addressed. Those doctrines, with them, had all the charm of freshness; and as there were no arousing calls to deep study and research, no anniversary occasions, no crowded public meetings, no overawing chapels, they had not so much of the misery and wear which follows the incessant requirements which are now made for intellectual effort.

The demand for excitement is immense, and cannot long be supplied to the extent required: the bodies and souls of the brethren are secretly breaking down in the endeavour to meet it. If we now see

a venerable and hale old man, without much loss of physical power, sustaining his years, we shall find that he has spent his youth, and the critical part of his ministerial life, much in the way which has just been described; the way in which the fathers of the Connexion were nurtured. The next generation will, however, have few of this class to exhibit. Early rising, with attention to exercise and diet, will do much to prolong and sustain the strength; but, after all, ministerial pursuits tend to exhaust it more than other pursuits, and to shorten the period of life.

The yeoman and the tradesman may now be viewed together on the other side. The one, by breathing, with inward tranquillity, the fresh air, preserves the vital activity of the functions; the other, by bustling and motion, urges the blood along in a healthy course, and prevents the germination of incipient disease.

This statement is fair, as far as it is general; and the position to be founded on it is this,—that the office of a Christian pastor, when truly and zealously filled, is one of self-denial and suffering,—that the sacrifice is made for the sake of the community, and therefore the community ought to requite him: so far we are but urging a principle of common justice. The medical student gives up his time to his profession, in order to benefit mankind as regards health, and is richly rewarded by a large income; and therefore, when the pastor gives up likewise his time and

attention to benefit men by attending to their salvation, and when he becomes the subject of painful and exhausting struggles for their souls' sake, ought he not too to be rewarded? We are viewing the minister as he stands in relation to men, whatever covenant and responsibility there may be between him and his God. Man is not clear until he is furnished with a comfortable and competent support: not with riches, for that would injure; not placed in poverty, for that would depress him; but maintained so as he may stand between the rich and the poor, having easy access unto both. He cannot increase his comforts like the successful tradesman; and therefore the ratio of contribution should be well considered. If his education has been expensive, the argument is all the stronger.

Besides, how often do our brethren make sacrifices of a pecuniary kind! When they first give themselves to God and his church, what fair prospects are slighted; what lucrative stations abandoned; what local honours yielded up; what social affections lacerated! The occurrence of this is by no means unfrequent. When the British nation required the West-India planter to give up his supposed proprietary right to the slave, there was a loud cry for compensation; and the cry was heard: but when a young man, the hope and stay of some family, abandons all worldly emoluments, to which talent would give him a right, when does he ever think of asking

for compensation? It would be unworthy of him, if he ever did, it is true; for his treasure, he asserts, is in heaven: but it would be well for the church to remember, that in him she has received a living sacrifice; and therefore a poor and parsimonious return would be indicative of a spirit very different from his own. If, on the other hand, his origin is humble, and the church has rather augmented than lessened his comforts by receiving him, it is presumed there was sufficient reason for so doing: and the same reason establishes his claim to undiminished kindness; it remains in full and even increasing force.

This is a question of gratitude, as well as justice. Most Christian churches can furnish instances of individuals rising in their worldly circumstances by reason of their connexion with the people and ministers of God. Wesleyan Methodism can furnish thousands. The competence or affluence of such arises, under the blessing of God's providence, from their temperance, industry, and order; these, from their conversion; and their conversion instrumentally from those who declared unto them the word of God. Are they now happy in the divine favour, after having been brought out of the dungeon of their natural state? and have they every temporal blessing beside? and shall they forget those who were the instruments of their rescue? Their spiritual benefactors will not be forgotten, when the case comes into other hands; but now the case lies with the

deeply benefited members of the flock: it is probationary at present, it will be finally adjusted then.

Nothing, we are sure, but that uneasy spirit which spurns all authority, and frets at seeing a superior, could ever meditate the impoverishing of the ministry, and reducing it, in point of meaning and authority, to the same grade as any other body of church officers occupy. The theory of equal rights is an anomaly, and is equally inconsistent with atheism or religion. With atheism,—for it would be hard to suppose that tumultuous chance, which acts blindly, should produce beings of equal excellency, and at all times similar in strength and beauty. With religion,—for analogy shows that a wise and holy God would be sure to make men differ from each other, because infinite power and love would have no scope in an unvarying similitude of form. A monotonous uniformity among his creatures has never appeared; the Bible knows nothing of it; it is strange both in the kingdoms of nature and grace,—unknown in heaven and on earth. When a few tempted, misguided men have risen against the ministry, and have either brought it down, or have withdrawn themselves from its control, what has been the next step? They have discovered that the church could not exist unless the power which they have just destroyed were again created, and lodged somewhere; and therefore they have either

vaulted into the vacant seat themselves, or made it the bone of contention amongst many; and, eventually, the most talented, or the most artful, have got possession. Such a state of things is borne as a man would bear a dislocated limb,—no longer than while redress cannot be had. An attempt to put down the ministry, or to diminish its legitimate powers, is useless: if put down a thousand times, the wants of man would again raise it. Besides, it is reflecting upon the wisdom of God, and altering his plan: it is a Titanic combat: men might as well carry on war against a law of nature. There is as beautiful an adaptation in framing the Pastoral Office for man's moral state, as there is in making the air and material system to suit his physical. The experience of six thousand years has shown, that the world cannot do without the ministers of God; and, as far as Christianity is concerned, every year of its history has proved that the church cannot do without that administration of Gospel law which is committed to them. The church is one family,—a part of the great family in heaven and earth; but its members have not equal claims,—who ever knew it to be so in any domestic circle on earth? Let the ambitious and the mistaken strive no more: the Bible has not made a mistake. O let benevolence plead for the persons they are labouring to impugn; and if they have received from them, directly or indirectly, temporal good,—spiritual we could hardly suppose they would

receive,—then let gratitude have a voice; let them not sting the bosom that cherished them; but rather honour, by tokens of respect, and by a proper liberality, those who have so reasonable and scriptural a claim to both.

It is thankfully conceded, that in our Connexion, when a minister does his duty, and lives in accordance with the Christian spirit, respect is not wanting. He is treated and received, in general, as he would fondly wish to be; and, in some cases, as St. Paul was by the primitive Galatians. If what is true of the whole, would become true of every part, and of every member of the church, then how would its efficiency increase! The holy apostle just named did not hesitate to tell one individual that he, Philemon, owed to him, as the instrument of his salvation, his very life: he did not say this vauntingly, but simply to establish the righteous claim which he had on Philemon's regard.

In language something like this might many ministers of the present day speak; not glorying in themselves, but rather seeking the spiritual good of their flocks,—which they are in fact doing, while asserting their right to a proper and Christian respect. An esteemed ministry, and a devoted people, present a formidable barrier of strength: and as the battle of the Lord is not yet decided, may the church ever have to recognise these as her children!

2. The case of aged and worn-out ministers is next to be considered.

They differ from others in this particular,—they can labour no more ; but this no Christian would ever consider as a reason why they should be honoured no more. The world, it is true, adopts a literal *lex talionis*; renders a compensation for equivalent and present services, but withdraws it when those services can no longer be rendered. The master pays his workman or servant the stipulated sum, but feels no obligation to continue the payment when the usual work is not at last performed. How much higher should be the principle of the sanctuary ! Yet let us not go too far, and traduce the world. It often happens that the master provides for his aged and enfeebled servant; and companies of men, whose association together has been entirely for worldly purposes, do often, at personal sacrifices, subscribe to those who have consumed time and strength in their service. The nation, we are certain, remembers its veteran and worn-out seamen,—the noble hospital at Greenwich is witness ; England's decayed statesmen, and superannuated public officers, likewise, all come in for their share of grateful recompence : and so it should be. But should the servants of the Lord return from their hard toil, and, when the shadows of evening gather around them, find only a cheerless home and limited comforts ? No wonder, when this is the case, that their temptations should be so keen and distressing.

All their life long they have endeavoured to show that the Gospel enlarges the heart, refines and purifies the moral sensibilities, and especially illumines the subject of relative obligation. But do they now find it so? or does the church listen to their claims with cold attention? The unthinking and carnal world has never loved them; but are they to be slighted by their own children, at a time when a slight is harder than ever to be borne? It is a difficult lesson for patience and resignation to learn.

After having sustained severe toil in actual warfare, it requires no ordinary measure of grace to enable them, like blind Belisarius, to retire into poverty and oblivion. Have seamen and the military fought in defensive war, and protected the nation from the enemy? They, too, have lifted up their hands in prayer, and have engaged the arm of God in its defence. Have statesmen, by their wisdom, given stability and peace to society? They, too, by spreading righteousness have been more efficient workers in the same cause. The royal preacher seemed to contemplate in his day a parallel case. "There was," he said, "a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. . . . Wisdom

is better than strength : nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard." (Eccles. ix. 14—16.)

If there be any truth in the Bible, faithful ministers then have been, amongst others, the saviours of their country; and therefore their title to comfort and solace in the decline of life should be subscribed both by the nation and the church. Hooker writes somewhat strongly on this subject:—"If there should be no other remedy but that the violence of men in the end must needs bereave them of all succour, further than the inclinations of others shall cast upon them by way of alms, for their relief but from hour to hour; better they are not than their fathers, who have been contented with as hard a portion at the world's hands; let the light of the sun and moon, the common benefit of heaven and earth, be taken away from B. B., if the question were, Whether God should lose his glory and the safety of his church be hazarded, or they relinquish the right and interest which they have in the things of this world. But since the question in truth is, Whether Levi shall be deprived of the portion of God or no, to the end that Simeon or Reuben may devour it as their spoil; the comfort of the one in sustaining the injuries which the other would offer, must be that prayer poured out by Moses, the prince of prophets, in most tender compassion to Levi: 'Bless, O Lord, his substance; accept thou the work of his hands; smite through

the loins of them that rise up against him, and of them which hate him, that they rise no more.' ”

These sentiments, of course, refer to an established or endowed church. Whatever truth they may have in such an application, they are to be restrained and limited in their reference to a voluntary one. If, with our author, we call the ministry Levi, we would not assume that there is a disposition on the part of Simeon or Reuben to spoil or rob, but only to slight and forget him. The imprecatory passage from Moses, too, must be properly understood: it indicates the interest which God takes in his servants in general, but cannot be supposed capable of the same application to Christian ministers which it literally had to those of a semi-temporal, although theocratic, institution; and if we attend to the style of Hebrew writing, we shall find it to be more of a prophecy than a prayer.

It will perhaps be objected, on the part of some, that such are the demands made on the resources of Christians, for the support of missionary and other evangelical societies, that the case of aged ministers cannot be met. The answer to this objection, we fear, could be little more than a rebuke of the love of money. No one will seriously maintain that the finances of the Christian community are inadequate to meet both these calls; every one is conscious they are adequate to more than both; so that we are not pleading against Christian policy, nor wishing to

diminish evangelical zeal. As long as Christians have any personal wealth, let them not say of this or that money, "It is corban," and therefore the ministry can have no share in it. God will not accept a penny thrown into his treasury with such like views, except the offerer act by mistake. He himself has cast his servants on the care of his church; and if, besides this, he has required that church to arise and seek the conversion of the world, he has not, as a righteous Father, over-estimated its pecuniary capability. Nor will his people be acting the part of the good servant, if they abandon one part of his work in order, with less of self-denial, to attend to the other.

It was one of the first eucharistic efforts of the primitive church to provide for widows,—the spirit of Christianity so soon developed itself. Then there were no worn-out ministers: if there had been, that spirit would have run swifter than the wind, and burned ardent as living flame on their behalf. To leave them to neglect and poverty is, considering their morbid sensibility, almost the same thing as leaving them to die.

In the Wesleyan church, the Auxiliary Fund was instituted for the purposes we are advocating. Its existence shows the affectionate spirit of the people; but it is decidedly insufficient to meet the increasing claims which are made upon it. The Fund does not fail for want of principle, we confidently believe: our

people love their ministers, and revere them when they retire from publicity; but the subject of their superannuation is not sufficiently made a matter of attention. Our people have such a world of religious excitement and employ around them, that in the bustle of the Connexion this is forgotten. They are, when directed to the subject, ever ready to acknowledge the claims of the aged minister; and to admit, that although his labour has ceased, the results remain, and are accumulating as long as the world stands. If the question, therefore, be treated as one of abstract justice, the church will always find an open and running account, in which she is charged largely as debtor: to balance this, there must be enlightened liberality.*

* The provision, as it stands at present, will be allowed by every candid man to be scanty indeed.

He who fails after having been actively engaged in the ministry less than

12 years	receives	£10	per ann.:	his widow	in case of his death	£10
18	.	.	.	15	.	15
24	.	.	.	20	.	20
29	.	.	.	25	.	25
34	.	.	.	30	.	30
Upwards	.	42	.	.	.	42

This Fund, however, is almost entirely raised by the subscriptions of the preachers themselves: the annual subscription is £6. 6s.,—a sum which can be but ill spared from the usual income, even when in full health and strength. The Auxiliary Fund, mentioned above, is exhausted by extraordinary expences.

The widows and children of the deceased are here very properly presented to our attention. A widow who is left behind in the world without property, but whose dependance was solely on her departed companion, is a widow indeed. The conduct of the primitive church has just been glanced at; and if we extol the Christians of those days for their simplicity and zeal, let us be consistent, and imitate their example.

During the life-time of our ministers, the interests of their wives are regarded identical with their own; and to a very small extent is it known, how deeply the societies and congregations of Christians at the present day are indebted to them. Such is the quiet energy and influence of woman, that a word of hers has often revived the drooping courage of her partner, and he has gone to his task with renewed vigour. She has been the spring and soul of his ministerial strength; and because he has gone to the grave, must she go to oblivion, and need the comforts of life, when for the first time she finds herself desolate? A numerous family may have exhausted resources, which it required the economy of years to raise; but demands from this quarter could be met, as long as the mind retained its moral courage: when that fails, the weight is fearful. Often it is found to fail; and what wonder, when we remember that the widowed sufferer was once an object of respect and attention, and mingled with the best

and wealthiest of the church?—such a change of circumstances is keenly felt. As far as earthly things are concerned, many a man of God would have felt more composure on his bed of sickness, if he could have cherished a hope, that the church would at his death relieve his family from depression. He believes that God will be a husband to his widow, and a father to his fatherless children; but faith cannot prevent nature from desiring to see the instrumentality of the case even when reposing on the consolatory declaration, “A judge of the fatherless and widow is God in his holy habitation.”

III. Finally. Ministers have a claim to the fervent supplications of their people, both in public and in private.

Such supplications are found in all liturgies, both of the ancient Jewish, and in ancient and modern Christian, churches; thus showing how universally our principle is acknowledged.

Those who are deeply impressed with the conviction, that the Spirit is not only in the word, but that his influence must attend its publication, as well as all religious exercises, in order to their being effectual, cannot restrain prayer before God in reference to this subject. The Christian not only acknowledges a beautiful and well-governed universe, but a supervision of individuals in reference unto things temporal: on the other hand, too, he must acknowledge, (for the doctrine is taught by the same

Bible,) that there is not merely a divine direction exercised in raising up ministers, and preserving the cords and stakes of Zion, but that there is in reserve an immeasurable plenitude of grace and holy influence to be poured out from heaven, in answer and according to the prayers of the faithful, upon those who serve at the altar.

St. Paul does not appear to have ever asked for any worldly thing either for himself or his colleagues, although he collected for the Jerusalem poor; yet he could, and did, most importunately plead, "Brethren, pray for us." If the church, without ceasing, made prayer in behalf of Peter, who was imprisoned, shall it be thought a matter of less moment to intercede for those who are surrounded by evil spirits more ruthless than the Jews, under a chief more malicious than Herod? Pastors have all the weaknesses and liabilities of common men, but with a far larger share of their responsibilities; and if they need anything from their people,—their respect, sympathy, supplies,—they need, more than all, their prayers. We have to do with those who believe in the efficacy of especial intercession, passing by all the heartless and pseudo-philosophical quibbles of sceptics; and cannot but think that the Spirit on high is only waiting to be longed after, and sought for, in order to send down, in consistency with the divine plan, his most copious effusions. Our Lord's remark to the disciples seems to have with us a rebuking significancy: "Hitherto

ye have asked nothing in my name ;” a conduct this, which but ill deserves the appended merciful direction, “ Ask, and receive, that your joy may be full.” Our Lord saw, in spirit, his church like a field of promise, white unto the harvest, waving with ripening fruit: and, though he knew the need there was of labourers, and saw but few, and was conscious that the energy of the Holy Ghost could call and prepare abundantly more, yet he connected the whole of this operation with the intercession of saints: “ Pray ye therefore,” said he, “ the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his harvest:” not, Rest assured that this will be done, and consequently take your ease; but, Pray ye that it may be so: and thus he connected the benefit of the instrumentality with that of the object.

Nor are the labourers themselves less in need of remembrance before God. The private Christian feels a load on his heart, very often, which nothing but prayer can remove. The minister feels the same: he indeed has many loads, his own and those of others; and he needs, in consequence, many prayers. Let it not be said, he ought to pray himself: this is acknowledged, and is a matter between him and his God. The duty and privilege of the private Christian remains the same. Those who preach and labour themselves for the souls of men know how to sympathize with their brethren, but few others know.* In public the

* I know the importance of this ministry and the difficulty of

preacher is not like another worshipper : for at times, when he would gladly retire into a pew and receive the manna of the word, he must ascend into the pulpit ; and, whether his mind be peaceful or perturbed, must lead the devotions and meditations of others. He may be labouring under distressing temptations, affliction may lie heavy upon his domestic circle, debility may have unstrung his frame, the grasshopper may be a burden ; but, amidst all this, he is expected to take his place ; and if he acquit himself not like a man, he is made the subject of censuring remark. When his voice is lifted up amid assembled hundreds, it requires, in the awful impressiveness of that hour, great help from above to keep the soul from trembling to its centre ; and it requires, too, more of gracious unction than of art and effort to arrest the attention of the surrounding audience. When the apostle Paul saw the young man Timothy rising up as a minister of Christ, his noble soul melted into tenderness at the sight. He knew what internal sufferings Timothy must have begun to endure : he contrasted his peaceful private state with the anxiety attendant on his present career : he saw the struggles of his soul ; and from what passed in his own breast, he well understood them. With a feeling partly fraternal and partly fatherly, he yearns for the youth

its duty, whose waves disturb the mind of those devoted to it more than tempests disturb the ocean.—CHRYSOST. *De Sacerd.*, lib. 3.

unutterably, and says in his Epistle, "Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears." He who was never moved by his own unparalleled troubles, was so affected by seeing ministerial responsibilities resting on Timothy's youthful mind, and ministerial tears flowing from his eyes, that he poured forth his full soul for him in prayer; and then, resuming the undaunted apostle again, he exclaims, as an intrepid and shouting commander would do in battle, "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." So did St. Paul blend the most animating encouragement with the most affectionate and fervent supplication. In the war of the Israelites with Amalek, far more was done by upholding the hands of Moses than by the efforts of the host,—a symbolic action this, to teach the faithful in all ages to uphold the ministry.

Hope is in full strength where intercession prevails; and hope is one of the elements of faith, which faith takes hold on God, and obtains from him his promise. Although prayer proceeds from a thirst after God, yet it has a reflective tendency to increase that thirst; by exercise it induces a longing after spiritual good, so great that we are glad to extract it from every thing: but what ought to be so productive as the ministry? If it is as a well of perennial water, let bands of the pious gather round, like the olden nobles of Israel, and cry, "Spring up, O well!" which

cry is not only hymnic, but, under the Gospel dispensation, full of the deepest prayer. He who prays daily and feelingly for his pastor, and for the whole of the pastors of Christ's church, cannot go unblest. God cannot clothe his priests with salvation, without making his chosen people joyful. Were this exalted duty and privilege less neglected, the exclamation of the awe-struck patriarch would, on entering the house of God, be oftener drawn from us, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

We have thus argued the just claims which ministers have upon the regards, the property, and prayers of their people, partly from the written word, and partly from the relation in which they stand to mankind.

The last of these cannot be too much pleaded for. The claimants are not the only persons who are benefited. The church assumes its true character as typified by Solomon's temple; it is the "house of prayer for all people;" and a brief survey of its sanctified and happy members, anointed with heavenly unction, and urging their way to the glory spoken of in the Scriptures, presents to the mind such a view of the love of God as to force the exclamation, "Will God in very deed dwell on the earth?" "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which" is "builded?" And

what were the church, and what were forms of religious service, without the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete?

Sacramental symbols may, in a fallen church, stand for a while, instead of the grace which they signify, and of which they might have been the channels; but, without the Spirit, the bread is but common food, the wine of the cup like other wine, and the water of baptism a mere element. He brings to every faithful mind the Redeemer's words, and applies to every heart the doctrines of that last passion-sermon which he delivered on the night in which he was betrayed. Without the Spirit, words, however eloquent, are but airy types; and writings, like hieroglyphic scrawls, mysterious and useless;—religious rites, even when connected with the publication of the truth, only as Adam in the dust.

Thou Spirit and Comforter! send forth the breath of life and let Thy manifestations increase. Nothing, in the actual recovery of man from ruin, has been effected without Thee. The unformed world felt Thee move. A guilty race who perished in the days of Noah are reserved to bear witness to Thy strivings with them. Thou wert the good Spirit! The tabernacle of witness was devised by Thee: it portrayed the Gospel church, and heaven too, and was fraught with patterns of heavenly things, indicative of Thy desire to lead men to heaven. The prophets spake by Thee: it was Thy

joyful work to testify of Christ; to glorify the evening-time of Simeon, Christ's expectant; to descend upon the pure incarnated Redeemer dove-like; and upon the weak and not un sinful disciples, with fire to purify and illumine them. Thou didst then, and dost now, assure the repenting and believing mourner of pardon; dwell in all the saints, and teach them to pray and carry on the work of holiness; open before them eternal life, and prepare them to enjoy it. When any good is done on earth, Thou doest it; and without Thee, as well as the Word, there is nothing made that is made. The golden vials are accumulating the prayers of saints. O pour Thyself forth; and then let the praise of the universal church be like the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

CHAPTER X.

HEAVEN THE MINISTER'S REWARD.

“Chains of my heart, avaunt, I say ;
I will arise, and in the strength of love,
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to his home above.

“Sure, when I reach the point where earth
Melts into nothing from the' uncumber'd sight,
Heaven will o'ercome the' attraction of my birth,
And I shall sink in yonder sea of light.”

IT must be evident to every person of reflection and judgment, that the Pastoral Office involves in it a degree of care and inward suffering which makes it necessary every hour to look up to God for help. The sources of that suffering have been mentioned: it arises partly from physical, partly from mental, and partly from spiritual causes. The frame too often droops into languor, and the soul in consequence becomes as powerless as a flaccid bow-string, when the bow is broken. And besides this, there is, even in full health and vigour, a painfully intense

longing to see fruit: at least, this is the case with every one who cherishes the true spirit of his duty.

Baxter despaired of seeing any man truly useful unless his desire for the conversion of sinners amounted almost to misery: that almost misery is then the minister's inheritance. He, however, the word of God assures us, shall reap in joy; and not only at the last day, but even now, like the high priest, gather his sheaf of first-fruits, and wave it before the Lord, an offering of faith and love. The Gospel is replete with holy influences and power, and gives richer promise of success than the former dispensations gave. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

The conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers, are results which ever attend the faithful administration of Gospel truth; and these are causes of the purest joy: they are the *præmium ante præmium*, the reward before the reward. The stipulation which our Lord made, when he delivered the great ministerial commission, stands good to all his servants,—his presence is with them always. And this presence is not to be understood as a glowing hyperbole; for as far as presence implies communion, Christ is more with them than is the air which they breathe, or the earthly friends which they enjoy. The pacific presence of Christ is a circumstance which alone can ensure the minister's peace, and which can repay him for the sacrifices he must make. On one memorable occasion it was about

to be withdrawn from Israel in judgment, when Moses entreats and cries, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence;" for that illustrious pleader knew that all was lost without it, and that with it he could cheerfully sustain the heaviest toil which his relation to the people imposed. This was the promise which calmed his mind: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." He, like every one who has since followed him, did not desire the woeful day; but when such a day arrived, he had strength accordingly, and more than an equivalent for all the woe. Nor is the want of success a circumstance sufficient to extinguish, although it may lessen, the true pastor's happiness: for if, like the exalted preacher in Isaiah, he should say, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain;" he may likewise proceed and say, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." (Isai. xlix. 4.) In fact, he may draw comfort from his very grief. The depression occasioned by seeing the impenitency and unbelief of men, indicates a concern for the divine glory, and proves that the soul is regenerate and under divine influence: it becomes almost a standing mark of ministerial sincerity. If the world be perishing around, and the breast unperturbed within; if the pulpit be gained, and the routine of a pastor's duty be prosecuted as a matter of course, without an

inward panting to gain the end of all these means; such an apathy is monstrous in itself, and lays the foundation for an argument against the ministry. "Ye," said our Lord to his disciples, "shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

The great reward of the minister is in reversion, —it is heaven : a reward not of debt, but of grace. It is the reward of that fearful but conquering moral struggle in which he engages. Grace and power were given him from God, wherewith to struggle ; they were exercised in faith; and now at the close he is crowned for doing well. Doing well in the ministry, as in all other situations, is the consequence of believing in Jesus; and therefore, when a minister enters heaven, we see grace self-existent rewarding the victorious efforts of grace imparted. When God glorifies his servant, it is as when he justified him; the act is done above law: for the law recognises no debt as due to obedience; but the whole procedure being carried on through the infinite merit of Christ, who appeased divine justice, it is so consistent with the spirit and intent of the law, and so in harmony with the divine perfections, that angels and men are left to wonder at it, and adore. The saint in light received illumination and conviction from Christ when he was a sinner, and pardon from Christ when he was a penitent, and power from Christ when a believer, and unction from Christ when a minister; and

therefore, it is immaterial whether you say he was rewarded for his works, or presented with his crown through the merits of Christ. In either case the meaning is the same. It is a reward suited to his sanctified character and condition. A wreath of laurel or amaranth might suffice for the athletic Greek who first gained the goal at the race; for that empty honour was commensurate with the degree of moral sublimity which marked his aims: but nothing is lastingly attractive to the Christian but a crown of life. Grace taught him the vanity of the world; and therefore he leaves it behind him: it expanded his hope, and formed his aspirations; and the one is realized, and the other are satisfied. Eternal life is the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and what that *ζωη αιωνιος* is, who can explain? St. Paul shows, by implication, that as *θανατος* implies sin and essential misery, of which dereliction and bodily death are minor details; so *ζωη αιωνιος*, on the other hand, implies holiness and bliss, of which spiritual life here, and the beatific vision of God hereafter, are the elements. In fact, in every point of view, eternal life is opposed to that death which is the consequence of transgression. It is more than existence,—it is glorified existence; it is more than action,—it is unwearied action; it is not merely the negation of pain, dissolution or death, but the positive possession of the final good, the obtaining as much of God as the

creature can receive. The faithful minister, from the very first, is led to long and languish for this life. First, because the requirements made upon him are heavier and more numerous than his present powers will enable him to meet. Second, because his sacred pursuits place the frivolous enterprises of men, and the world itself, in a strongly-contrasted and sometimes intolerable light. Third, because his position in the church ever tends to remind him of Jerusalem above, of which the one on earth is only a type. He stands by the river of the city of God, and pines to see its source. Fourth, because the soul, being regenerated, as naturally desires God and glory, as the eagle does the sky, or the gazelle the hills. When Bucholtzer was near his death, he desired that he might be carried into the midst of his people, that he might preach to them once more, as he had been wont; and having his desire fulfilled, he began to discourse upon those heart-reviving words, "Who-soever believeth in him *shall* not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) It was his last sermon, but his best: the spirit of the preacher was ravished at the prospect of that life which is the final result of believing in Christ, and of which the incipient stages themselves are so full of satisfaction and delight. His hearers were melted too: the dying pastor was entering, while anticipating his rest. He had been a door-keeper in the house of God; and now he was about to leave the door for the *adytum*,—the

most holy place. Similar are the expectations of all who have lived and laboured like him. Their "feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord." (Psalm cxxii. 2, 4.) It is related of Mr. Wesley, that once, towards the close of his life, after he had concluded the liturgical service, in the forenoon, at his favourite chapel, he ascended the pulpit, and, instead of announcing the hymn, to the surprise of all present, he stood for the space of nearly ten minutes with his eyes closed, and wrapped in deep and absorbing contemplation. He was evidently communing with the realities of the eternal world, and pondering the glorified condition of the departed thousands whom he, as an instrument, had turned to righteousness. He had now begun to taste the fruits of the good land while he was in the wilderness, and to know how the faithful messenger of salvation is saved, indeed, himself. Ours be the profound joys of these dying men, and that keen-eyed and Mosaic view of the heavenly country, which made them so dignified in their departure! O the glorious temple of my God! Well might Calvin exclaim, "*Usquequo, Domine?*—How long, Lord?" and be like the souls under the altar. And well may the prevailing cry of the Spirit and the Bride be, "Come!" Herbert pours forth his quaint but expressive lay:—

"O loose this frame, this knot of man untie,
That my free soul may use her wing

Which is now pinion'd with mortality,
Like an entangled, hamper'd thing !
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee !”

Heaven is the highest manifestation of God ; but his is only to say that it is a manifestation ever manifesting.

The earth is full of hidden beauty,—we know this from exploring it, to even a limited extent. A beam of light, once thought simple and serene, breaks into various rays ; a rugged stone, when cut and polished, is either translucent or glows with every hue ; the cryptogamic vegetable atom rises before the scientific eye a beautiful green world ; the elements are made continually to combine into new forms of splendour and power ; and where shall these unfoldings terminate ? Who has seen an end of all perfection ? Ah ! what then will the minister's reward bring to light ? What incipient glory, both visible and moral, will brighten, to become enwrapped in cloud no more ! “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.” He who is the Author of all these fair patterns, and who himself is and must be unsymbolized, is now the object of vision.

There is a germinant richness in the truths taught by a pastor, which glory will fully open to his amazed soul. Heaven realizes an adoring view into the divine law, and a profound submission to it : this is

an expansion of repentance. It realizes an eternal and implicit trust in God, on the part of all ranks and orders, which binds them to him, and makes heaven, heaven. It is an expansion of the doctrine of salvation by faith; and the holy use to which all will be for ever consecrated, is the final and enlarged expansion of the doctrine of sanctification by the Holy Ghost.

When a man of God enters into his place on the sabbath, and begins to discourse upon some portion of the inspired word, his circumstances are far from being uninteresting. He is in the midst of a mass of human beings: they all listen in deep silence to his voice, and hang upon his lips. He is surrounded with spirit, and is spirit himself. His soul is aroused in its material vehicle, and sees, though faintly, whatever is the object of moral sight, and hears the heavenly harpers, and grasps whatever faith makes tangible; but, at the same time, how like is he to a traveller who sees from some mountain a distant country, and through vapoury air! His spiritual eyes are at once bright and feeble,—bright for a mortal, but too feeble to look through immortality: they behold the half-developed forms of things by men unseen, and read the lessons of half-apprehended truth. Such a man, in such an hour, feels a painful and yet welcome struggle within him: he pants as though he were just behind the veil of eternity, and could look through its interstices.

It is always glad news to a human soul to be informed, that beyond the expanse which lies before it, so illimitable and obscure, there is another, not only infinite, but light. The voice in the Apocalypse declares, "The former things are passed away;" and the voice from the throne, "Behold, I make all things new." When this is realized, the things of doubt and misapprehension—the shadows—have fled, and eternity is all day. The parting words of the angel to the prophet Daniel were, "Go thy way until the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days;" and in them every faithful minister who like Daniel has, in the midst of opposing circumstances, proved his fidelity, may read his joyful doom.

"Go thy way." In other words, Persevere in thy wonted duty; and, whether attended by success or not, do the work of the great Master: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; urge on the course of honourable labour, seeking, with acts of self-denial, the glory of the Lord, and the salvation of souls. "Go," though every prospect should be gloomy, and every hand should be lifted up against thee; go, ("for thou shalt rest" at last,) go, approved by God alone. The world below may continue to be troubled; the church itself may still have its agitations; calamity may come upon the private circles of society; parties may strive; the noise

of man may still be heard, and Providence continue its mysterious march; but of thy toil there shall be an end; and, after a while longer, an end of all things earthly.

“Thou shalt rest.” Not in unconsciousness; not in having the soul asleep, and buried in some ethereal or sublunary grave. Absent from the body, thou art present with the Lord, entering upon that *σαββατισμος*, that sabbath-state, which, in a lower sense, has been already referred to: in the highest, it is the soul's final rest; not mere repose, not cessation from service,—it is rest in service, because it is the attainment of that for which the soul was both naturally and supernaturally fitted; it is not absolute quiet and freedom from action, but the complacency and settled delight which it has in God, who now is no longer hidden and distant,—it is freedom in action. “Thou shalt rest” satisfied at last; no longer crying, “When shall I come and appear before God?” for before him thou art. “Thou shalt rest” from probationary labours: the scale will no longer tremble in the balance; the doom of the unfaithful servant will no longer be an object of fear, nor final salvation a matter of doubt; no more shall the cry be heard, “I fear lest, having preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” Hardness has to be endured no longer; for the fight is fought, and the toils of the field are over. No brands have to be plucked from the burning,—the only burning here

is that of love and joy: no flocks have to be fed,—the Lamb himself shall feed them. “Thou shalt rest:”—not as the disciples rested, who, on sleeping, were so kindly excused by their Lord; but as the blessed ones above do, who “rest not, day nor night,” from crying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” It was the highest delight of the minister in the church below to mingle and commune with the saints; and now that delight is raised far beyond conception higher: trained in the outward sanctuary, he is permitted to follow his great sacerdotal Forerunner within the veil,—a privilege for which all his life long he had been earnestly breathing.

“And stand in thy lot.” Here we are taught that the rewards of the sanctified are various. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah enter upon their various possessions; as for Levi, the Lord especially is his inheritance. Every man in his own order, according to his holiness, and the extent and fidelity of his services. Christ, the first-fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, ministers, if faithful, have a higher lot than ordinary Christians; for they have resisted stronger temptations, had their graces more put to the proof, and in general, for the church's sake, have lived a more painful, self-denying life. Thou shalt “stand in thy lot:” every holy effort shall enhance it, every day of self-sacrifice, every inward groaning after more extensive usefulness, every moment spent for Christ,

either in the mount or multitude, shall enlarge the heavenly possession. With what solemnity does every moment of the minister's time tell upon his eternity! Time, with all its events, does not occupy an atom-point in the abyss; and yet the bliss which follows him, through all its height and depth, was once, in its incipient state, a little spark. Grace is expanded into glory! The cloud which arose, little as a human hand, and bright like the shekinah when luminous, has now spread over all the sky,—the rain filleth the pools. The soul of a child, or of a saved malefactor, rejoices in heaven; but the herald of the cross has a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

All this shall take place “at the end of the days;” that is, when time shall be no more. Hours and moments shall no longer assist in computing our progress through the stages of immortality: the landmarks of existence are gone! The glorified minister shall rest when all the agitations, physical and spiritual, which have been produced by the introduction of sin into the universe, shall have subsided. There is an eternal calm after the storm.

The prophet himself received an intimation of the state of the Lord's faithful servants in these words: “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” In which announcement we have,

—1. Their distinctive wisdom. Knowledge was not mere speculation: it was directed to its proper and practical end; it was founded on the true rock, the infallible decisions of God's word. They knew God, and therefore loved and served him: they knew the value of the souls of men, and therefore sought to save them: they "turned many to righteousness."
—2. Their position and bliss. It is taught by figure: the reflected lustre which they shed (for theirs is not original light) is like that of "the firmament" and of "the stars."
—3. The order which they maintain, and in which they move, likewise furnishes another point of resemblance. Holiness is order, and the final order the highest.

The typical system, which not only included Canaan but the tabernacle, was intended to convey instruction on this subject; and yet it is a most impressive circumstance, that these patterns of the heavenly things which Moses made, were all laid up in a place of sacred darkness,—the veil hid them from the gaze of careless observers. Glory thus lies beyond the veil; and "it does not appear what we shall be." "But we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The visionic system of revelation, too, has had its own peculiar use; and most impressive have been its lessons. Before the brightness which announced God's presence, Moses at first trembled, though afterwards, when strengthened, he fervently prayed

he might behold it again. Isaiah in the temple, and accompanied by bending seraphs, quails before this glory, crying, "Woe is me!" and complains that he is a man of unclean lips; so overpowering was the fear which rose within him. St. Paul, rapt from the body, or carried in it, passed to the most holy place, and saw, and heard; but, in returning, his lips were sealed in mute astonishment. St. John beholds his divine Master appear in all his majesty, and falls at his feet as one dead: and, being restored, mighty voices strike his ear; a great white throne appears, and one seated upon it; innumerable hosts marshalled rank above rank around, clad in white robes, and immersed in a sea of light; while it is said of them, "The Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." Such is the glory revealed without us, and above us; but every saint, and especially every minister, expects a glory which is different and superior,—“the GLORY which shall be REVEALED IN US:” for *εις ημας* is a phrase which cannot be misunderstood.

The saints which were of old are bereft of the painfulness of their fear; and now their blessed souls are left open to the influxes of another tide than that which flows through the visual channel,—they receive God. What is this glory which shall be revealed in us? It is God made communicable, and the triumph of the soul in possessing him; it is that blessed burden, (for St. Paul calls it *βαρος*, “a

weight," 2 Cor. iv. 17,) the impending of the Spirit, and the eternal and internal overflow of his influence!

But let our weak and trembling heart no longer search after what is inscrutable, but rather wait with patience and hope to possess it. Few and evil are the days of the years of our pilgrimage; but if we are Christ's, they will soon be lost to view, like the waves which break in the distant ocean. And O, servant of God, is the shore beyond, thy rest? and this the reward promised thee by the Lord himself, when he bade thee, in anticipation thereof, be exceeding glad? It will take much to satisfy infinite love; but now he shall see in thee the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Even while in this wilderness, every whisper of the blessed Spirit is like the voice of one crying, "Prepare the way of the Lord;" expect more glorious things, open the temple of thy soul, for ere long it shall be filled! Thus was it with Moses: how sweetly he sang himself to rest, the eternal God being his refuge! Stephen, Paul, and Peter, and the rest of the primitive saints, exulted to follow their Lord. When he went to lay the anchor of their soul within the veil, he calmed the storm as he passed through; and therefore they came rejoicing after. Holy souls! we follow in your track.

The self-denying missionary, who is not the least or weakest of Christ's servants, may abundantly encourage himself with these anticipations. We say

self-denying missionary; for his is often a life of uninterrupted sacrifice. A Christian missionary is the Gospel personified; or else, like the ark of testimony, bearing both hidden manna, and the symbols of law and grace, he bears witness in every land respecting his Saviour and God. In heaven, however, the traveller's rugged journey ends. Martyn does not lay his head upon a piece of desert rock, but leans, like John, upon the Redeemer. Coke had it in his heart to raise a church for God in India, but died in the effort:

“Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor,
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed.”

Missionaries follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; to the desert to be tempted, to the deep to be tossed, amid Sadducees to be scorned; they follow him to the ruler's bar, and to prison and death. Did grace and pardoning mercy lead them through this, and shall it not lead them into his presence? O let the words of the dying Saviour sink deep into every faithful missionary's heart! “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory:” and also a little before, “He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.”

The Wesleyan Connexion has contributed well to furnish ministers for the conversion and instruction of the heathen. They have struggled through every kind

of toil and privation, and greatly have their labours been blessed. They have penetrated into regions where the worldly speculatist would never go; and have committed themselves, live or die, to their hallowed toil. Many have gone to return no more: their graves are in Sierra-Leone, and South Africa, and the West Indies, and in North America: when they rise from the dead, a number of churches will be around, of whom they will stand the apostolical fathers. And even as it is, there are bands of converted men who in all those places remember with emotion the pastor who administered unto them the word of the Lord.

“ They saw the strength in which his soul was strong,
They felt the answer to his dying prayer,
Amazed they heard his joy-o'erflowing tongue
Of heaven and immortality declare ;
And he who was their light and hope so long,
Meekly they sought to follow ;—from despair
Confiding faith sprung up, and death was sent
To crown the work in which his life was spent.”

And as regards home, the ranks of the ministry have been well and honourably filled. Some of the departed have been equal to those of any church, both in erudition and talent, and in piety: taking them all together, they have not been excelled. “ Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? ” Fathers and prophets submit to the common lot of man; but great is their reward in

heaven. The venerable Joseph Sutcliffe, at the close of his Commentary on the Scriptures, very impressively remarks, on the subject of these our concluding meditations, and in his own person shows what the desires and the glorious hopes of a faithful minister are,—“ Having now been favoured with life and health to close this work, what more can I ask or desire on earth, but to follow the blessed who have died in the Lord? I now see the ministry, in which I have laboured for forty years, crowded with younger men, the strength and rising hope of the church; and all that my heart can suggest of blessing, thanksgiving, and prayer is poured out for them. But in the enfeebled efforts of age, when gleanings become scanty in the hand, the heart holds a trembling balance between the church on earth and the church in heaven. I often pause to recollect names which appear new to me here; but I never forget the names of Wesley, Valton, Crosse, and a cloud of others; some of whom were fathers to me in my early ministry, and others the companions and friends of more mature and manly labours in the vineyard of the Lord. These are still my dearest friends. I recount their names with strong emotion. Our love was too holy, too heavenly and divine, to admit of separation. Neither life nor death can dissolve the union. They have crossed the flood before me, and I faintly hear their shouts of victory and songs of triumph. But if they triumph,

I shall triumph also. Of one heart and one soul, our sorrows and joys are the same; our hope, our confidence, and our conflicts the same. We laboured often in the same field, and fought under the same standard. It cannot be, but that we shall be crowned together in the day of the Lord."

There is much, in the present state of the church, to depress us, and much to excite our hope. The world itself is beginning to frown upon a worldly ministry; and spiritual persons, so called, are themselves beginning to see their utter need of God's Holy Spirit. And when we think upon the perishing millions of our race, fervently must every believer in every place join us in reiterating the prayer which was offered by the devout and inspired king of Israel, "Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy people shout aloud for joy."

THE END.





東 山



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01005 5749