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sermons on the Church, or,
The episcopacy, liturgy,

SERMONS ON THE CHURCH.

OR

THE EPISCOPACY, LITURGY,
AND CEREMONIES OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

CONSIDERED IN FOUR DISCOURSES, PREACHED
AT
THE CATHEDRAL OF DERRY.

BY ARCHIBALD BOYD, A.M.

CURATE OF THE CATHEDRAL.

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TO THE HON. AND RIGHT REV.
THE LORD BISHOP OF DERRY AND RAPHOE,
THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF DERRY,
AND
THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH
AT WHOSE DESIRE
THESE SERMONS ARE PUBLISHED,
THEY ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.



ERRATA.

- Page 7, seventh line from foot, for "*wrought*" read "*brought*."
- 16, seventh line from top, for "*this honour*" read "*these honours*."
 - 32, fifteenth line from top, for "*this*" read "*their*."
 - 35, fifteenth line from top, for "*holiness*" read "*belief*."
 - 37, ninth line from foot, for "*part*" read "*point*."
 - 38, eighth line from foot, for "*erected*" read "*created*."
 - 45, eighth line from foot, for "*profoundness*" read "*preparedness*."
 - 47, second line from foot, for "*that*" read "*what*."
 - 50, eighth line from foot, for "*practice*" read "*functions*."
 - 83, sixth line from top, for "*once*" read "*one*."
 - 137, seventh line from top, for "*worthy*" read "*wanting*."
 - 171, tenth line from top, for "*Scriptures*" read "*Dissenters*."
 - 211, thirteenth line from foot, for "*Getulid*" read "*Getulia*."



ment was represented as unscriptural, her system as alien to the genius of the Gospel, and her formularies were censured as being detrimental to the interests of genuine religion. Satisfied, as the Author was, that such statements were the children of prejudice, or the results of a very superficial acquaintance with the subject, he conceived that he could not better discharge (what appeared to him) a sacred and urgent duty, than by submitting to his congregation the proofs which the Church of England could adduce in support of her pretensions. In taking this step, his hope was that he might be enabled to instruct his own hearers on points not usually made the subject of pulpit ministrations; and remove somewhat of that prejudice and hostility which, it distressed him to observe, occupied the minds of many in other denominations.

In the discharge of this duty, his wish, his endeavour was to speak the truth in candour, and to avoid any thing savouring of a spirit of unkindness towards others. There is nothing he would more pointedly disclaim than a desire to invade the peculiarities of other religious communities. His views on this subject were stated during the delivery of these Sermons, and are now placed on record. His design was instructive and defensive. While he advocates the duty of a minister to point out the excellences of his own Church, and to meet the objections which may

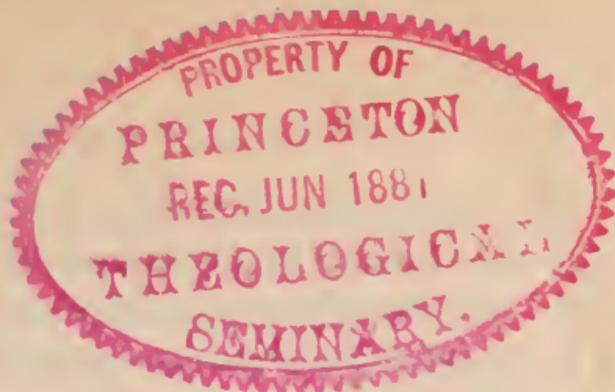
be urged against it, he deprecates aggression, and dislikes the defence which assumes the tone of re-crimination.

The kindly-expressed wishes of a large number of the flock have induced him to commit these discourses to the press. He does so in deference to their opinion, though, conscious that they merit no such distinction. But to shrink from such a duty when called to it by the voice of a flock whose regard he dearly values and whose establishment in the faith is the prayer of his heart; when urged to it by the wish of his Rector, and the desire of his Diocesan—this he felt to be impossible. It will be to him ever a matter of high gratification, that his willingness (for that may exist where the ability is wanting) to advocate the truth and to remove misconception, has been honored by the approval of his ecclesiastical superiors, and all classes of the beloved flock among whom his ministry has been cast.

In a work of this nature it is scarcely to be expected that much matter can be found strictly deserving to be called original. The subjects treated of have been so often and so ably discussed, that a writer entering upon them in the present day must feel conscious that he is travelling over an explored country. He may place an argument in a different light, or pursue it into details into which it has not been pressed by others, or make truth more striking

by the combination of facts and proofs; but he can scarcely hope to become a discoverer. The writer of these discourses feels that he is indebted to the labours and talents of others for the hints at least of some of the arguments adduced; and of course for many of the facts urged in illustration of them. Amongst those to whom he would acknowledge himself indebted, he would especially mention the author of "Letters to a Dissenting Minister," and the "Layman," who has placed the Church of England, and the cause of religion in general, under such deep obligation by his valuable "Essays on the Church."

March, 1838.



SERMON I.

THE CHARACTER AND PRIVILEGES OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

PSALM XLVIII. 12, 13.

WALK ABOUT ZION, AND GO ROUND ABOUT HER : TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF : MARK YE WELL HER BULWARKS, CONSIDER HER PALACES ; THAT YE MAY TELL IT TO THE GENERATION FOLLOWING.

THERE is something extremely peculiar in the character of this Psalm, from which our text is selected. It partakes in no respect of that tone of depression and sadness, which breathes through so many of the inspired hymns of the Psalmists, and which tells us that their hearts were overclouded by sorrow at the moment they gave utterance to their expressions. It is, from first to last, conceived in emotions of triumph; and so far from being tinged by the slightest shade of dejection, it peals forth its strain of praise in notes of exultation which must have thrilled to the heart of every true worshipper in Israel. We have not been permitted to know, with historical certainty, what

the occasion was which called it into existence. The song of triumph is left upon record, but it announces not the events which produced it; so that we are left to infer them rather from the spirit and expression of the Psalm itself, than from any evidence which points decisively to them. And this is an attempt of no trifling difficulty, because the incidents in the history of Israel which might well have suggested such a burst of thanksgiving are so many, that perplexity must gather round the endeavour to select one out of such a crowd of rival wonders. The records of Israel are a narrative of successive deliverances effected by God for his people; and as we pursue our way through their pages, the many scenes of peril giving place to as many scenes of victory; the many approaches of disaster converted by the touch of Divine interposition into the glories of conquest, pass so rapidly before our notice, that when we turn to a Psalm of gratitude for national blessings conferred or deliverances effected, we feel ourselves at a loss to connect the event and the memorial; to choose out of Israel's brilliant annals the special circumstances to which the Commemorative Hymn refers.

And this difficulty, which attaches itself to many of the Psalms, meets us in our endeavour to determine the history of that at this moment before us. There are several events in Jewish chronicles with which it might with propriety be associated. It ap-

pears to me, however, that the allusions which occur in it, and the general character of its expressions, harmonize more closely with the deliverance vouchsafed in the times of Jehoshaphat than with any other similar event of Jewish history. We shall find this recorded in the twentieth chapter of the second book of Chronicles : “ It came to pass after this, also, that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria ; and Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord : even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court ; and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven ? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen ? and in thy hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee ? art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever ? And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, behold, I say, how they

reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." In this striking passage we have spread before our view the scene of Israel's distress, and the refuge into which she retreated in the day of her threatened calamity. Her hereditary foes had united in a bold and determined effort to carry the desolations of war over the sacred territory of Judah, and to effect the destruction of the kingdom, which was the object alike of their envy and cherished hatred. The strength of the confederacy, the multitudes which followed the standard of invasion, and the oft-experienced hostility of the nations who united to uphold it, all augured darkly for the safety of the Lord's inheritance. But the dependence of Jehoshaphat was not upon an arm of flesh; God was his trusted refuge, and prayer in the Lord's house the weapon of defence selected by him and the congregation of Judah. And upon that occasion the God of Israel manifested himself as a prayer-hearing God, for the answer which reached the downcast yet trustful Israelites assured them of a triumphant deliverance—a deliverance which should be effected by no skill or prowess of man; for "the battle was not to be theirs, but God's." Their part was to sit still,

and see the salvation of the Lord. And in dependence upon this gracious declaration—in full anticipation of the promised help, the provisions for thanksgiving were made before the blow of rescue was struck, and in the very presence of a formidable army, the singers of Israel were to “praise the Lord whose mercy endured for ever.” The event corresponded to their expectations; “according to their faith it was unto them.” By dissension and strife among themselves, the forces of the confederate invaders were destroyed, and Israel found herself, by the power of that God who made the wrath of man to praise him, released from her imminent peril, and enriched by the spoils of an enemy against whom she had not drawn a sword nor made a resisting movement. “The battle was God’s, and the salvation of the Lord was with his people.”

It is impossible to compare the circumstances of this deliverance, the number and strength of the invaders, the marvellous manner in which they were defeated, the infatuation which possessed them in the very crises of their plans, the spirit of trust which moved the hearts of the Israelites, and the burst of wondering praise which made the valleys of Berachah and the streets of Jerusalem re-echo with thanksgivings to the Lord, with the expressions and allusions of the Psalm before us, without being struck by the conjecture, almost by the conviction, that the

hymn and the narrative point to the same event ; that the one is in poetry what the other is in history : and we may not be altogether unjustified in hazarding the opinion that the Psalm itself was chanted by Jehoshaphat and his rejoicing subjects in the thanksgiving services of the time, when “with psalteries and harps and trumpets,” the hosts of Israel, with their monarch in their ‘forefront’ marched in solemn procession to the temple of the Lord.

We have, then, so far advanced in the investigation of our subject, that we have ascertained, (as far as well-sustained conjecture can ascertain it,) the portion of Scripture we are considering to be an inspired record of past glories to Israel. It is, however, more than this ; it is a summons to Israel to examine and understand their advantages. The Psalm does not simply commemorate a transaction ; it invites Israel to estimate the securities and blessings which were still hers subsequent to that transaction. For she is called upon to go round the walls of her capital—so lately threatened and so peculiarly exposed to danger—and to see that notwithstanding the boast and machinations of her many foes, the towers of Jerusalem still remained uninjured, her bulwarks still erect in their strength, her palaces still unspoiled of a single ornament. In a word, the text before us fastens the attention, and calls the scrutiny of every Israelite to the stronghold which God had provided

and preserved for him, and lays it upon him as a bounden duty to proclaim to his descendants that he had seen Jerusalem threatened and yet safe, assailed and yet undismantled ; that he had accurately scanned her condition and satisfied his mind of the fact, that not a defence was wanting to her battlements, nor a stone dislodged from her ramparts.

Now, although this is undoubtedly the primary intention of our text, we are not, I conceive, unjustified in attaching to it a more extended signification. The circumstances in which the Israelites were placed naturally called for large and high-toned expressions of praise. Still we think that the language now before us is of a kind too bold and elevated to be restricted to any event in the history of that people. The Psalms are many of them somewhat more than historical : they are typical and prophetic. At the same time that they record and celebrate a particular event, they point forward to some event still greater. And this harmonizes with the whole character of the Jews as a people. Their Church and polity are confessedly typical of the peculiarities of the Messiah's kingdom. What was wrought into light and fulness by the Gospel had its existence in a shadowy and contracted form under the law ; and so it is, we conceive, with respect to the Psalm before us. Many of the terms of the allusions found in it are figurative as well as real. Thus, Zion in it is used in a figure. Being literally the hill on which the city of God

stood, it is employed to denote Jerusalem itself, and then in a more extended sense to denote that of which Jerusalem was a clear and expressive type, the community of the faithful, the covenanted Church of Christ. Of this application of the term we find many instances in Scripture. Thus, in the 102d Psalm, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come." "Behold, I lay in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious." (Isai. xxviii. 16.) "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, and unto the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and Church of the first-born." (Heb. xii. 22, 23.) So that it is clearly allowable to us to consider our text, not simply as descriptive of the excellences and strength of Jerusalem, but as figuratively descriptive of the stability of the Church of God; and its commands as addressed not merely to the inhabitants of the city of David, but as extended to all who claim a connection with, and profess an interest in, the privileges of the spiritual Jerusalem.

Having thus endeavoured to establish our right to use our text for this purpose, we shall consider it in reference to these two topics :

I. THE FIGURE USED TO DESCRIBE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ;

II. THE DUTY OF HER MEMBERS IN RESPECT TO HER.

I. The figure under which the Church is here

presented to our thoughts, is that of a city encircled with its battlements and protected by its towers. This figure is applicable, in the *first place, on account of the strength of its foundations*. The fortified city requires to be sustained by the firmness of its under-structure. This was peculiarly the case with Jerusalem ; it was founded not upon the shifting soil of a low country, but proudly planted upon the rocky eminence. “It was a city set on a hill.” It was fixed “upon the mountain of holiness, beautiful for situation ; her foundation was upon the holy hills.” This was amongst the reasons which induced the Israelites, in the vanity of their fleshly confidence, to believe that their capital was impregnable and secure against all invasion. The rock on which it stood protected it from undermining, and the loftiness of its position made surprisal an impossibility. This peculiarity belongs to the spiritual Zion, the Church of the first-born ; its foundations are firmness itself, for it is builded on a rock. (Matt. xvi. 18.) It is raised upon the foundation of prophets and apostles, a pledge in itself of its security ; for other foundation can no man lay than that already laid for it—Christ, the unchangeable, the eternal. To his Church he is the Alpha and the Omega ; her hopes, her stability, her comforts, are all centred in him. It was his atonement which made a redeemed and saved community a thing possible in the counsels of God, for

iniquity had broken up the ties which bound the Creator and the creature to each other; and it was reconciliation for iniquity which made it possible for the guilty to stand in a renewed covenant with God. The Church's stability depends upon her junction with the Saviour. The covenant which ensures her salvation is made with him, and not with her; with him it is that the Father is well pleased. The promises on which she rests, the declarations on which she ventures to build, are all confirmed and ratified in him; "in him they are Amen to the glory of God by us." The happiness she enjoys, the strength she experiences, the faith which makes her more than conqueror in her trials and vicissitudes, are all derived through him; for the Father, when he gave his Son to die for transgression, "with him gave the Church all things." She is thus, by virtue of her union with him, a city resting upon an immoveable foundation; and if her walls rise gradually into beauty and stability, it is because the work commenced in him, is carried forward by him, and through the doctrines, the providence, and the gift of Jesus, the spiritual edifice becomes the fortified and extended citadel.

2. The Church is compared to a city on account of its separate and enclosed character. The original state of society was not that of settlement and order. The tribes of the children of men were scattered upon the face of the globe, of which they found

themselves inhabitants, and raised their tents or ruder dwellings as caprice or convenience dictated. The scantiness of its population admitted of its hordes roaming from spot to spot as necessity required, and suggested not the urgency of lines of separation between the branches of the same great family. But in process of time, the alteration of circumstances, and the improvements of society, called for the establishment of distinct communities; and as increase in wealth or attachment to long-loved dwellings rivetted them to their settlements, an identity of interest suggested combination and effort for their mutual protection. And thus were the abodes of men select and distinguished from surrounding tribes, and their inhabitants selections from the multitude. The city was the enclosed and separate settlement. So it is, my brethren, with the Church of the Redeemer. It is a community called out from the world, the effect of spiritual improvement. It is in it, and yet chosen out and distinguished from it. The general population of earth are still in the primitive state of their natural condition: the Church is in the cultivated state of renewal and sanctification. And this is the view which the Bible ever takes of the Church's position. If Christ speaks of her in the figurative language of the Canticles, he describes her as a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, an orchard with all the sweet spices. If

he speaks of her in the parabolic language of the New Testament, he represents her as a vineyard girt in with its hedges, planted with the choicest vines, and guarded by the tower of protection. All this indicates the marked-off character of the true Church of Jesus. It is separate from the world, not only because elected out of it, but that it may be preserved from its contaminations. Its distinctions are its protection. The peculiar favour of God on the one hand, and the holiness of its members on the other, are the grounds of its unmixing attitude. It is not removed from the world at large by unmeaning peculiarities and pharisaic repulsiveness, but by the substantial distinction which must ever exist between a state of nature and a state of grace. And if, like the city, the Church seems to assume an attitude of exclusiveness, she would have it to be recollected that that is not the consequence of pride, but because "God hath made her to differ."

3. The Church is compared to a city, on account of its peculiar *polity or government*. This is a remarkable and well-known characteristic of cities. They subsist in the kingdom where they are found located, as part of its strength, and connected with its interests. They are amenable to the laws by which the stability of the kingdom is secured, and its welfare promoted. They are protected by its government, and participate in the manifold advantages

which flow in upon a country from the administration of judgment and justice. But yet, besides all this, the city is regulated by laws peculiar to itself, suited to its own circumstances, and devised to meet its special exigencies. Its magistracy is its own, its regulations of a different order from those which tell upon the surrounding population. It is so, my brethren, with the separated community of which we speak. The Church of Jesus is a kingdom in itself, an empire within empires. It receives a protection and countenance from the laws and earthly governments under which it subsists; a protection to which it is every way entitled, not only because to its members are due the common advantages of subjects, but because the true members of the Saviour's mystical body, are for 'conscience' sake, the best subjects which an earthly potentate can reckon among his people. But at the same time that the Church enjoys the safeguard of the powers that be, and renders them the honour that is justly theirs, she has a polity and government of her own. It interferes in no respect with earthly monarchy; for the kingdom of Messiah is not of this world. It is altogether spiritual. The laws to which the Christian does homage are the laws of religion, of spirituality, of holiness—laws little understood and less revered by the mass of the ungodly. The Christian learns, in the secrecy of his retirement, of a King that is

invisible, and feels in his regenerated heart the constrainings of an authority which has no political sanction to support it. The principles which spring from the Bible, and enter into and dwell in his spirit, which regulate his actions and mould his conversation, which tell not only to live soberly, but righteously and godly, which restrain him from evil and prompt him to good,—these are the same principles which are diffused by a kind of magic influence over the whole body of the Church, and which constrain to what is pure and lovely with greater cogency than the thousand enactments of a nation's statute-book. The machinery of the government of the heavenly Jerusalem is perfect. She has her own King, her own laws, and her own persuasive motives. With them a "stranger may not intermeddle," but the citizen of Zion feels and understands their sway.

4. The Church sustains the similitude of a city, if we consider *its peculiar privileges*. These every city possesses. The constitution which makes it a separated community endows it also with separate distinctions—distinctions valued and jealously guarded in modern times, and still more prized in the earlier ages of the world. Of this we have an illustration in the conduct of Paul at Jerusalem, where we find the apostle standing, and successfully standing, upon the immunities which were his, when, in virtue of his being a citizen of Rome, the

simple mention of his honours stayed the hand of oppression, and made the Gentile authorities tremble at the danger they had so nearly incurred by subjecting him to indignity. (Acts xxii. 25.) The privileges possessed were of course various, and created by the peculiarity of the times and circumstances under which they were granted. But we may say that generally they provided for the citizens security, freedom, and dignity. The Church of the first-born is in this respect a city. She has not only her own government, but she has beyond it, her special immunities. Her charter is granted and recorded by the hand of God himself, emblazoned upon the pages of his own book of Revelation, and kept by him inviolate for his people. A franchise is conferred upon every citizen of Zion at the moment he receives admission into the general assembly of the redeemed: for, the instant that he takes up the cross, the badge of humiliation and suffering, he takes up at the same time the badge of privilege and honour. He partakes of the *security* conferred in the general promise to the Church, "I the Lord do keep it." He is invested with the safety implied in the special assurance, "I give unto my sheep eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." He receives the gift of *freedom*, not an empty distinction or a pageant honour, but a substantial mercy: for he was the servant of sin, but

now he stands blessed in the "liberty wherewith Christ has made him free." He enjoys the *dignity* of a citizen : for the act of grace which made him a Christian and connected him with the Church of God, made him a fellow-citizen of the saints, a member of the Eternal's household, one of a peculiar generation, "This honour have all God's saints." They are settled upon the community of Zion. They are the privileges of the New Jerusalem, inseparable from her constitution, and the chartered right of the meanest of her children.

II. Having thus considered the character of the Church as suggested by the figure of our text, we turn to the second topic on which we proposed to speak—
THE DUTY OF HER MEMBERS IN RESPECT TO HER.
The passage before us plainly asserts what is affirmed by the universal testimony of Scripture, that blessings and responsibilities are linked together in God's arrangements, and that a participation of privileges constrains to the fulfilment of corresponding duties. We have examined the privileges, and from them we are sent to the consideration of the duties. The *first* of these which the text points to is that of thankfulness and praise for connection with the city of God. This we discover in the clause, "Walk about Zion." This command, as we conceive, inculcates not the duty of estimating the resources of Zion, but that of expressing gratitude for the advan-

tage of belonging to it. It is an allusion to the custom so well known in former times, of marching in solemn state around the walls of a delivered fortress with songs of victory and praise. This custom seems to have obtained amongst the Jews, as well as among the Gentile nations of antiquity, for we find it observed by Nehemiah upon the occasion of the celebration of the restoring of Jerusalem. (Neh. xii. 31—40.) And we are confirmed in affixing this interpretation to the words by their connection with the foregoing verse: “Let Mount Zion rejoice, and the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments—walk about Zion.” In this clause, then, the whole population of Israel is summoned to unite in triumphant praise, that they were linked to a spot so honoured as that which God had shielded and sheltered by his omnipotence. Brethren, the same spirit is alike the privilege and the duty of the Christian. He is a citizen of no mean city. He should rejoice in the dignity. The honour and advantage of membership with the spiritual Church of Christ, are matters which should be prized by believers, but which are oftentimes sadly overlooked and undervalued; and, in consequence, the strain of dejection is often heard when the hymn of praise should be rushing from the heart. The realised fact should be frequently presented to the mind of the Christian, that he is of the household of God. It would give

an elevation to his spirit, and pour a rich flood of light over his prospects. In times the most troublous it would contribute to uphold him, and almost be a counterpoise to every trial; for his rejoicing would not be in the uncertain tone of frames and feelings, but in an unaltering privilege. It was this spirit of praise, resting upon this realised fact, that sparkles through the declaration of the prophet—a declaration not more remarkable for its eloquence than its faith. “Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

A *second* duty pressed upon us in our text is, that of examination into the Church’s state and peculiarities. This is inculcated in the words, “Go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.” We can well understand the reason for which this injunction was originally issued. The Psalmists of Israel, in the temper of adoring gratitude, would have all the population of their country satisfy themselves that Jerusalem had suffered nothing from the menaces of its foes; they would have them bestow upon her the minutest scrutiny, the closest inspection; they would have them successively look to towers, to bulwarks, and to palaces, and reanimate their faith and

augment their joy by discovering from personal investigation that not a stone was disturbed in its buildings. And we can well conceive how trustfulness in Israel's God would be strengthened by a survey of these evidences of his power. Brethren, the same duty towards the spiritual fabric is binding upon Christians. They should for their own sakes, for the upholding of their confidence and the establishing of their hopes, try oftentimes whether God has not fulfilled his pledge to his Church ; whether after many assaults she has not stood unmoved ; whether she be not still safe and glorious, notwithstanding the strivings of the adversary. And in pursuing such an investigation, the Christian will find himself guided by the passage at present under review ; for he will find not only the duty urged, but the points of examination specified. His eye will be directed to the towers, the bulwarks, and the palaces of the Lord's Zion ; that is, he will be summoned to inspect her points of usefulness, her points of strength, and her points of ornament. The Church's TOWERS are her *resources*, they are to her what the strongly fortified building was to the defenced city ; the armoury in which the weapons of war were lodged, open to the valiant citizens, and prepared to supply them with the means of encountering the assailants. These the Church possesses, in that rich treasury of gifts and graces and helps, which are laid

up in the security of a Saviour's fulness, to be distributed on demand by him to all who are willing to wage a good warfare. "Of his fulness do all his people receive, and grace for grace." In him they are complete, furnished for the battle, equipped for the emergency. It was this which a tried warrior of the cross learned from his Redeemer's lips: "My grace is sufficient for thee." It was this which he learned from the testimony of his own experience: "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

The Church's BULWARKS are the strength she possesses in virtue of her covenant relation to her Lord. She gathers it, first, from the *promises* made by him to her—promises which have stood unmoved and unrecalled from the moment they were bestowed upon Zion. Each Testament contains a golden catalogue of these causes of Zion's stability, for each is studded over with bright and cheering assurances. And if from them we should select one in illustration of the point on which we are speaking, we would recal to your memory the first prophecy of Jehovah, and the last personal assurance of Immanuel: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." "I am with you always, even to the end of the world." With these declarations emblazoned on her charter, the heavenly Jerusalem is girt with bulwarks; for they tell her that God is pledged for her preserva-

tion, and that till the Faithful One shall become as the children of men, who say and do not, the gates of hell can never prevail against her.

The Church gathers her strength, secondly, from her Maker's *providences*. These are over all, but peculiarly and emphatically for good over those who have learned to love God. The Lord's providence reached to all nations, but the sunshine of its rays fell with special favour upon Israel. Its sacred territory was a land which the Lord cared for. His pledge of providential protection was specially extended to the vineyard of his own planting. "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." This, which was true in a limited sense with regard to literal Israel, is true in a fuller and richer sense, with respect to the spiritual Israel. The promised and experienced providence of God is always the strongest bulwark of Zion. The Church has passed through many difficulties and varied trials; the power of man and the subtlety of Satan have made common cause for her destruction, but she has surmounted and outlived them all. The history of the Church and the history of the world are alike the records of Zion's preservation. An unseen arm has ever discomfited her foes, and like the proud bulwark of the city has rolled back from its unscaled front the most tumultuous tide of her assailants.

The Church gathers her strength, thirdly, from the kingship of her Saviour. This is a bulwark to her which never has been nor can be shaken. Zión is the kingdom, the monarchy of Jesus. In her is his unseen throne established, within her lines are deposited his crown and sceptre. "Zion, thy king reigneth." (Isai. lii. 7.) This in itself is an enduring cause of strength to the Church. The empire which Christ establishes, and over which it is his right to preside, is one which cannot be destroyed; for "his dominion is an everlasting dominion," and his kingship therefore can never leave the Church till his throne is overturned and his authority wrested from him; and this makes the Church endowed with immortal security, for the King and the kingdom must stand or fall together. But Oh! my brethren, the monarchy of the Messiah is not, like the pageant dominions of earth, made and unmade by the changeable breath of man's approval or condemnal. It is not of this world; it is superior to the accidents of things mortal. It is the creation of Jehovah's wisdom, the production of his power; and though the frantic violence of man may labour to destroy it, and his short-sighted ingenuity seek to undermine it, they can no more avail to injure it, or loosen the foundations of the Saviour's throne, than the wild rush of the stormy waters could tear down the iron cliff against which they dash themselves with fierce

but impotent fury. "The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient; he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet." The wrath of man can never affect the determinations of God. The kings of the earth may stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed; they may with one consent determine to break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from them: but he that sitteth in the heavens will laugh; HE HAS SET HIS KING UPON HIS HOLY HILL OF ZION. The strength of the Church must be co-enduring with the monarchy of Jesus, and her bulwarks as firm as the foundations of his throne. Never can the vessel sink which carries the honor of the Eternal.

But the Church has her *ornaments* as well as her towers and bulwarks. The PALACES of Zion are to pass beneath the eye of the citizens, as well as her fortifications. "Consider her palaces." These, we have before observed, are the Church's decorations, the stately edifices which commend the general fabric to the admiration alike of enemies and friends. The palace is the kingly residence, the token, the indication, that the monarch dwells among his people. It is distinguished from every building near it by this peculiarity, that it is the King's house, and for the most part its appearance corresponds to the distinguished purpose for which it has been erected.

The spiritual Jerusalem has its palaces too ; for every child of God, every renewed and regenerated sinner, becomes the residence in which it pleaseth God to dwell. His cleansed heart is " the temple of the Holy Ghost," the earthly palace in which the High and Holy One delights to find an abode. " With this man will I dwell, that is of a humble and a contrite spirit." It is this indwelling of God which gives stability to the spiritual fabric. " God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved ;" and what his peculiar providence is to the Church at large, his spiritual presence is to every believer in it. And when the effects of this residence, when the impulses of the Spirit within, begin to tell upon the external conduct and the daily conversation, it is then that the decorations of the palace strike upon the eye, and the loveliness of the Christian character attracts the respectful attention of beholders. The holiness, the gifts, the graces discovered in the people of God, tell that God is among them ; they indicate his presence as much as the clustered ornaments and the peculiar stateliness of architecture distinguish the royal mansion. It was this which Paul saw in the people of his care, evidences of grace which gladdened his heart, and enabled him to prove to the world that religion has a reality : " Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men."

These are the points upon which the duty of exa-

mination into the Church's state is to exercise itself. The citizen of Zion is to survey her towers, her bulwarks, and her palaces,—the resources, the strength, and the ornaments which God has bestowed upon the spiritual Jerusalem.

III. But besides these duties of thankfulness and examination, to which we have spoken, the text enjoins a *third* upon all who rejoice in a connection with the Church of God. They are to leave a record to posterity of their confidence in and attachment to her:—"Tell it to the generation following." This, my brethren, is a duty incumbent upon all Christians. The mode of fulfilling it may be varied, but the obligation to do it is unquestionable. It was pressed upon the Israelites by Jehoshaphat, that generations to come might know that, in time of trial, the Lord had been his people's deliverer and defence; and that, knowing this, they might look with confirmed confidence for like mercies in every time of need. It is for the same reason that the same duty is inculcated still upon the spiritual citizen of Zion. The Church has passed through trials, many, intense and searching; and, if we mistake not greatly the testimony of prophecy and the portents of the times, she is destined to pass through more; and if those seasons of tribulation should arise, few things could be more consolatory and confirming to the men who shall be called to endure them, than testimonies from

past generations of love and attachment to the faith for which they shall be allowed to suffer. It will assist in establishing their conviction, that they cling to no cunningly devised fables, but that they endure the "fight of afflictions" for the same principles, the same truths, and the same assurances, which the departed excellent of the earth had revered. It will nerve their courage and sustain their firmness, to know that those who went before them had sifted and examined the Church's pretensions, and by recorded testimony, by the more silent witnesses of faith and holiness, by (if need were) endurance of tribulation, set to their seal that all its promises were true. It is this which holy men of every age have done—borne this testimony, that the Church has been "perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" assailed, like Jerusalem, by many a foe, but emerged unscathed from the conflict. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, have raised and sustained and prolonged the same song of declaration. And in our own land the same evidence has been heard amid the flames of Smithfield; and the martyrs of England have ascended from the sufferings of time to the raptures of eternity, leaving with their last breath their avowal upon record, that all the principles and hopes of the Church were based upon truth; and that, though men might rage, and the powers of darkness combine

to cast her down, the gates of hell never had been, and never would be allowed to prevail against her.

Such, then, my brethren, are the truths advanced by our text. It has shewn to us the character of the Church of Jesus, and the duty of her members in reference to her.

Independent of the general importance of the subject I have brought before you, I have been influenced by special considerations in calling your attention to the text we have just examined. We, if we all belong not to the spiritual Church of the first-born, belong to the Church visible upon earth, and are members of one of its most distinguished departments—a department venerable from its antiquity, revered for its faithfulness, admired even by its enemies for the orthodoxy of its opinions, and standing deservedly high in the esteem of the world on account of the men of God it has formed and sent forth. The Church of England is a pillar and ground of the truth. She has passed through trials as severe and varied as ever probed the integrity and faith of a religious community; and in the hottest days of persecution she has been tried, and not found wanting. She has been a nursery of the learning and talents which have done good service, not to herself only, but to the cause of general Christianity. Yet all these her claims upon Christians have not shielded her from obloquy and unprovoked assault.

Things have been laid to her charge which she knew not ; and, for the most part, she has held her peace and spoken nothing. But this has been construed into the silence of conscious guilt ; and therefore the time seems to me to have arrived, for making her congregations understand that she can stand fearlessly on her defence, and that in all her peculiarities she is built and based upon the truth of God. It is this which I propose to establish before you, my brethren, the congregation to which, in the providence of my God, I am called to minister. And in order to discharge, as effectually as I may, the duty which (from a consciousness of its necessity) I have imposed upon myself, I propose, with the Spirit's assistance, to dwell for three succeeding sabbaths upon the most prominent of the Church's peculiarities. The order I prescribe to myself is this : to consider, 1st, The EPISCOPACY ; 2dly, The LITURGY, and, 3dly, The CEREMONIES of the Church of England ; making each of these the distinct subject of a separate discourse. And in treating upon each of these important topics, I trust to be enabled to demonstrate that our Church is formed and constructed on most sure warrant of Scripture. We invite your attention, my brethren, we invite the attention of all, to the proofs which shall be brought forward. Our boast is this, that we have nothing to conceal, that we dread no scrutiny, we shrink from

no dissection of our Zion. We challenge investigation; we hold out the same language to doubting friends, and to concealed or open detractors: "Go round about our Zion: tell ye her towers: mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." We say to all, "Try us, whether we be of the faith."

SERMON II.

EPISCOPACY.

2 TIMOTHY III. 1.

IF ANY MAN DESIRETH THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP,
HE DESIRETH A GOOD WORK.

THERE are few sentiments of the scriptures of truth which will come home with more power to the Christian's spirit, or meet with a readier response from his heart, than that advanced in the memorable expression of David, "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." In a world so convulsed as ours, so filled with the elements of disorder, and distracted by the warfare of the most jarring materials, it is sweet to hear of the very name of unity. The thought of it is gladdening and refreshing to the mind. It carries us back in the reveries of recollection to those happier seasons of the world, when its tenants were harmonious, because they were sinless; and it hurries us forward in contemplation to those blessed times when the disorders of earth shall cease; when

peace shall be restored to this dislocated order of things; when violence shall no more be heard in the land, nor distraction be known in its borders. And if, my brethren, the idea of all this unity in the abstract be so pleasing and tranquillizing to the mind, it is no less attractive when we see it reduced to an actual, a positive exhibition. This the world has witnessed; and we may place the picture before ourselves by referring to the record of the encampment of the children of Israel in the desert: "When the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard throughout their hosts. And the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony." (Numb. i. 51—54.) In this passage we have a view of perfect unity—unity of spirit without compromise of principle or dignity. Each tribe of Israel views itself as a member of the same body, a fragment of the same connected population. And yet each tribe observes its peculiar place in Israel's encampment, ranges itself beneath its own peculiar standard, and preserves its unencroaching attitude. The result of this arrangement was unity and order, its effect was harmony and peace. It was this which elicited expressions of wondering commendation even from the

enemies of God's people, which arrested the astonished gaze of the prophet of Aram, and assisted in changing his intended denunciations into a rich prophecy of blessings. "He saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes, and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable and said, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters." It is thus, my brethren, that it should be with the tribes of the modern Israel, the different departments of the Christian Zion. The order and harmony of the desert encampment should be perpetuated in this union and agreement. Each might circle round their own standard, and yet all might dwell together in unity.

But this is not so. It is forgotten in our times that unity can alone be sustained upon the principle of mutual forbearance. Ephraim must not envy Judah, and Judah must not vex Ephraim. This principle, so simple in its character, and so certain in its result, is lost sight of or trampled under foot. It is absorbed in an undue attachment to peculiarities; and the offensive urging of points of distinction is preferred to the Christian duty of forbearing one another in love. When this is so: when points of difference are urged, not in the way of defence, but

in the way of invidious comparison; when opposite peculiarities are held up to scorn, and made the objects of assault and invective; then Judah is vexed by Ephraim. A tribe has come off its own peculiar ground of encampment, and made an unkindly inroad upon the territory of its neighbour. And when this is so, the course of the invaded tribe is beyond controversy clear. It is the duty of the members of the assaulted Church to scrutinize her state, to examine into her pretensions, that they may judge for themselves whether the things laid against her be so; and it is the duty of her ministers to make battle on her behalf, and to see to it that the tone of bold assertion be not allowed to pass current for the voice of truth. In our day, this has become an especial duty towards our own Church; for she has been made the object of fierce and incessant attack; the open foe and the pretended friend go round about her walls in one thing united—the resolve to discover a weakness, and on a principle of “Christian charity,” to proclaim it.

In the midst of the dissension which all this must occasion, it is well to bear in mind that the materials for unity still exist. All disagreement between religious denominations is not of the same kind, nor are its causes all equally important. It sometimes subsists between communities, on the ground of discipline, and sometimes upon that of doctrine; and

there may be perfect harmony in reference to the one, while there is utter discord in respect to the other. Thus, between the Established Church of this kingdom, and the orthodox dissenting communities, there is (and we bless the Lord that it is so) perfect unity in reference to doctrine. Our creeds are substantially the same. Our confessions are kindred in their character. We concur in rejecting the same doctrinal errors, and we coalesce in embracing the same essential truths. And yet while there is thus a oneness of opinions in reference to doctrine, there is an utter diversity of opinion in reference to discipline. On the other hand, there is a partial similiarity between the English and the Romish Churches in respect of government, while there is an entire separation between them in matters of faith. In these two cases, the causes of disagreement are broadly distinguishable from each other. That which separates the established and the orthodox dissenting communities from each other, being merely of discipline, is comparatively trivial and unimportant. It affects not the life, the soundness of the bodies. It relates to the external structure; it is a fragment of the scaffolding, and touches not upon the integrity of the building. It is far otherwise in the second case. The cause of disagreement between Rome and England is of the first, the most formidable magnitude. It is connected

closely and essentially with the peculiarities of belief. It bears upon the entire structure, nay more, it is wrought into the very foundation of its building. The one Church is based upon the shifting sand of mortal inventions; the other rests upon the Rock of Ages. The one deposes the Redeemer from his supreme throne; the other knows nothing but Christ and Him crucified. In such a case, union is an utter impossibility. The wall of partition is of such a character that it cannot be overpassed. The motto of the establishment now is the same which formed the leading principle of the Reformation: "No peace with Rome." But, in the first case, union is not only possible, but practicable. The communities, harmonious in holiness, and separate in externals, have but to act upon the principle of attachment to things essential, and forbearance in things immaterial; and they can meet without collision, they can be cordial without compromise.

It may be necessary for the perfect understanding of the subject on which we purpose this day to speak, that we should put you in possession of the different opinions which are held in reference to the disputed points of Church government. These may be reduced to three: the Presbyterian, the Congregational, and the Episcopal. The first of these systems is constructed upon the principle of having many congregations united in one bond of discipline,

—the ecclesiastical affairs of the community being arranged by a synod composed of all the ministers and lay delegates from the several congregations. The second asserts the perfect independency of each separate congregation ; and looking upon it as a Church complete within itself, claims for it the absolute right of regulating all its own concerns. The third inculcates the subjection of many ministers and congregations to the regulated rule of one who is elevated above his brethren in the ministry, and occupies with regard to them the seat of superintendence and authority. It will be observable that, however in details the first two of these forms differ from each other, they are accordant in this point—*the perfect equality of ministers*. It is in this grand point that they stand contradistinguished from the episcopal form of government ; for it asserts the disparity of ministers, the subjection of two orders to a third, and the appropriation of certain duties to some of these orders, from the performance of which the others are restrained. It is this arrangement which is objected to by our assailants, who content not themselves with the assertion that the disparity of ministers is unscriptural, but discover a reason for its introduction, in the corruptions of Christianity, and the carnal struggles of man's selfish and interested ambition. They repudiate a system of subordination, and as loudly laud their own prized equality.

Now, before we proceed to examine the question at issue, we would observe in the general, that this system of perfect equality on which our opponents place themselves is not the system of God. Subordination and distinction seem to pervade all the works of the Lord of Wisdom. If he frame and stretch forth the glorious fabric of the material heavens, he carries not out upon it the indications of equality. He studs it over with the sparkling evidences of his power, but "one star differeth from another star in glory." If he arrange the social order of Heaven, he conducts his arrangement upon the same principle. Of its state, little is revealed in Scripture; the thick cloud hangs between us and that far off world, where God sits enthroned in visible majesty, and forbids the eager glance of our curiosity to discover what is "passing beyond the veil." "We see through a glass darkly." Yet, although we are kept in this state of ignorance as to the condition and peculiarities of Heaven, one part seems to be pointedly revealed,—that a system of subordination pervades it. It is a state where the conflict of mortal passions is unknown; where no breath of angry strife is permitted to traverse the sea of glass, or to ruffle its crystal surface; and to which, on that account, a system of equality in dignities would appear to be peculiarly congenial. Yet it is not found there. The harmony of Heaven

is sustained by subordination. In the circle of its glorious inhabitants are found the angels who minister to their Maker's will; the archangels who surround his throne, and the seraphim who seem to be honoured by a closer attendance on his presence. (Isa. vi. 2.) All the sketches of the unseen world which reach us through the volume of inspiration, combine to reveal the existence of the inequality of dignity above.

Now when God came to introduce his system of religion and government upon earth, we find his arrangements below analogous to those above. The structure of the Jewish Church was conducted on this principle. He established not one, but divers orders of ministration. By his appointment the High Priest of Israel stood solitary in his dignity. By the same appointment, the priests discharged their peculiar duties, and the Levites fulfilled their inferior functions. The same principle was adopted in the formation of the secular polity of Israel. She was not erected a republic. The Lord himself was her King; and under him were the separate grades of lawgivers, and princes, and elders. And this principle which was interwoven with the constitution of God's ancient people, whether ecclesiastical or political, was carried out into the second Church which God planted upon earth; the Church which He founded in the days of his sojourn among

men. At present we are speaking but upon the principle of subordination in the ministry in the general; and therefore at present we content ourselves with a general proof upon the point; and such a proof do we find in the assertion of the apostle, "that there are many members in the same body, and all members have not the same office;" and that "God set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that, governments"—offices these in the Church broadly distinct from each other, and each placed in a higher or lower grade according to the Master's will.

And it is in no small degree remarkable that attempts at overthrowing this system of ministerial subordination, which appears to pervade the Churches of each Testament, have been marked by the frown of God's displeasure. Being his appointment, intrusion upon it must needs be offensive in his sight. Of this we have an indication in the doom which fell with such tremendous weight upon Korah and his associates in rebellion. Their effort was not to secure an equality in things political, but in things ecclesiastical. He strove not to ascend to a higher office in the state, or to drag down civil authorities to his own level. His ambition was to destroy the distinction which subsisted between priests and Levites, and to create a perfect equality among ministers.

This is obvious from the remonstrance of Moses : “ Seemeth it but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to himself in the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them,—and seek ye the priesthood also ? ” This attempt to subvert the settled order of things ecclesiastical was marked by the Lord’s most unequivocal condemnation ; and on the fearful sepulchre which that day saw opened in Israel, was inscribed the mind of God, that (as far at least as Israel was concerned) subordination in things spiritual was the system He would have followed by his people.

So far then, we have advanced in the consideration of this question, that we have shewn in general that disparity in the offices of the ministry, as well as an order of subordination in matters political, is the system approved by God.

This we shall now see more clearly by entering upon our examination of the constitution of the Christian Church. And in stepping upon this ground of inquiry, which involves the whole subject of Church Government, the question at issue between us and our opponents, we would wish, my brethren, to simplify matters by stating distinctly what is the point we purpose to establish. We wish to make this not a question of words, but a question of things ;

not so much to consider by what names offices in the Christian Church of the New Testament were called, but what offices really existed. It signifies little to us what titles ministers received, (for terms are changeable and fleeting) but it signifies much what offices they filled, what functions they actually discharged. This is the real point to be come at. We are prepared, for simplification sake, to concede almost all that can be asked from us as to ministerial names.* It is not here that the grand difference between us and our antagonists is found. It is not here that the hinge of the question lies. The grand point of disagreement in respect to Church government, between the established and dissenting bodies, is this, *that we hold a disparity, and they an equality among ministers*. This is the point we wish to discuss; and the proposition we advance, and which we wish you to hold in view, is this—that an equality among ministers is not the doctrine of the Bible; but that Scripture sanctions the existence of three orders in the Christian ministry, of different ranks and different duties. It is on this point that our Church is assailed, and on this point do we speak in her vindication.

Now in order to establish this proposition, we shall first revert to that ancient dispensation in which the mind of God on this point was first manifested. The

* See Appendix, A.

Messiah's object in coming into this lower world was the creation of a Church which should sustain his name and honor upon earth, and glorify his name in eternity. This object he commenced with the house of Israel. He found the world without a Church, darkness spread over the land, and the deepest shadows of idolatry resting upon the people; and out of this unbroken mass of heathenism the Lord selected the seed, the nucleus of a people which should, by its religion, stand distinguished from all nations. In the freeness of his grace he called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees. His peculiar blessing multiplied his descendants into a people; within the short compass of a few generations, the one became millions; and when that people were rescued by the continuance of the same grace from the thralldom of Egypt, its loose and scattered materials were, in the loneliness of the desert, settled and consolidated into an orderly community. The laws which were to guide it, and the provisions which were to bind it together, were delivered amid the acclamations which rolled in thunder from the peaks of Sinai. All this was done by Christ himself. He was the angel of his people, and in manifested deity spake to Moses in the mount. The first object to which he applied himself after Israel had become a community, was to constitute her a Church. He had given her law-givers and magistrates, and he proceeded to bestow upon her

the better gift of a ministry. And in constructing this, he appointed divers grades and orders for his Zion—orders distinct from each other not only in dignity, but in the offices they were to fulfil, and the functions they were each to execute. The High-Priest, the Priest and the Levite, all ministers, but unequal in degree, were the ordinance of God. This is all beyond doubt or controversy. Now the Church which succeeded this first one of the Lord's planting, was a counterpart of it. The constitution of the Christian Church was a continuation of the Jewish. Christianity was no new and separate religion. It was a brighter and more glorious developement of the same religion which subsisted under the law and the prophets. Everything set forth in the Levitical dispensation, in type and shadow, was embodied in the Christian dispensation in reality and substance. The sacrifices were carried out from the one into the other. They were collected and substantiated in Jesus. The waters of sprinkling had their antitype and completeness; they spoke of, and were developed in their full efficacy in the sanctification of the Spirit. The tabernacle itself, with its courts, its worshippers, its supernatural lights, was the pattern of the spiritual Church; its holy of holies, the department of the Church above; its sanctuary, the worshipping Church below. Heb. ix. 9, 12, 24; viii. 5. This correspondence between the arrangements of the two dis-

pensations was, as we conceive, not limited to sacrifices and ceremonies, but was consistently carried out into the ministry itself. The orders of the priesthood in Israel were types of the better ministry of the new covenant. It was not the only thing in Christianity left unprefigured in Judaism. The Church in the wilderness had its grades of ministerial dignity; and its threefold orders were, as we conceive, carried out into the ministry of the Christian dispensation.

This point, which so far only rests upon the argument of analogy, we are to establish by detailed evidence. To do this, we call upon you, brethren, in the first place, to look at the state of things *at the commencement of the present dispensation*. The Baptist had fulfilled his mission. He had, as the messenger of the Messiah, gone before his master's face to prepare a people for his Lord. "He made many disciples." The Saviour followed in the track of the prophet who announced his advent. "He himself made and baptized more disciples than John." Here were the materials of the Church of the first-born collected, a people gathered in from the careless, the outcast, the ungodly, and brought by the power of grace to enroll themselves beneath his standard. The Saviour's first object was to do for them, as he had done for the congregation in the wilderness; to provide them with a ministry; to create pastors who should not only establish the Church,

but enlarge its platform and augment its numbers. One order in the ministry was at this time in existence. Christ was himself the spiritual guide and shepherd of his people. In him the ministerial functions were all concentrated. He was everything to his Church, the minister himself of the true tabernacle, the high-priest of the profession, the pastor and bishop of souls. He himself fulfilled all ministerial duties. The teaching that was in the Church flowed from his lips; the appointments introduced into it were the results of his wisdom; the regulations which controlled it were the exercises of his authority. Yet, although all this was so, the Saviour did not deem the ecclesiastical structure complete, the true tabernacle furnished, in a single order of ministry. He therefore proceeded to make the ministerial arrangement perfect. And this he did by the process of ordination. In the sixth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we have the record of this deeply interesting procedure; a procedure on which the Saviour entered not without the most solemn profoundness of spirit, without the most earnest and prayerful consideration. He spent upon his knees the night previous to the first ordination he held upon earth: "in a mountain he continued all night in prayer to God." And after conveying to the Church this most striking intimation of his sense of the transcendent importance of such an act, "he called unto him his disci-

ples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." (Verses 12, 13,) The quality of this ordination will be comprehended by reflecting upon the terms employed in the quotation. The individuals ordained were distinguished by a peculiar title; they were marked by the smallness of their number, and they were selections from the general body of the Redeemer's followers. They were called *Apostles*; their number was *twelve*; they were chosen *out of the Disciples*. We wish you, brethren, to carry these points steadily in your recollection, for we design to throw them into contrast with another portion of Scripture to which we now invite your attention. In the tenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we have a record of the *second* ordination which the Great Head of the Church held. It appears that he deemed not his ministry yet completed, although he himself presided over the Church's welfare, and had associated with himself in the pastorate a number of his followers. The chapter to which we have just referred tells us of an extension of the ministry. "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." There can be no doubt as to the nature of the office to which these seventy were appointed. They were not only endowed with miraculous powers, as credentials of their mission,

but they were to be proclaimers of the truth, ministers of the Gospel: "Say unto the people, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." So that in the transaction recorded in this passage, we have the step by which the Saviour admitted a second body into the ministry of his Church. Now our position is, that those members of this second body were not an addition to the first body, set apart for the furtherance of the Gospel, but of an order totally distinct and separate from it. The two bodies are kept markedly apart in Scripture. The one is as clearly recognised by the title of "the Twelve," as the other is by that of "the Seventy." The latter came under the Saviour's care and guidance, but by no means in that peculiar and distinguished manner in which the former were instructed by him. They were "the twelve," who were gathered round Jesus at the last supper; they were the twelve, for whom he specially interceded. (John xvii. 9.) It was upon them that he conferred the signal privilege of witnessing his departure from earth, his ascension into glory. (Mark xvi. 16—19.) All these indications of peculiar favour concur to draw a clear line of distinction between the two bodies who at this time constituted the ministry of the early Church. But that peculiarly (and, as we should say, incontrovertibly) establishes the fact of a distinction in order

and dignity between these two classes in the ministry, is the circumstance that the vacancy in the circle of the apostles, occasioned by the suicide of Judas, was filled up from this body. (Acts i. 21.) If the two classes were the same, alike in dignity and duties, why was there an election from the one into the other? The idea of parity makes such a step idle and inconsistent. No, the transaction itself shews that the apostles held a rank which the disciples possessed not. It is in accordance with the doctrine of ministerial inequality, but totally at variance with a system of ministerial parity.

This, then, we conceive to have been the state of things under the management of Christ himself: that he was himself the bishop, the superintending authority of the Church; it belonging to him to regulate, to appoint, to provide and send forth a ministry; that the apostles occupied the place of the Presbyters, or priests; it belonging to them to teach, to preach, to baptize, but not to ordain or send forth labourers or missions; and that the disciples occupied a lower station still, filling the deacon's office, exercising ministerial functions, but plainly, not officially, identified with those whom Jesus first called to the priesthood.

II. But we proceed to carry this argument a step further. We ask you to investigate the condition of Church affairs, SUBSEQUENT TO THE RESURRECTION

OF CHRIST. The death of the Redeemer was that astounding event which, for a time, bewildered the little flock of Christians, and paralyzed the powers of the infant community. It sounded in their ears like the knell of expiring hope; it was regarded as the breaking up, the dissolution, of all their fondly-cherished expectations. They spoke of it as destructive of all their plans—"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." The shepherd was smitten, and the trembling sheep were scattered. But this state of dismay and suspended energy could not long continue. The Saviour had promised perpetuity to his Church, and it had not been in unison with that promise that his removal from earth should entail feebleness or disaster upon her. We shall find upon inquiry that one of his most important doings after the resurrection was the continuation to his Church of the ministry and government he had previously established. To effect this, what should we pronounce *à priori* to be necessary? We should say that in case of his own final removal, the continuance of the office to the Church which he himself had held, by delegation of it to others. And we find ourselves prepared to look for some act of this nature in the history of the times of Jesus previous to his withdrawal from this world. Now, brethren, such an act we do discover to have been performed by Jesus. Let us refer to the record. "The same day at even-

ing, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 19—23). It is clear from parallel scriptures, (Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 33.) that this transaction occurred with and was limited to the eleven. It is also clear from a study of the narrative, that they received at that moment not only spiritual advantages, but also *an extension of their powers*. It was a second dedication of them to a work. It was the act of a second ordination. If after it they had been but the same, as when the transaction of the sixth of Luke had taken place, the same in office, the same in practice, the same in dignity, this act must have been altogether fruitless. It was a solemn procedure without an object; it was a deed without a use. It must have been a change in their office, or a meaningless ceremony. That it could not have been the latter is undoubted, and therefore we see in it the Apostles' elevation to a higher order in the ministry,* the order

* See Appendix, B.

which Christ had himself held, but which he now delegated to them; ("as the Father had sent him, so he sent them,")—the order which retained them to the Church as ministers, but conferred upon them the duties of superintendence—the order which now more than ever was required in the Christian community, not only because its Head was about to remove his personal presence from it, but because it was about to become largely and rapidly extended.

In this view we find ourselves confirmed by observing the conduct of the Apostles subsequent to this transaction. Hitherto they had assumed no duties in the Church but those of a purely pastoral character. If we are right in the interpretation we have placed upon the circumstance we have just considered, we are prepared to expect to find them executing functions of a very different, of an authoritative nature; discharging those duties of ordination, of arrangement, and of government which Christ had hitherto fulfilled. And our expectation is not disappointed. We turn to the record of their conduct, the Acts of these Apostles, and there we find them taking upon themselves these (to them) unusual offices of Church administration. The emergencies of the infant Church call for the exercise of those powers which Jesus had hitherto wielded, and they are found lodged in his Apostles' hands. They admit by ordination seven individuals into the ministry,

(Acts vi. 6.) for the qualifications required in the candidates, and the duties discharged by them altogether forbid us to consider the deacons of the sixth of Acts as secular officers of the Church. (Acts vi. 3—10; viii. 5—35). They do more, they ordain presbyters, or elders, in every Church. (Acts xiv. 23). They take upon them, which they never before did, the care of the Churches, and they discharge duties in reference to them, which it is evident, other ministers were unqualified to perform. (Acts viii. 14—17). The whole tenor of Apostolic acts subsequent to the departure of Christ, is of a kind wholly dissimilar to that they had before observed. And while it tends to prove that they had been elevated into an order distinct from that with which they had been once connected, it also establishes this point, that in the Church immediately subsequent to the ascension, there was a disparity among ministers. Its ministerial constitution was this;—the Apostles acting in the Church as its overseers or bishops, the presbyters ordained by Jesus, and increased in their numbers by Apostolic appointments, discharging the duties of ordinary pastors; and the deacons, an inferior order, preaching and baptizing, but apparently not confined to any fixed or responsible charge. (Acts viii. 5, 26; xxi. 8.)

III. Now this point, to which we have conducted our subject, carries us into another important consi-

deration--the *nature* of the Episcopacy exercised by the Apostles. The condition of the Church was at this time unsettled. Christianity had emerged from the comparative obscurity in which its infancy was sheltered, and was making sensible inroads upon the ignorance and darkness of the world. Its object was to bring individuals and peoples to the faith of Jesus. To systematize and regulate its converts was a second step in its movements. The Apostles therefore at first were not limited in their Episcopal functions to any one sphere of duty. As Apostles, they were missionaries to the world; as bishops, their care extended over the whole population of the faithful. They were ready to superintend wherever superintendence was required. But in process of time the extension of the Church, and the increase of its converts called for some system more fixed and settled. They demanded that these inspections, which were hitherto general, should be restrained to particular spheres of action. That this was early contemplated we have proof in the remark of St. Paul in the second chapter of Galatians. "James, Cephas and John gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the *heathen*, and they unto the *circumcision*." (Gal. ii. 9). This appears to have been the first grand division of Episcopal labour. Its allocated spheres were the Jewish and Gentile worlds. And in accord-

ance with this principle of restricting the early prelates of the Church to a peculiar scene of duty, we find from this time the Apostle James located at Jerusalem, the eldest bishopric of Christianity. Antiquity concurs with Scripture in assigning this especial district of the vineyard to him. The writers of the early ages with one voice style him Bishop of Jerusalem.* The ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius, has left upon record a line of thirteen bishops who presided over that see successively, and has placed him first upon his list. And although Scripture makes no precise statement, contains no definite record upon this fact, it presents such indications of its existence, as must, with every unprejudiced, every candid mind, amount to a demonstration. In each of the visits which Paul paid to Jerusalem, the first three years, and the second fourteen years after his conversion, he found James there. (Gal. i. 18, 19; ii. 9). Upon another occasion, that on which he forced his way to Jerusalem through the tears, the remonstrances, the heart-breaking entreaties of the believers of Cesarea, he found him still resident there; and the manner in which this Apostle is distinguished from other ministers in that metropolis in the narrative of Paul's interview, is utterly inexplicable upon any other ground, than that of his being of superior station to them. "The day following Paul went in *unto*

* See Appendix, C.

James,—and all the elders were present.” Take this, my brethren, in connection with the history of the council held at Jerusalem on account of the strange doctrines which disturbed the Church of Antioch, and you will discover still stronger reasons for believing that at this period James was, what the united voice of antiquity report him to have been, the occupier of the Episcopal chair in Jerusalem. His language upon that occasion is that of the president of a solemn assembly collecting the declarations made, and announcing his decision in the tone of official authority. “*My sentence* is that we trouble not those which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God.” A language this and a tone calculated much to favour the supposition that James presided over that day’s deliberations, because he was upon the ground of his own jurisdiction—within the boundary of the sphere of his own Episcopal duties. All these incidental testimonies, corroborated as they are by the voice of history and the evidence of antiquity, combine to shew us that Episcopacy held by all the Apostles as successors to their master, and originally stretching itself, without systematic arrangement, over all the movements of Christianity, became (as far as James was concerned) an appointment limited and restricted to a particular territory. The same might be evidenced in the cases of other Apostles; and

therefore this position of ecclesiastical arrangement places the Church before us in the view of a body possessed clearly of Prelatical Episcopacy, and that Episcopacy approaching nearly to its present diocese form.*

But this point, as well as another to which it is of the deepest importance to advert, namely, the *power* and *authority* annexed to the office of the primitive bishop, will be seen more clearly by a reference to the Epistolary parts of the New Testament. We turn now to two remarkable documents—the Epistles to Timothy and Titus—documents which must be erased from the Bible before the Episcopal order can be separated from the Church, or the doctrine of ministerial equality be considered a truth of inspiration. These Epistles were letters of counsel and direction from the aged and experienced Paul, to two ministers labouring in important fields of the Christian vineyard, Ephesus and Crete. And, as we conceive, the entire tenor of these deeply valuable letters tends in the strongest manner to substantiate the point for which we are contending. That, my brethren, you will bear in mind, is the doctrine of a disparity as to rank and duties among ministers being the ordinance of God.

We shall first consult the Epistle to Timothy ; and before looking into its purport, we would remind you

* See Appendix, D.

of two facts : first, that at the time this Epistle was written, there was a plurality of ministers in the Church of Ephesus ; and, secondly, that the Epistle was not addressed to them as a collective body, but to a single individual. The latter of these points requires no proof. It is demonstrated by the title, the address and the language of the letter. The former is established by a reference to Scripture. " From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the elders (or presbyters) of the Church ; and when he had spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." This demonstrates the fact, that in this Church with which Timothy was connected there was a multiplicity of ministers.

We now turn to consider the purport of the Epistle. There could have been nothing remarkable in the circumstance of its being addressed to a single individual, if the matter contained in it were purely of a personal character. It had then been but the letter of a Christian to a Christian ; a communication of counsel or of comfort. But this is not its character. It is addressed to Timothy as an official personage ; its advice relates to the discharge of his public duties. Now, out of these several advices and injunctions which are scattered over, which pervade it, we shall select a few which bear upon the topic of our consideration, for the purpose of shewing that, in

the judgment of St. Paul, and by the consent of the Ephesian Church, Timothy occupied a station superior to, and distinct from, that of the rest of its ministers. "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith." (1 Tim. i. 3, 4.) Here is a plain acknowledgment of the right of Timothy to sit in judgment upon the doctrines inculcated by public teachers, and to issue his injunctions respecting the character of their preaching.

Again: "Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. iii. 12, 13.) Here is the recognition of his power to control the conduct of deacons, (whom he has formerly proved, and admitted to the use of this office,) and that with a view to their advancement in the ministry.

Again: "Rebuke not an elder, (a presbyter,) but intreat him as a father. Against an elder raise not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." (1 Tim. v. 1, 19.) Here is admitted his right to sit

in judgment over presbyters, to occupy the tribunal before which charges against them were to be preferred.

Again: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins." (1 Tim. v. 22.) Here the power of ordaining to the ministry is lodged in the hands of Timothy.

Again: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." In this passage we again discover the office of director and superintendent.

Now, brethren, we cast this selection before the mind of every candid and dispassionate inquirer; and we ask them to weigh their import, to consider the evidence which they contain. They are found addressed not to many, but to one individual; and that individual connected with a Church which inspired history declares to have had many ministers. They call upon that individual to exercise functions which imply not merely the possession of the pastoral office, but of a station which carried with it authority, and the power of compelling to obedience. They counsel that individual not simply to advise, but to "charge" teachers with respect to the doctrines they inculcated, to examine into the conduct and characters of the deacons of the Church, with a view to

their promotion, their advancement to a higher grade.* They direct him upon the subject of his treatment of presbyters, those whom Paul himself styled "the pastors of the Church of God;" and they permit him to receive accusations against them, so that those accusations were made in a formal, an official manner, and did not assume the aspect of a secret information. They concede to him the privilege of ascertaining the qualifications of candidates for ordination, and lodge the power of ordaining in his hands. We ask fearlessly, Do not all these directions prove our point? Do they not affirm that Timothy occupied a situation of superiority and authority in the Church of Ephesus? If not, how should he presume to be an arbiter as to the soundness or unsoundness of doctrines, and to issue mandates as to the truths which brother ministers were to inculcate, the topics they should avoid in their instructions? If not, how should he presume to appoint deacons in the Church, and to sit in observation upon their conduct, with a view to their elevation? If not, why should he dare to rebuke his co-partners in open assembly, and officially to receive charges brought against them on account of errors either committed or advocated? If not, why were qualifications for the ministry to be submitted

* See Appendix, E.

to the ordeal of his scrutiny, and he be specially enjoined to transmit to faithful men the truths he himself had received? If not, why, above all, did the apostle, whose care was so watchfully extended over all the Churches, and who knew the mind of the Spirit, and who ever inculcated the fitness of "rendering to all their due," admit by the whole style and tenor of his Epistle, that these functions, so many and so important, rested in the hands of one, and abstain from all intimation that that one was but a partner with others in the dignity and the duty? The only answer which can be rendered to these questions is this: that Timothy possessed an office of authority in the Church, which made the discharge of those functions proper to him, and conveyed them not to others. The whole constitution of the Church of Ephesus will accord with the theory of a subordination among ministers, but is at utter variance with that of an equality. If we doubt it, let us ask Dissenters, Would they—do they, allow to any one minister the position and the duties fulfilled by Timothy? Will they allow to one minister of their body an ordaining power? Will they permit him to assume the office of a rebuker? Will they permit him officially to receive accusations against his brethren? Will they place in his hands the right to control, to regulate, to reform matters of discipline in the Church? No: for this would be the exalta-

tion of that one to a throne of authority and peculiar privilege, and the destruction of that system of parity on which they so much (perhaps so causelessly) congratulate themselves.

The inference, then, to which a review of this Epistle conducts us, is, that in apostolic times, and by apostolic arrangement, the system of ministerial inequality was that inculcated in the churches; and that the Church of Ephesus, a community planted and protected by the hands of Paul himself, possessed a threefold ministry,—the deacons looking forward to a higher office; the presbyters labouring in the word and doctrine; and the bishop, in the person of Timothy, superintending all, and exercising control in matters of discipline and faith.

We now turn, for corroboration of this, to the Epistle to Titus. This letter of the apostle is of a kindred character to that on which we have commented. We shall select from it but two passages in reference to the point at issue: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless,” &c. (Tit. i. 5.) “These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” (Tit. ii. 15.) In both these passages we trace the superintending officer of the Church—in the first, in the power of ordaining presbyters,

after examination into character, being placed in his hands as fully, as absolutely, as it had been possessed by Paul himself; and in the second, in the licence of rebuking with authority being assumed as the rightful prerogative of his station. It is impossible, we conceive, to learn that Titus possessed these powers, the one arming him with authority, the other vesting in him the choice of ministers and the liberty of locating them in the several cities of Crete, without being irresistibly impelled to consider that his duties were different, his station superior to theirs; without, in a word, reading in the powers of Titus the peculiarities of the episcopal office. So that in this Church, as well as in that of Ephesus, we discover ministerial inequality.

Now, before we pass from the field of Scripture and enter upon that of the testimony of antiquity, we would wish to call your attention for a moment to a striking body of evidence upon our point, which meets us in the book of Revelation. The first few chapters of that book consist of letters addressed by the Saviour to the Seven Churches of Asia. In character they are the same, and strikingly similar in construction. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with bringing one of them under consideration, and shall select that to the Church of Ephesus. This is an Epistle commendatory of the former faith, and condemnatory of the then coldness of that once

deeply spiritual community. It will be in your recollection, my brethren, that this Church was supplied with many ministers. The many presbyters gathered round Paul to receive the last counsel they should ever hear from his honored lips. Now to whom is this letter in question addressed? to all these ministers? to a council or synod of these presbyters? Nay, but to a single individual,—“*the* Angel of the Church of Ephesus.” How, we pause to ask, could this individual be ascertained? Why should one person be selected for this distinction, when there were many in the ministry of the Church, and all, as we are assured, equal, and of course all equally entitled to the dignity implied in the address. The difficulty is soluble but upon one principle,—that the superior station held by one at once pointed out the addressed individual. The Angel of the Church was its presiding minister,* he who stood contradistinguished from his brethren by the superintendency, the episcopal dignity he held. And to almost this conclusion are our antagonists driven by the pressing necessity of the case. Hear the following admission from the pen of one of the most learned and able of modern Dissenters, the celebrated Dr. J. Pye Smith: “Ordinarily, in large churches, there were two or three or more elders, performing jointly and upon an

* See Appendix, F.

equality of rank the pastoral duties, but classifying and distributing the details according to the special talents of each ; that one of these, the most signally fit, became, *by the very dictates of reason* and the force of circumstances, *the perpetual president.*” This admission goes very far towards granting all that we insist upon. It admits an inequality of station among ministers, although not necessarily a difference of duties. But, after all, this continuous moderatorship comes, in many respects, near to the scheme of moderate episcopacy.

Such, then, brethren, is the testimony of Scripture upon this important subject. We have collected our evidence from the analogy of the two dispensations, from the words and doings of Christ while acting as the founder and arranger of his Church, and from those records which unfold the constitution of the apostolic Churches. And upon a dispassionate review of the line of proof, we feel ourselves justified in making this assertion, that the Bible sanctions a disparity of ministers in the Church of God, exhibits three orders as existent in the earliest times of Christianity, and located, diocesan episcopacy as the system of government to which the settled and regulated communities were subjected.

We are aware, brethren, that we have already much exceeded the limit of time generally assigned to addresses from this place ; but we should not

deem the chain of proof along which we have travelled complete, without consulting the testimony of antiquity upon this subject. The wisdom of the Lord has preserved in his Church records belonging to the days of Christianity immediately succeeding the apostolic age, and thus enabled us to ascertain the nature of its government at that period. In looking for information in these records, we shall bring you as near to Bible times as possible. The first testimony we shall adduce is that of Ignatius, (A.D. 107,) always described in Church history as "*the Bishop of Antioch,*" and reported by Chrysostom "to have conversed with the apostles, and to have been perfectly acquainted with their doctrine." The career of this servant of God was bright and glorious. His path was that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. He closed a life of faith with the sufferings of martyrdom; but the trials which were around him, and the prospect of the agonies which were to embitter the last hours of his pilgrimage, could not extinguish the reigning passion of his heart,—the desire to do good unto the household of faith. On his way to Rome, where his spirit was to be emancipated from a tortured and lacerated body, he addressed four letters to different Churches. One of these is to the Ephesian Christians, and from it is the following quotation taken: "Jesus Christ our inseparable life is the mind of the Father, as the

bishops appointed even unto the utmost bounds of the earth are the mind of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it will become you to run together, according to the will of the bishop, as also ye do. For your famous presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to its bishop, as the strings are to their harp. Therefore in your concord and agreeing charity, Jesus Christ is sung, and every single person among you makes up the chorus."

In his Epistle to the Magnesians, the following passage occurs: "Seeing, then, that I have been judged worthy to see you by Damas, your most excellent bishop, and by your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and by my fellow-servant, Sotio, your deacon, in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject to his bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it will become you not to take advantage of the youth of your bishop, but to yield all reverence to him according to the power of God the Father, as I also perceive that your holy presbyters do."

In the Epistle to the Church at Tralles, this remarkable testimony is found: "When ye are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ. It is therefore necessary that, as ye do, without your bishop ye should do nothing. Also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the apos-

bles of Jesus Christ our hope, in whom, if we walk, we shall be found in him. The deacons, also, being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means study to please all, *for they are not the ministers of meats and drinks, but of the Church of God.* Wherefore they must avoid all offences as fire. In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ, and the bishop as the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God and college of the apostles. Without these, there is no church!"

We might easily multiply quotations from the same primitive saint, all breathing the same sentiments, all expressive of the same opinion. These, however, are amply sufficient to shew what the government and orders of the Church were in the days of Ignatius, that is, in the days of one who conversed with the apostles. The selections from his writings which have been made clearly demonstrate these points: first, that in the year 107, there was a threefold ministry in the Church, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons; and, secondly, that the deacon of those early periods was not a secular officer, but what we in Scripture discovered him to be, a steward of the mysteries of God.

But we shall endeavour to corroborate this evidence, by advancing a little further in the downward stream of history. We shall appeal to the works of Irenæus, who flourished about the year 167, or about

half a century subsequent to Ignatius. The following quotation is from his writings: "We can enumerate those who were instituted bishops in the several Churches by the apostles, even to ourselves. The apostolic state of the Church is known through all the world by the succession of bishops, to whom the apostles gave power to *rule and govern* the Church." (Lib. iii. c. 3.)

To the same purport is the declaration of Tertulian, who flourished towards the close of the second century: "The high priest, who is the bishop, has the chief right of administering it (baptism); then the presbyters and deacons, but not without the authority of the bishop." (De Bapt. c. 17.)

We shall close this branch of our evidence by two quotations taken from writers of the middle of the third and fourth centuries. The first to which I refer is from the letter of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, to Cornelius, bishop of Rome: "How great reason have we to be afraid of the wrath of God, when some presbyters, neither mindful of the gospel, nor of their own station, nor thinking of the future judgment of God, nor considering that they have a bishop now their governor, dare to assume all to themselves, to the contempt of their governor—a thing never before attempted, under any of my predecessors." (Ep. 16.)

The second is from the first book of the writings

of Optatus (A.D. 368): "To what purpose should I mention deacons, who are in the third, or presbyters, in the second, degree of priesthood, when the very heads and princes of all, even certain of the bishops themselves, were content to redeem life with the loss of heaven?" (Lib. i.)

I forbear, my brethren, from all comment upon these quotations. They are too conclusive and expressive to require a syllable of observation. They exhibit the government of the Christian Church at different points of time between the beginning of the second and the close of the fourth centuries; and they are strictly harmonious in the evidence they produce. They show, in a manner too clear to be mistaken, too emphatic to be gainsayed, that a disparity among ministers was the constitution of the primitive Churches; and that, whether the testimony come from Antioch or Carthage, from Lyons or Numidia, it all supports the same truth—a truth asserted by Scripture, and now echoed by antiquity—that the ministry of Christianity lay, in her purest times, in three distinct and unmixing orders: bishops, priests, and deacons. The evidence poured in from the literature of the first few centuries, must, indeed, have been of the most overwhelming and convincing character, when Calvin himself was compelled to acknowledge, that, for the first fourteen hundred years after Christ, no Christian Church could be

found without its presiding bishop.* Every record procured by the industry of modern research confirms the same verdict,† and tends to substantiate the opinion we have this day endeavoured to maintain.

And now, beloved brethren, let us not withdraw from these walls without taking with us the material for some profitable reflection connected with our subject. In the first place, let us learn to love our Church with more constancy and truth than ever we have yet done. In these days of attack upon every thing that is established, her enemies have not been sparing of their scorn and condemnation. Both have been poured upon her with a willing and a liberal hand, and even by her own children has her course of forbearance been mistaken for the silence of conscious guilt; and in proportion as the slander has been credited, our confidence in her has been weakened. Brethren, let us shake off such impressions, if they have ever rested on our minds. Our Church is scriptural in her constitution, and can claim kindred with the oldest and purest communities in the peculiarities of her government. Let this tend to tie our affections to our apostolic and time-honored Zion. As we pursue our inquiries, we shall, we

* See Appendix, G.

† See Appendix, H.

trust, be able to prove that in other matters, also, things have been laid to her charge which she knows not. So far as we have gone, however, let us feel that the ecclesiastical structure of our Church bears the impress of the ordinance of God.

Secondly. Let us learn to discriminate between connection with a church however scriptural in its constitutions, and connection with the Spiritual Church of the Redeemer. The error which kept the house of Judah blinded to the last was built upon an undue value of external privileges. Their boast was, "we have Abraham to our Father." Their glory was in the carnal relationship, while they possessed not the spirit of their ancestor. On their features they bore the lines which attested their descent from the father of believers, while the traces of his faith was not discernible in their conduct. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." My brethren, build not upon the privilege you possess of visible connection with an orthodox church. If her doctrines be not savingly wrought into your hearts, and the spirit of faith which glowed so brightly in many of her martyrs, has not descended upon you, your baptismal enrolment amongst her children will profit you nothing. He was not a Jew which was one outwardly; nor is he a heaven-born Christian who possesses but the privilege of professional church-membership. God

can write folly upon the charter of the most glorious privileges, if they lead not to sanctification. He can cast the unfruitful trees out of the richest vineyard, and out of its stones raise up children to Abraham.

SERMON III.

THE LAWFULNESS AND EXPEDIENCY OF PRECOMPOSED FORMS
OF PRAYER.

2 TIMOTHY I. 13.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS.

ON the last two occasions on which I addressed you, my brethren, from this place, the objects I had in view were to direct your thoughts to the consideration of the character and privileges of the Church of Christ, and to demonstrate that the branch of it to which we are united could safely appeal, for support of its orders and government, to the concurrent testimony of Scripture and antiquity. Upon the first of these occasions I viewed the Church at large *simply in her spiritual aspect*—as a holy community elected from the mass of the ungodly by the mercy of her Lord, endowed by him with peculiar advantages, and strengthened by his pledged and unceasing protection. On the last, I viewed the Church of which we are members *as an Ecclesiastical structure*, and sought to ascertain (as far as the topic

under consideration permitted us) the soundness of the building. The subject before us this day carries us into a different department of the same general inquiry. We have "gone round Zion," and seen the variety of her resources, and tested the strength of her securities. We have examined the constitution of our own Zion, and tried her government and orders by reference to the highest authorities to which the point could be submitted. We now step within the walls of the temple, and subject to a similar scrutiny the Church's internal arrangements, the nature and peculiarities of her *worship*.

On this point, as upon the question of government, a difference arises between us and the members of dissenting communities. United as we are in the recognition of what constitutes acceptable service, we disagree upon the subject of the mode of public worship. We of the Established Church of this kingdom cling with feelings of preference to a precomposed and well-known form of prayer. They on the contrary glory in the liberty which is found, or supposed to be found, in extemporaneous services. This, we hesitate not to say, is a difference of practice which should never have led to divisions of feeling. The point controverted between the respective bodies is not one involving a difference in matters of faith; it is one altogether of discipline and arrangement. Upon it Ephraim never should have vexed Judah; for upon it,

as far as we know, Judah has never assailed Ephraim. The Church of England neither censures nor suffers herself to condemn any of the dissenting communities for their preference or adoption of unwritten supplications. She stands consistently upon her own practice, because she deems it more advisable than theirs, but she comes not off that ground to invade the peculiarity of her sister tribe. She can give to herself and to others a reason for the mode of worship that is in her, but she intrudes not upon others a rebuke on account of their non-conformity. Nay, upon the contrary, she hesitates not to express her approval of unwritten prayers used on particular occasions and under peculiar circumstances. The sick bed is often comforted by the special petitions of her ministers,* the incense oftentimes offered upon the family altar is that of unprepared intercession; and upon a late occasion some of the most distinguished of her laity in this country vindicated their right to the enjoyment of this privilege, and made, when that privilege was, from a sense of supposed duty, invaded, a firm, though respectful stand, against what they thought Episcopal encroachment. But this moderation practised by our Church towards her dissenting brethren has not been copied by them towards her. Her moderation has been met by worse than condemnation; her inobtrusive adoption of

* See Appendix, A.

her own Liturgy in the public worship of her own temples, has drawn down upon her assaults the most unprovoked, attacks the most undeserved. That we may not be suspected of having made this assertion without sufficient cause, I shall call your attention to two works of some weight in the dissenting communities. The first from which I quote is one well known, not only from the spirit of hostility towards the establishment which characterizes it, but also from the unexpected service it has done our Church by calling out on her behalf a host of able defenders. In Mr. James's "Church Members' Guide," (pp. 15, 16,) the following passage occurs—"It (the Church of England) teaches in her Prayer-Book and Canons many things which we do not believe, as for example, that baptism is regeneration—that all go to heaven whatever was their previous character. She practises Liturgical forms of worship, which we deem less edifying than extempore prayer, while her Liturgy abounds with vain repetitions. She multiplies offices in her Communion beyond all Scripture precedent, till she has quite secularized her nature and appearance; she has corrupted the communion of saints by the indiscriminate admission of persons of all characters to the Lord's table."* So much for the spirit of an Independent towards our Church.

The second production from which I quote is a

* See Appendix, B.

Catechism well known amongst our presbyterian brethren. Its title is "The Protestant Dissenter's Catechism," and it contains the following questions and answers. "Q. What are the principal disadvantages of a Liturgy? A. It is an encouragement to indolence in ministers. It tends to lessen their ability for praying in cases of emergency, &c. Q. What is objectionable in the general form and construction of the Liturgy? A. The method is irregular and confused, the several prayers, collects, &c. are without any order or connection. Some of the distinct prayers, and especially the collects, seem to have no distinguishing object, but are little more than introduction and conclusion. It is full of tautology and vain repetitions. It is in some views very defective. Many of its prayers are needless and redundant. The manner in which the people join with the priest in the Parish Churches is unedifying and unnatural." (pp. 65, 66.) This language, and the manner in which the book containing it has been received by those from whom we should have expected its utter rejection, sufficiently evince the spirit in which the Established Church is regarded by a large body of our Protestant brethren in this country, and render a defence of our Zion not only justifiable but necessary. We court no contest with those who dissent from us simply upon the ground of usages and forms. We wish to dwell with them in

unity, or to take the right hand track on the same extended field, if it pleases them to journey on the left. But when our forbearance only provokes insult, our unencroaching adherence to our own forms only excites hostility and invective, resistance to the assault is the discharge of a duty. And if for this we be censured, (as probably in these times of mistaken liberalism may be the case) we point to the unkind provocation, and inscribe the motto on our standards—"Is there not a cause?"

I. In entering upon the defence of the Liturgy of our Church, we shall first call your attention to the point of *the lawfulness of precomposed and prescribed forms of prayer*. This we shall sustain, in the first place, on the consideration that such prayers were dictated and allowed by God himself, for the use of the Church over which he specially presided,—the Church of Israel. Of this we shall find a proof in the 26th chapter of Deuteronomy. The observance spoken of in that chapter is the presentation of the basket of first-fruits to the Lord. "The priest shall take the basket out of thy hands, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and

afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders, and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me." (v. 4—10.) In this beautiful and affecting ceremonial, it is to be observed that the form of prayer in which the worshipper of Israel was to express his gratitude to God was not only distinctly prescribed, but that it was intended to be perpetual in Israel. It was not supplied for a single, a special occasion, (although that in itself would establish our point,)—it was designed for the use of the men of all succeeding generations. Enunciated first in the wilderness, it was to be used when they had come into the inheritance-land. It was not intended as a temporary provision for the Church during its time of unsettledness and migration; these very expressions of praise were to be heard in the temple, "the place where God would put his name," in the days of the nation's established greatness and prosperity. Nor are we left to gather our proof from a solitary in-

stance of this kind. By reference to the sixth chapter of Numbers, we shall find ourselves sustained by a similar testimony: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." (22—24.) This passage contains the express terms in which the ministers of the congregation of Israel were to pronounce the benediction over the people. The duty is not merely commanded, but by God himself are the words dictated. Was it then lawful, nay, fit, that Israel should be blessed in a precomposed form, and can it be unlawful or unfit that our Churches should be so addressed now? Can the Lord deny himself?

Again, in the tenth chapter of the same book, we shall discover a kindred evidence. The movement and settlements of the ark which regulated those of the children of Israel were to be solemnized by a set and unvaried form of supplication. "When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before them. And when it rested, he said, Return O Lord unto the many thousands of Israel." Neither the excitement of the projected march, nor

the happiness of the commencing rest tempted to a deviation from the prescribed and long used form. It was suggested by God, and men sought out no new inventions.

Evidences of this kind confirmatory of our point might be multiplied almost indefinitely. (Deut. xxi. 7, 8; xxvi. 13—15.) But these are sufficient to prove that pre-arranged and stated forms of public worship are sanctioned by the authorship of the Lord himself. We would remind you that they are also sanctioned by his *permission* of them in the services of the tabernacle and temple. The fifteenth chapter of Exodus is a record of an act of praise and grateful adoration in which the many thousands of Israel joined. It is the hymn of thanksgiving which was chaunted by the rescued population of the free on the banks of those waves which were rolling in vengeful fury over the bodies of their infatuated persecutors. The song of Israel threw its echoes over the dark flood like a strain of victory rising from a well fought field. As one man, the hosts of the redeemed burst forth into praise: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea: the Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation; he is my God, my father's God, and I will exalt him, —thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power." To have been congregational, sung by all,

this splendid ode of adoration must have been familiar to all, and consequently precomposed and submitted to the people. Nay more, condemned by our antagonists as is the system of response in public worship, pronounced as it is, "unedifying and unnatural," it was once adopted by Israel, and not condemned by the Lord. "When Moses and the children of Israel sung, Miriam and all the women went out with their timbrels; and Miriam *answered them* "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

But we can establish this point with equal strength of evidence by carrying you from the wilderness into the more settled times of Israel. In reviewing the arrangements made for the tabernacle and temple services in those times, we discover that they were, if not specially dictated, at least prompted and sanctioned by Jehovah. The Psalms, written by inspiration of God, were many of them introduced into, many of them written for, the public worship of Israel. The xlvith and xlviiith seem to have been specially prepared for this purpose;* and from the hands of the monarch himself did the ministers of the congregation receive the precomposed form of prayer and praise which was to ascend as incense before the Lord. "David appointed certain of the

* See Title.

Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord ; and to record and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel. Then on that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord unto the hand of Asaph and his brethren ; “ Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, &c. ; and all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord.” (1 Chron. xvi. 4—7.) Here we have prescribed forms of worship for Israel. And let it not be thought, my brethren, that this transaction was of an occasional, a transient character. That form of worship introduced by David was meant to be perpetuated and fixed in Israel ; for one of the acts of the reformation by Hezekiah, was to secure to his worshipping people the advantage of this very formulary, which had gladdened the hearts of the faithful three hundred years before. “ Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord *with the words of David* and of Asaph the seer.” (2 Chron. xxix. 25—30.) And when through the calamities which visited the nation and broke up its civil and religious usages, the order of the public worship had become deranged, one of the most pointed acts of Nehemiah was to bring back to the temple the ritual of David, to make the walls of the second building resound with the praises which had floated in rich harmony through the first. “ The singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, according to the com-

mandment of David and of Solomon his son. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise, and thanksgiving unto God." (Neh. xii. 45, 46.) All this concurrence of testimony demonstrates that even in times of inspiration, when holy men of old, many and devoted, spake from the movement of the Spirit upon their hearts, when the gift of inspired utterance was poured out in a richer flood than in the latter ages of the Church, pre-arranged and well-known prayers for public worship were ordained and approved by Him who is Wisdom itself, and assures us that we are right in our assertion as to the lawfulness of prescribed forms.

But we sustain this assertion again upon the ground that such forms were assented to, and therefore approved of by Christ when upon earth. There can be no doubt that forms of prayer, pre-arranged and fixed, were used in the synagogue service of the Jews. This is a point which scarcely requires demonstration, for it is admitted by the Jews themselves, and affirmed by heathen historians. Fragments of the Jewish Liturgy of our Saviour's days are still extant, and collected by the industry of modern authors. We shall not occupy time by producing evidence of this, although there lies before me at this moment a volume containing nineteen of the prayers which, eighteen centuries since, composed the Liturgy of

the synagogue.* We rather desire to press upon your notice the fact, that Jesus, in the days of his mortal pilgrimage, was a member of the synagogue congregation. "As *his custom was*, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day." (Luke iv. 16.) By his presence, his repeated presence, he honoured, he sanctioned the method of their worship. His enemies waited with malicious attention on his words—they laid many things to his charge, and even condemned him by perversion of his expressions. But never do they lay this to his account, that he had ever indicated contempt or disapproval of their public worship. They censured him for his conduct on the Sabbath day, but they never made it the ground of accusation that he had "forsaken the assembling of the people together." Is not all this an approval of their mode of worship, a high and distinguished testimony to its lawfulness—we had almost said, its peculiar propriety. Nay more, he was often led to speak in a strain of indignant condemnation upon the subject of the hypocrisies, the formalities, the ostentation which disfigured the devotion of his times, which made the service of the Lord the mere tribute of the lips, instead of the humble sanctified homage of the heart; but in doing so, he is never found to carry his condemnation to the established mode

* Prideaux's Connections.

of worship. That, in itself, was right; its abuse lay in the Pharisaism of the worshippers. Jesus could draw the line between these two; and while he thundered forth his denunciations against the one, he never breathed a disapproval of the other. Christ, as a worshipper himself, and Christ, as a public rebuker of improprieties, has declared the lawfulness of prayer in forms. His negative approval on the one hand, and his positive approval on the other, tells us loudly, that what he has honored we should not venture lightly to esteem.

Again: we defend the lawfulness of pre-composed forms on the ground that such were provided by Christ for the use of his own Church. We refer you to the prayer which he composed in reply to that simple and affecting application, "Lord, teach us to pray." It has long been a matter of dispute whether this prayer is to be regarded as a form or a model, that is, as a prayer to be used in the very terms in which it is constructed, or as a pattern after, or upon which, we may construct our own supplications. The prayer is somewhat differently recorded in the two Evangelists, who have preserved it for the Church. In the one the Saviour is described as saying—"After this manner, therefore, pray ye." In the other, "When ye pray, say." The former expression is appealed to as an evidence that the prayer was intended for a model; the latter, that it

was meant for a form. The question seems to me, my brethren, to be one of little moment. It is probable that our Lord intended his prayer to serve both these purposes. One thing is evident, that whether meant besides for a model or not, it was undoubtedly designed for a form. The command is definite and express. "When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c." This language shuts us up to a conclusion. But it is by no means so evident, that the words which are appealed to in favor of the opposite opinion will at all sustain that opinion. The direct meaning of the original word which is here translated "after this manner," is "so" or "thus." In this manner the word is rendered in a passage in Luke's Gospel. "If any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him." (Luke xix. 31). In this command, no latitude was left to the disciples as to the words in which they were to convey their Master's will. The words were provided for them, and their's it was to use them, "thus," not "after this manner, shall ye say." And it is clear that it was in this sense the Disciples understood their Lord; for they used, in their reply, his exact, his precise words. "The Lord hath need of him." So that while it is beyond controversy that the prayer before our thoughts was intended for a form, it is by no means so clear that it was intended merely for a pattern.

The one rests upon a definite and simple command, the other upon an expression which will not, as a translation, bear critical investigation. And this view, for which we have contended, is not only sustained by the very construction of the prayer, but by the opinion of the earliest and soundest writers of Christian antiquity.* The members of the Primitive Churches regarded it as a form supplied to them by the consideration of their Lord, and used it as such in their assemblings for public worship. It was uttered by many a congregation, who were enabled, through its blessed sentences, “with one heart and one mouth to glorify their Father.”

But, lastly, we defend our position as to the lawfulness of forms of prayer in public worship, from a fact which, were it but calmly weighed, must forever close the lips of objectors to our practice. We mean that their lawfulness, their propriety, are virtually admitted by the practice of Dissenters themselves. Their boasted liberty, the emancipation from formal restraints which their mode of service is supposed to secure for them, is an utter delusion—a pleasing, it may be, but an absolute misconception. The censure which they bestow upon us for the adoption of a form, upon examination, will be found to roll back with unabated force upon their own heads ;

* See Appendix, C.

for virtually they adopt what they condemn. *Every congregation must use a form of prayer, or cease to be a praying congregation.* Each individual in it must adopt the prayer of the conducting minister, or must, like the Pharisee, pray by himself, and so insulate himself, disconnect himself from the congregation. If there be unity of worship, there must be the following of one train of thought, the one series of words which flows from the lips of the occupier of the pulpit. *To him* the prayer offered up may not be a form precomposed and pre-arranged, for he may pray out of the momentary impulses of his heart, the excited fervency of his present devotional feelings; but the instant the prayer passes from his lips, is heard in its successive syllables by the congregation, and is adopted by them as their own supplication, that instant it becomes *to them* a form. It is not their own; it is not the creation of each person's own mind, the words of each person's separate composition. It is to the congregation as absolutely, as truly, as virtually a form, as if it were read from manuscript or book. It is impossible it can be otherwise, so long as men meet *as a congregation* to worship together, and not to put up in the same building each man his separate, his unsocial supplication. There is no alternative between having "each a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue," and following the leadership of one authorized and responsible individual.

The unity of worship, which is an essential element in the constitution of a worshipping assembly, strictly forbids it to be otherwise. We enter not now into the question, whether the prayers of our Dissenting brethren in the ministry be precomposed or not. If they be, (and, considering the solemn importance of the act, we see not why they should not be,) the case then is only altered in this respect,—that they, as well as their congregations, are using forms. But this view of the necessity of forms of prayer in congregations, reduces the question at issue between us and Dissenters to a very narrow and intelligible compass; for it takes it off the ground of *lawfulness*, and fixes it upon that of *the expediency*. It brings it to this very simple and comprehensible inquiry, viz., that since every congregation must necessarily pray in a form, which is preferable—to be supplied with one according to the option, the judgment, the capacity of the minister, and attended with all the disadvantages of its being then for the first time presented to the mind,—or to use one previously known, the result of the collective wisdom of many individuals—one which has undergone the trial of calm examination, whose petitions have been weighed in the balances of thought, and wrought from long usage and early acquaintanceship into the very texture of the mind. This is the real point to which to bring this question—to make it one of comparison, to

take it not on abstract grounds, but to regard it as a practical inquiry, to view it as something which (its lawfulness having been previously established) is to be settled by placing the advantages or disadvantages of opposite systems over against each other, and arriving at a decision between them. On such a ground as this, we fearlessly calculate upon a verdict in our favour; for the benefits gained by our system will be found far to outweigh the necessary drawbacks. This was seen, as will be evidenced by the following quotation, by the clear and sagacious mind of Calvin, an authority who will speak with weight to our opponents. In his letter to the Protector of England* is found this remarkable paragraph: "I do highly approve of a form of prayer and ecclesiastical rites, that it should be fixed; that from it it should not be lawful for pastors, in the discharge of their duty, to depart: First, that there may be a provision for the ignorance and unskilfulness of some; secondly, that the agreement of all the Churches among themselves may more certainly appear; thirdly, that the unsettled levity of some who affect novelties may be met. So also it is fit that there should be a fixed catechism, a fixed administration of the sacraments, and also a public form of prayer."

II. We are, then, to pursue our inquiry of our

* Dated 1548.

subject, in the examination of the point of the *expediency* of pre-arranged forms of prayer for public worship. The question of their lawfulness we conceive to be settled beyond dispute; we have therefore to weigh that of the superior advantages provided by a Liturgy such as we are permitted to possess. The *first* advantage which it seems to me to confer upon us is this, that it ensures to a congregation a safe and sound method of exercising the most important duty of public worship—their intercourse with God. In examining into the value of this advantage, we wish you, brethren, to observe that the question before us at this instant is to be settled by a contrast (we mean no invidious one) between our practice and the system preferred by Dissenters; and that, in looking into that system, we are bound to view it not under its choice and peculiarly happy exhibitions, but as it meets us in the course of common and ordinary experience. In investigating the merits of extemporaneous prayers, we should do wrong to weigh them by the eloquent and comprehensive effusions of such master-spirits as Hall or Chalmers. These and such-like men were unusual specimens of power. We must estimate them as we find them in the ordinary measure of capacity which is to be found in ministers in general. The question is a general one, and it must not be tried upon special or peculiar excellency. Now, affirming that a

form of prayer such as ours ensures to a congregation a safe method of praying, we ask you to take the contrast system, and to consider it in connection with a *doctrinally unsound minister*. And let it not be said, my brethren, that this is trying the question upon an unlikely case: no case is unlikely that has occurred, and that, from the tendency of men to err, is likely to be of continual occurrence. Now, of what description will be the prayers of such an individual? Will they cast the sinner's mind upon the sufficiency of an Almighty, a Divine Saviour? Will they carry peace and hope to a troubled conscience, by exhibiting the work of atonement as perfect, because the work of Deity? Will they recognize the omnipotence of the Eternal Spirit, and lead up the half-obdurate, half-convicted soul to the power of his influences, that the hardihood of the temper may be melted, and the flintiness of the rebel nature subdued? Will they bend down the listening sinner's head, and draw his feelings into an attitude of self-abasement, by confessing the spiritual bankruptcy, the utter destitution, the unqualified ruin of his state, and assist in humbling him to the dust by acknowledging his inability either to turn himself from the error of his ways, or erect a shelter from the storm of approaching vengeance? No, brethren: unless the minister (being such in views as we have supposed him) become the hypocrite, and act a part before his

people, expressing opinions which he holds not, acknowledging a hope on which he depends not, his prayers will not breathe out such topics of supplication as these. They will be the transcript of his mind. The fruit will correspond with the stock which produces it. Now, contrast with this the Liturgy of the Church. It recognizes, it expresses, it breathes out all this. • Be the minister what he may, he *must*, (oh, we glory in our bonds !) he must pray aright. He must present to the people a pure, a safe, a sound method of supplication. He must provide for the flock an orthodox and faithful medium for their intercourse with God. The Church is resolved that they shall not, in the discharge of man's most solemn duty, most glorious privilege upon earth, be left to the mercy of a creature fallible and uncertain.

Or let us suppose a case somewhat different from this, but of still more likelihood of occurrence,—that of a congregation being entrusted to the care of a minister sound and orthodox in his views, but *unspiritual in his heart*. Experience, my brethren, teaches us what the Bible has admitted, that the kingdom of God may be received in word, while it is not received in power, that the heart may be filled with the most scriptural opinions, and the religious creed formed in accordance with the soundest systems of theology, while the influence, the unction, the energy of the truth has made no lodgment what-

ever in the affections ; that, in a word, there may be the bold, correct recognition of the truth where the warm glow of its quickening and elevating power is wanting. What, in such a case as this, of frigid ministerial orthodoxy, (and is it not to be found in ministers as well as people) will be the effect upon a congregation unblest with a Liturgy? They may find everything correct in the sentiments advanced, in the doctrines recognized in the prayer ; but will there be in the prayer that rich fervent strain and tone of spirituality which constitutes prayer's chiefest excellence. Will the anxious experienced Christian who has felt the happiness of heart-intercourse with God, the blessedness of rising above earth, and having conversation in heaven, find his feelings represented by such a minister as we have pictured? His opinions he may find expressed, but will the prayer he strives to join in come over his heart like the breathings of a kindred spirit. No, brethren, for the altar from which it rises is cold ; the live coal cannot be where no fire has been kindled. The songs of Zion could not be sung in a strange land, nor can the undefinable emotions of Zion be felt by an estranged heart. And the believer will, in such an exercise, find his rising warmth checked, his kindling sensations smothered, in the want of a congenial medium through which to outpour them. Now contrast with all this the Liturgy of our Church. It

puts the words of humiliation into the mouth of the penitent, the cry for needed help upon the lips of the feeble, and gives a palpable and defined shape to the aspirations and unuttered feelings of the deeply devotional. Cannot the most spiritual-minded believer find a free and full vent for the struggling emotions of his heart in such expressions as these,—“O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man’s understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may not fail to attain thy gracious promises, which exceed all that we can desire.” “Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The Liturgy affords, in such instances as we have adverted to, a safe and a broad channel for the egress of the most varied emotions.

Let us exhibit the advantage it possesses over unprepared prayers, by the supposition of another case, a case which may have, and has had, its reality in common life. We allude to that of a congregation placed in the hands of a minister, orthodox in opinions, and spiritual in feelings, and yet *ungifted in readiness or clearness of expression*. This supposition is reasonable so long as we are led by Scripture

to expect that there shall be "diversities of gifts in the ministry," and so long as experience tells us that many can feel deeply what they cannot express lucidly. In a case such as this, we ask not what will be the effect on the minister himself, for we feel conscious that it will be to him a cause of unqualified abasement to find within him thoughts that glow, when he cannot command the words that burn. But we ask, what will be the effect on the people? When there is the want of fluency, of collectedness, of appositeness of expression in the pulpit, will there not be in the congregation an embarrassment of mind, a distraction of the attention, a chilling of the fervency, a repression of the flowings of devotion. Can it be otherwise? Can hesitation in language, or poverty of expression, or reiteration of the same ideas produce upon the hearers any other effect than that of an irritation of spirit, or a straying of attention, each, or either, unfriendly to the hallowed exercise. Brethren, this is no theory of mine. It is an acknowledged reality. Hear the following admission of it in the words of a most competent authority. "The brethren who lead our devotions are so outrageously long and dull, that after enjoying the first half of their prayers, the congregation are anxiously waiting for the close of the other half. We are often prayed into a good frame, and then prayed out of it again, by those who extend their

supplications to twenty, or five-and-twenty minutes at a time.”* Again we ask you to contrast this with our Liturgy. I wish not to become its panegyrist, because I might be considered partial in my esteem, and because I prefer to draw its encomiums out of the camp of the adversary. The testimony which the candid and high-minded Hall bore to the excellency of our Liturgy is this, “Though a Protestant Dissenter, I am by no means insensible to its merits ; I believe that the evangelical purity of its sentiment, the chastened fervor of its devotion, and the majestic simplicity of its language, have combined to place it in the very first rank of uninspired composition.” And these expressions of approval are more than echoed by one of the leading dissenting periodicals of England. “The Church, it cannot be denied, professes the life-giving doctrines of the Gospel ; favors every great principle rescued from Rome by the reformers, and puts into the lips of the people a language of devotion unrivalled in majesty, beauty, propriety, and comprehension.”† Our Liturgy, then, is what we have affirmed it to be, a safe, a certain, a congenial channel for the conveyance of supplications, reaching to frames the most exalted, stooping to feelings the most humble, and couched in a beauty

* Church Member's Guide, p. 56.

† Eclectic Review.

of expression which has elicited the warmest praise from opponents.

But we proceed to call your attention to a *second* advantage, which a form of pre-composed possesses over extemporaneous, prayers. A Liturgy is a grand cementer of the Church. It promotes that which it is beautiful to see existent in those who cling to the same faith — uniformity, and connection by worship. The Church of Jesus is one great family. It should be actuated by the same mind, and desire the same things. It should, if possible, be not only united in opinions, but also in usages. If possible, it should not only feel, but act, alike. And greatly would it tend to its exaltation in the eyes of men, if, by its congregational acts in a thousand different places, it were at once evidenced that different congregations were branches of one great brotherhood. This is in some measure done for our Church by the uniformity of worship observed everywhere throughout it. It may be, perhaps, a pleasing play of the fancy; but still to me there is something cheering and elevating in the thought that at this moment, or within the past hour, the very same sounds of praise, the very same expressions of supplication, the same uttered representations of feelings, which have risen from ourselves, have ascended upwards to the throne of the Eternal from the lips of the millions who compose our thousands of Episcopal

congregations in this empire. It is refreshing to contemplate the idea that the same note of thanksgiving which has been struck in one spot of our land, has, so to speak, been caught up, and repeated, and re-echoed along the extended line of our worshipping people, until the vast volume of harmonious sound, swelling in its progress, and gathering strength and fulness in its course, has rolled upwards from earth to heaven, and thrown itself, like a mighty wave, at the feet of the same object of adoration. It is pleasing to carry the imagination still farther, and, recollecting that the form of worship which we pursue is not confined within the limits of the seas of Britain, but is found wherever a branch of the British Church subsists, or a Church, kindred in its structure and government, has been planted; to fasten the mind upon the thought that at the noontime of the same hallowed day, our Episcopal brethren in America, in the Western Indies, in the far-off territories of Hindostan, in the many colonies where the British flag has been planted, and its authority acknowledged, — in those distant and secluded spots where an inroad has been made upon heathenism, and Christianity, in connection with our Church, has been established — in the remoteness of the Missionary Stations of the Western World, the ocean-girt islands of the Pacific, and the burning plains of Ceylon, — have all united in the same accents and expressions

of prayer, and swelled the chorus which has mingled in the Psalm of the worshippers in the heavenly temple. "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord; all the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting."

And if it be elevating and impressive to find ourselves, through the medium of our Liturgy, thus linked to churches far off, and separated from us by their geographical remoteness, it is no less a source of solemn enjoyment to find ourselves by the same chain bound to the men of other times, to discover in it a property which almost annihilates the lapse of years, and brings into close connection the past and the present. Through the medium of our Liturgy, which has survived the rise and fall of many generations, we are associated with the spirits of other days. I cannot forget as I utter the supplications of my prayer-book, that they have been uttered by believers now numbered with the dead. I cannot forget that they have expressed the very feelings and embodied the very wishes of multitudes of the excellent of the earth; that the prayers which I now use, have contributed to gladden the hearts of the persecuted Protestants of passed-by ages, have been heard in the prison cells of England, have been used at the stake, have floated above the flames, and almost borne down the taunts and execrations of Smithfield. I cannot forget that the attachment of

the martyrs of the sixteenth century to those very prayers, was among the matters laid to their charge, a special article in the indictment under which they were condemned. I cannot forget the chivalrous ardour of Cranmer who pledged himself to defend the prayer-book of the English Church against all and every assailant: the love expressed for it by Hulliers who clasped it to his heart at the stake, and died with it in his grasp: the veneration for it expressed in the conduct of Taylor when he bequeathed to his wife his Prayer-Book as the best legacy he could leave her. A work so wrought into the very history of Protestantism, a Liturgy so associated with the most trying and triumphant times of the Church's struggles cannot but be precious to every one who truly enjoys the privileges then so dearly purchased. We cannot but feel gladdened at the thought that our words of worship are the same with those which these noble spirits valued, and that in the use of the prayers handed down from them to us our Church has an uniformity and a connection with the Church of those eventful days.

But we press forward to the notice of a *third* advantage which our mode of worship possesses over free prayers. A Liturgy is one of the most secure and certain bulwarks which a Church can possess against the incursions of heresy. To this the Church of the Redeemer has ever been exposed. Paradise

was scarcely tenanted, when the serpent began to intrude upon its purity. The wheat had been hardly sown, until the enemy began to scatter tares in the field. The apostolic age had not come to its close, when the elements of heresy were discernible in the Churches. And what is the Church's history throughout, but a record of the attempts which the originators and supporters of unsound opinions have been ever making to supplant and overthrow the truth. Against all this danger so constantly menacing, so frequently successful, what is the barrier which the Church is to erect. The fashionable theory is that the pulpit can always meet and effectually resist the inroad of the foe; that in it is found the grand conservative resource of the Church, and that no heresy can thrive while a preaching ministry is sustained. This is the modern theory upon this matter; a theory which would be perfectly correct, if only one point was secured, that the occupier of the pulpit was not fallible in his nature, and capable of falling under the influence of heresy himself. Once let this be secured, and we concede that heresy can never exist without being detected, and can never raise its head without being crushed. But we pass from theory, and we look to experience; and of it do we ask the question whether the pulpit has been able without the aid of a liturgy to preserve Church purity as to doctrine. It is admitted by one of the

leading dissenting periodicals of England, that out of 258 Presbyterian congregations in England, 235 have become Socinian.* Nor is this lamentable decline confined to our own empire; America has felt that "a Church without a Liturgy is laid open to all the incursions of heresy." Boston was a place in which the light of true religion once shone with unbroken splendor. What is the history of religion there? The tares were sown, and have prospered in the midst of the wheat. The dark and deadly taint of Socinianism overspread its churches; the gold, once fine and unsullied, has become dimmed, and in the fearful transition from sterling orthodoxy to the foulest stain of doctrinal error is the truth written, that the pulpit never can of itself be regarded as a sufficient barrier against heresy. But while such is the history of churches using prayers in their public services at the will and opinions of the minister, (a history which might add to its pages the records of the Presbyterian Church in the northern parts of this country†), what is the history of the Church of England? That individuals of her communion may fall into, and advance unsound doctrines, we mean not to deny; for no Church upon earth has ever yet kept all its members in perfect accordance with its own creed: but

* Eclectic Review, Feb. 1832.

† See Appendix, D.

that no congregation or aggregate of congregations in our Church have fallen away from truth to error, from soundness to corruption, while the blessing of an used Liturgy was continued, we boldly and proudly affirm. And what, brethren, is the cause of this remarkable difference between the episcopal and dissenting communities in this and other countries? Because she possessed that which they wanted; because she relied not on the expected continuance of ministerial orthodoxy, but upon her used and published formularies. Every day that her Liturgy was read, her standard and confession of faith was promulgated; her prayers not only served for a medium of supplication for the people, but for a test and criterion of the doctrines of her ministers. It is impossible that they can inculcate error without being at once met and contradicted upon the spot. The reading desk is the corrector of the pulpit. By the construction of our services, the prayers and the sermon are thrown into such juxta-position with each other, that if the latter be sound, the harmony is at once felt; and if it be unsound, the contrast is too striking to escape observation. And, oh! we esteem it a signal beauty and excellency of our system that each member of our community, the lowliest and most obscure, possesses in the quietness of his own house, a help for the guidance of his own opinions, and a test for those of his minister, We love, for

this reason, to see the prayer-book in every man's dwelling. We exult in the thought that in it our people possess something which leaves them not at the mercy of their teachers; and that if in the course of our sabbath ministrations, they should hear things unlike the truth which they thought their Bibles taught them, they have it in their power to turn to the expressed opinions of their Church, and to become fortified in their repugnance to statements so much at variance with them.

Having so long dwelt upon the lawfulness and expediency of precomposed forms of prayer for the public services of the Church, we turn to consider, briefly, some of the most commonplace *objections* which are made to our Liturgy. In touching on this subject, it is far from our intention to notice those special objections which are urged with such industrious minuteness against particular parts of the Liturgy. To descend into such, would be to enter into a range of detail inconsistent with the nature of our present inquiry. We wish now to confine ourselves to some of the most popular exceptions taken to the Liturgy in general. The first of these is one which demands notice rather from the frequency with which it has been urged, than for any thing in it, justifying the compliment of observation. It is this, *—that the Liturgy of our Church is wearisome

* Dis. Cat. p. 66.

from the variety of its prayers. Now this, which is by some regarded as a blemish, we hesitate not to place among the excellences of our Prayer-Book. The variety of its supplications is that very peculiarity which contributes so much to its fulness and comprehensiveness. It is true that, in the course of our services, the mind is carried rapidly through a multitude of topics, and probably forbidden to rest long upon any; but this very arrangement, while it secures the notice of almost every imaginable case for supplication, prevents the mind from being wearied in the exercise. It enables it to traverse a rich and most extensive field, and, by the presentation of a quick succession of objects, prevents its being distressed by that monotony and protracted adherence to the selfsame point, which is felt to be such an evil in unprepared prayers. No, my brethren: whenever the petitions of our Church are felt to be a weariness, the fault lies not in them, but in the heart which experiences it. When the heart is unquickened by the Spirit of the Lord, every holy exercise is weariness, because it is the labour-work of an uncongenial mind. It is not the spontaneous homage of the soul which knows God's service to be perfect freedom. It is the slavish effort to discharge a debt which conscience requires to be paid, while the influence is wanting which alone can make the effort endurable. But that in itself the Liturgy we possess is tedious

from its variety, is denied by Dissenters, who, despite of prejudice, have learned to understand its value. The following sentence, from a Presbyterian periodical in America, expresses the truth: "The Church service for the morning is long, but it is not wearisome; so far from it, it is popular and delightful. The prayers, which are truly devotional, are short; and the services are interspersed with the Litany and the Lessons."*

A second objection urged against our Liturgy is, that it is for the most part taken from the Mass-Book of the Church of Rome. This is a charge which we do not feel ourselves called upon utterly to deny. We admit that there are portions and fragments of our service to be found in the Romish formularies, and that the compilers of the Liturgy availed themselves of these formularies in the formation of the Book of Common Prayer. That the Liturgy is for the most part taken from that source, is a gross perversion of the truth. That expressions and portions of prayers have been transplanted from one ritual to the other, it were in the face of candour and history to gainsay; and while we admit the fact, we are prepared to justify the proceeding. It follows not, that because Popery is in many things corrupt and unscriptural, that therefore she is so in every

* The Richmond Visiter.

thing. There are doctrines acknowledged in her creed which we ourselves glory in upholding. The doctrine of three co-equal Persons subsisting in the unity of one Godhead, is as cardinal an article in the Church of Rome as in those of England or Geneva. Are we therefore to reject it, because it is found espoused by Rome? or are we not justified in embracing it, upon the ground of its own truth and scripturality? It is upon the same principle that the compilers of our Liturgy have proceeded.* They made the ritual of the Romish Church available for their own purposes, so far as they found it good and unobjectionable. But while they selected the sound and valuable, they rejected with abhorrence the corrupt and erroneous. It can surely be no matter of censure, either against them or their work, that they pursued this course, that finding jewels in a mass of corruption, they took them out, and setting them in the Liturgy, made them sparkle through it, like the lines of a master in an illuminated volume. And be it recollected, brethren, that our obligations to Rome are neither so many nor so weighty as our enemies have been willing to represent them. The portions of the Liturgy of England which have travelled down from far-back days, are not the offspring of the Church of Rome; she was merely a kind of deposi-

* See Appendix, E.

tory of treasures gathered from other Churches. The richest and most unctious prayers in our services are to be found in the Liturgies of Churches both of Asia and of Africa, which never had alliance with the apostate Church of the West. And are we to be condemned for enriching ourselves with the preserved excellences of pure and ancient times. No, this is our boast,—that (as has been well expressed by one of our prelates) the Liturgy of our Church “is not the work of one man, of one society, or of one age. It is like the British constitution, a precious result of accumulative and collective wisdom. Its materials were gradually formed, and safely deposited among the records of various Churches, eastern and western, more and less ancient, more and less pure; and when time was ripe for its formation, its compilers were led, I verily believe, by a wisdom not their own, to proceed on the principle of rejecting whatever was peculiar to any sect or party, to any age or nation; and retaining that sacred depositum, which had the common sanction of all.”*

Again, The Liturgy of the Church has been condemned on the assertion that “it is full of tautology and vain repetitions.” This is a charge which we at once and utterly repel. Repetitions there are in our services: vain repetitions there are none. A vain

* Bishop Jebb's Correspondence, vol. i. 375.

repetition is the unmeaning reiteration of the same name or the same expression, recurring, it may be, with causeless frequency in the same clause or sentence. And of this were the worshippers of the idol guilty, in Israel, when from morning even until noon, they urged with senseless constancy the same petition, "O Baal, hear us." With this is the mass-book of the Romish Church chargeable, when it puts into the mouths of the people the endless titles of some saint, or teaches them to think that they shall be heard for the constant using of the Saviour's name. But there may be a repetition in prayer, a recurrence of the same supplication, arising merely from the fervency of the heart, the intensity of the feelings which is altogether free from this character of vanity. If every repetition be a vain one, then must the Scriptures given by inspiration of God, be subjected to the same condemnation. Listen to the expression which burst from the Psalmist when the fire was kindling within him: "The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." (Psalm cxviii. 15, 16.) Is the Spirit which was in David (we ask it with reverence) guilty here of "vain repetition." Listen again to the chorus of praise which occurs with such remarkable frequency in Psalm cxxxvi.:

“ Give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods : for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the Lord of lords, for his mercy endureth for ever. To Him who alone doeth great wonders : for his mercy endureth for ever. To Him who by wisdom made the heavens : for his mercy endureth for ever.”*

Is this, we again ask,—this hymn of celestial origin, an instance of vain repetition. If so, we are content that the Liturgy should remain subject to a similar condemnation ; and shall exult in the thought that we suffer according to the will of God. But pass from the psalmody of the Bible, and entering upon the ground of narrative, accompany me, my brethren, to the garden of Gethsemane. In that hour, the darkest which ever passed over the world, the most deeply mysterious which the annals of the earth have to tell of, when the tried Spirit of the Redeemer was almost crushed under the load of mental agony which oppressed it, Jesus sought relief in prayer. And while he poured out his very soul in supplication, and made his secluded oratory re-echo with the strong cries which escaped him, we read not that those supplications flowed forth in the form of continuous petitions ; no, the high-wrought emotions of his heart came embodied in reiterated exclamations,

* See also Psalm ciii. 3 ; cxvi. 10 ; xlvii. 6.

“ he went a little farther, and fell upon his face, and prayed, saying thrice the same words.” Were these repetitions, vain repetitions? It were blasphemy to affirm it. And if that our Master in that season of most intense and wrestling effort could best express the sensations of heart by an using and re-using of the same terms, shall we be condemned, when we close our Litany, the portion of our service which has included all our wants, and thrown us most fully on the boundless generosity of God, with the repeated invocation: “ O Christ, hear us; Lord have mercy upon us; Christ have mercy upon us.”?

The last objection to the Liturgy which we propose to notice, is, that through it, our Church inculcates the observance of particular times and seasons. And while one body of our assailants regards this as one of the proofs that “ she retains many of the corruptions of Rome;” another will bring us under the full weight of apostolic censure, “ Ye observe days and months and times and years.” Now, our reply to this objection—an objection urged again and again, until we are almost wearied with listening to the indictment,—is that we glory in what we are accused of, and deem that a peculiar excellency of our Church which is pointed at as one of her blemishes. So far from being ashamed of that arrangement of our calendar, by which particular days are signalized by special religious observance, that we

continually bless God for that wisdom given to the framers of the prayer-book, by which they were led to make it. Other communities may exult in their liberty in this respect; we exult in our compulsory regulations. For to this very arrangement do we trace much of that soundness of doctrinal opinion, that recognition of the leading truths of salvation which is admitted to exist in the members of the establishment as a body. The Church provides that the people shall be instructed in the prominent doctrines of the Gospel. By the observance of peculiar days throughout the year, she makes it a matter not of option but of necessity, that they shall hear of the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of the Saviour, the Deity and influences of the Spirit, and the Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead. And, if on those days thus dedicated (so to speak) to these grand and essential topics, her ministers should be untrue to their duty thus pressed upon their notice, the people are not permitted to be the victims of their negligence; for the service of the day preaches of itself, pointedly and powerfully, the doctrine which is peculiar to it. Nor is it in this way alone that the Church receives undoubted benefit from this so much taunted arrangement. Her attention is not only drawn to truths, which it were fatal to safety to lose sight of; but her recollection is from time to time fastened upon certain glorious

and important events in the nation's history which deserve to be enshrined in undying remembrance. The Church has made the prayer-book a tablet on which she has engraven her gratitude for privileges continued to the empire, through the means of deliverance effected in the very crisis of danger. By the services which specially belong to this day,* she has told it out that in times long passed indeed, but still unforgotten, the interests, the destinies of Protestantism, the thousand blessings both political and religious, which are interwoven with it; the stability of the kingdom itself, were all trembling upon the brink of a precipice of ruin, and that the Lord brought to light the perils which threatened them, and guarded our liberties in the hour which was to have witnessed their downfall. By these services she has enjoined her children to be grateful, and put, as it were, the hymn of thanksgiving into their lips: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; bless the Lord who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness."

And now, brethren, that we have dwelt thus minutely upon the several topics we designed to treat of,—the lawfulness and expediency of pre-composed forms of prayer, and the popular ob-

* This Sermon was preached on the 5th of November.

jections taken to our Liturgy—we desire to bring this subject to a close by addressing a few words of admonition not unconnected with it. In the first place, let us bind it upon ourselves as a duty not to condemn the usages of others, when those usages are not condemned by revelation. For ourselves, we claim the right to worship God in that manner which we know to be lawful, and which we deem to be most expedient. Let us extend the same license to others. We can have no quarrel with our dissenting brethren in respect of their mode of public worship; for while we advocate the *superiority*, we assert not the *necessity* of liturgical forms. We pronounce our own way to be more excellent than theirs; but we deny not the excellence of theirs. We view the question which has been discussed this day to be one of opinion and preference, rather than one of necessity and unaltering rule; not as one fitted to break up Christian fellowship, but as one on which the Churches may afford consistently to differ.

Secondly, While we pursue this course of moderation towards others, let us remember that there is a duty we owe to ourselves. It is inculcated in the words of our text—“Hold fast the form of sound words.” Let no false or sickly liberality make us insensible to the blessing we possess in our tried and time-honoured Liturgy. It is our duty to love it, it is our duty to study it; and while, above all, we

seek to imbibe its blessed spirit, it is our duty, if need be, to rally round and defend it. Brethren, we live in times when things are not honored because they are sacred, nor respected because they are venerable from antiquity. The hand of innovation has touched the temporalities of our Church, and meddled with parts of the external structure. But it must not dare to touch the ark. If ever the hour comes, (and, looking to the aspect of the times, we know not how soon it may come,) when the restless spirit of change, which is so remarkable a character of our days, should direct its reckless and intrusive energies against the spiritualities of our Zion, should dare to interfere with her Articles, or to modify the wholesome faithfulness of her Liturgy, then shall the hour have arrived when it shall be the bounden duty of the laity of our Church to arouse themselves from a slumber in which they have too long indulged, and, gathering themselves round the Prayer Book, as the citadel of the fortress, to tell those who would rashly infringe on their best privilege—"Ye shall not come up into this city, nor cast a bank against it."

Lastly, Brethren, be prepared to give, to every one who asketh, a reason of the attachment to our Liturgy which is in you. It will not satisfy the objector that you profess to love it because it has been in your hands from childhood, and its sounds are those you have ever been accustomed to. You must learn

to repel the assailant, and to produce substantial reasons for your adherence. And to do this, you must study your Prayer Book. You must become acquainted with its several excellences to be able to point them out to others. And such a study will be neither uninteresting nor unprofitable. Each step in it will lay open more of the deep experience, the sterling orthodoxy, and the unctious spirit of the framers of our formularies. It will tell us more of what genuine prayer is; for, from the fervor, the fulness, and the elevation of the Liturgy, we may learn what it is "to worship God in spirit and in truth."

SERMON IV.

THE OFFICES, RITES, AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH.

I CORINTHIANS XIV. 40.

LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER.

OUR attention has now been occupied for three Sabbaths upon different sections of the same interesting subject. In entering upon it, we made it our first duty to consider the spiritual character of the Church of Christ, as being a point of infinitely higher importance than aught connected with the structure of any visible Church upon earth. We then entered upon the examination of the Church with which we ourselves are externally and ecclesiastically connected, for the purpose of ascertaining, by calm and candid inquiry, whether, in her system and peculiarities, she was deserving of our adherence and attachment. And in pursuing this inquiry, we investigated, first, the construction of the government and ministry of the Church of England; and, after due and honest

examination had, we found that upon this point she could bear to be brought to the law and to the testimony—that, weighed in the balances of Bible declarations and historical evidences, she could claim for herself that she was tried and not found wanting. Our second point, in the pursuance of the same inquiry, was the internal arrangement of the Church with respect to her ritual. And in dwelling upon this peculiarity of our Church, this point by which she is separated from, and for which she is reproached by, Dissenters, we were enabled to demonstrate,—

First, That she was justified by Scripture in her using of Liturgical forms : Secondly, That her adoption of these, in preference to extemporaneous supplications, is both marked by wisdom, and followed by unequivocal advantages : and Thirdly, That the particular form she uses has elicited the admiration, and commanded the homage of respect even from those who were without the pale of her communion. There remains still another department of our subject to traverse, one nearly allied to that which last demanded our reflections, for both belong to the same field of inquiry—the internal economy of the Established Church. The one brought under our survey the Church's mode of worship, the other carries us into the consideration of her offices, rites, and ceremonies.

At first view, it would have seemed altogether

unlikely that a point such as this could have been made the subject of animadversion by the foes of our Zion. We should have expected, that in a matter so entirely belonging to the internal discipline or arrangements of a Church, other communities would have seen, if not the necessity, at least the propriety, of abstaining from all strictures on a subject with which they were in no way connected,—that the Churches would have made mutual concessions of the privilege of each to conduct its own worship and regulate its own ceremonials, as seemed best to its own wisdom. And the only limitation which we could have deemed it allowable to attach to the exercise of such a privilege, is this, that such arrangement should never conflict with any rule of Scripture, or any thing tending to edification. But this expectation of ours, so just and reasonable, is destined to encounter disappointment. The Church cannot make internal arrangements for herself without coming under the disapproval, or being subjected to the ready denunciations of dissenters. We stand accused of imposing upon our deluded people idle and unauthorized inventions. That such has been the course observed towards the establishment we shall demonstrate by a reference to some of the productions of our assailants. I turn first to the volume somewhat strangely named “Christian Fellowship; or, the Churchman’s Guide.” This is the portraiture

which its author draws of our Church, — “The Church of England retains many of the corruptions of her relation at Rome. She multiplies offices in her communion beyond all Scripture precedent, till she has quite secularized her nature and appearance. By her system of patronage, she has taken from the people the just right to elect their own pastors, and deprived herself of the means of preserving a faithful and holy ministry, and she has corrupted the communion of the saints by the indiscriminate admission of persons of all characters to the Lord’s table.” (pp. 16, 146.) So far with regard to the strictures of an Independent upon the exercise of our privilege to make and follow our own internal arrangements. The second evidence I shall produce, is one to which your attention has been already invited, and to which I purpose to refer more copiously before arriving at the close of my subject. In “Palmer’s Protestant Dissenter’s Catechism,” we discover the following questions and replies: “What is the opinion of Dissenters with respect to *ceremonies* in divine worship? They disapprove of such as are of mere human invention, especially when made necessary, as those of the Church of England are, and think themselves bound to refuse complying with them. Are the ceremonies of the Church of England forbidden in Scripture? They are not expressly forbidden in Scripture, be-

cause they were not in use early enough; but all *will-worship* is, of which these are one kind; and as they are not *commanded* there, that is a sufficient reason for refusing to submit to them. Does not the Church claim authority to decree rites and ceremonies in divine worship? Yes; but Dissenters deny the claim, and cannot submit to any of her ceremonies, till she can prove her authority to enjoin them from Scripture. Is nothing to be required in the worship of God, but what is commanded in Scripture? Nothing but what is either expressly commanded, or necessarily implied in a command." (pp. 78, 79.) Now, before proceeding to comment upon this passage, which is mildness itself compared to many others in the same work, I wish to make an observation upon the weight which this book should bear as an authority, or an expression of the mind of Dissenters towards the Established Church. It may by some be supposed that it is unjust and uncandid to make Dissenters generally responsible for the opinions advanced or the sentiments expressed by any single individual; nay, more, that the existence of such a hatred-engendering publication had but to be known to the influential of our Dissenting brethren to ensure its repudiation and rejection. It would, my brethren, be pleasing in this day of needless hostility to think so; but the volume itself from which I quote puts to flight such a happy illusion. In the

Preface to this edition,* the following statement is found: "With respect to the necessity of republication, it is only needful to observe, that this is the *second* edition presented to the public in the present year; that one thousand copies of the previous edition, published in March last, were disposed of within the short space of *two months*, and that the demand for them since has been increasing with an eager and impatient avidity. To the ministers of the Synod of Ulster, who have taken so active and gratuitous a part in the circulation of the former impression, he (the publisher) is much indebted." † This, we conceive, gives this book a weight and an importance which possibly in itself it may not possess; for it puts it before the public, not simply as the work of the individual whose name it bears, but as that work taken up, espoused, sanctioned, and actively circulated by,—not the laity among the Dissenters, but those whose station gives them influence, and whose profession stamps a value on their opinion,—ministers of the Presbyterian Church. Such, then, is the authority by which we are censured for the adoption of peculiar ceremonials in our services. We now return to the passage which has been cited out of this evidence. It will be seen that it touches upon two points which are closely connected with our main

* Belfast, 1824.

† See Appendix, A.

inquiry of this day. The *first* of these is the principle on which we are condemned,—because “the ceremonies of the Church are *not commanded* in Scripture;” and upon this is grounded the assertion that nothing should be required in the worship of God, but what is either expressly commanded, or *necessarily* implied in a command.” So that, if we cannot produce Bible injunctions, either signified or expressed, for our peculiarities, we are forthwith exposed to a sweeping condemnation for being unscriptural;—nay, more, antiscritural in our usages.* Now, we wish the distinction to be drawn between these two terms. Any thing that is antiscritural we reject, with the same earnestness of reprehension that is found in any of our assailants. On this point our Church is express: “It is not lawful for her to ordain any thing contrary to God’s word written.” † But there may be many things which are neither enjoined nor alluded to in the word of God, which the Church may deem it highly expedient to ordain; and such ordinances may be unscriptural, because they appeal to no direct Scripture for their support; and yet they may be far from antiscritural, because they come not into conflict or collision with any rule or command of revelation. This privilege we claim for the Church, and we conceive that there are but

* Prot. Diss. Cat. Qu. 57.

† Art. XX.

two restrictions by which it can lawfully be fettered : first, that the matter ordained or appointed be in no instance a matter of faith, a point involving the question of a man's salvation ; and, secondly, that it be not useless or vain, a thing of idle ceremony, but tending to profit and edification. This allowance, restrained only by such exceptions, seems to be by the Scriptures conceded to the Church. Our text, alluding to matters of internal arrangement, extends the permission, but limits it by the restriction, " Let all things be done decently and in order." * And the same apostle from whom it issued, writing on the same point to another of the Primitive Churches, lays down a similar law accompanied by a similar limitation : " Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby the one may *edify* another." So that we conceive, that although a thing may not be commanded either expressly or by implication in the word of God, it still may be allowable, nay more, commendable, upon the ground of its profit and propriety. And notwithstanding that dissenters expend upon us the weight of their (sometimes most uncourteous) remarks on account of an adherence to this principle, it is not altogether un instructive to learn that by a remarkable inconsistency they build upon the very law which they con-

* See Appendix, B.

demn. The catechism on which I have commented has been honored by the recommendation of a well-known dissenter, from whom I have already quoted,* and we may therefore reasonably infer that the statements which have been read from it are in accordance with that dissenter's views. And yet upon reference to his own work we find this remarkable admission, "It is true that we shall search the New Testament in vain for either precedent or practice, which will support all the usages of our Churches, any otherwise than as these usages are deduced from the spirit and bearing of *general principles*." And when he comes afterwards to speak of these usages thus resting upon the mere spirit of general principles, unsupported by precedent or practice, we find amongst them—not things so trivial and unimportant as mere ceremonies—but a thing so solemn and weighty as the election of the pastor by the flock to which he is to minister. "No case occurs in the inspired history where it is mentioned that a Church elected its pastor; yet it so entirely *accords with the practice of the Church in other respects*, that an exception in this particular would have been a singular anomaly, &c." So that whilst those who, unprovoked, fling upon us the fulness of their reproofs for upholding ceremonies and rites without express warrant of

* Church Member's Guide, p. 6.

Scripture, they yet are found themselves to uphold the very most important and distinctive of their practices,—that to which they cling as to one of their privileges—that which they cast into invidious comparison with our usage, upon the weak foundation of “general principles,” or the dangerous ground of a fanciful analogy.

The *second* point to which the Catechism, from which I have already quoted, has adverted, is the denial to a Church of the right of decreeing rules, rites, and ceremonies.* We pause not now to notice the difficulty in which the Dissenting communities must necessarily involve themselves by the adoption of this opinion. Every Church visible upon earth must have its usages, although they may be of the simplest kind. In order that things, in the conduct of public worship may be done decently and in order, certain regulations, or admitted practices, must be in existence. And for many of these—such as the order followed in religious services, addresses before the Communion, the mode of the administration of baptism, the setting apart of particular days for devotional purposes—it will be difficult to discover any injunction in the Bible. They are pressed upon these communities neither by the voice of Scripture, nor by that of any extraneous authority. From whence then does it arise, that they are followed

* Quest. 58.

respectfully and used so universally? Because they are matters of Church regulation. The body frames and appoints them for its own comfort and guidance, and finds the result to be decency and edification. This is the principle we contend for—the right of the Church to do this. This is the principle which our assailants pronounce to be erroneous, and yet adopt in their own practice.

The first branch, then, for our consideration this day, is the examination of this disputed question. We have seen what the views of dissenters are respecting it—that they deny the authority claimed by the Church to decree rites and ceremonies. That claim our Church has advanced in her 20th Article in which she affirms this power to belong to her, and at the same time limits its exercise by the full admission of this principle, “that it is not lawful for her to ordain anything contrary to God’s written word.”

Now in vindicating this claim of our Church, we shall support it, in the first place, by a reference to *the practice of the Church of Israel*. In order to appreciate the weight of the argument which we purpose to draw from this source, it will be well to recollect the peculiar character and history of that Church. Her institutions were, from the highest to the most unimportant, created by God himself. It was not left to the sagacity or carefulness of man to construct the religious system by which she was dis-

tinguished. Her ceremonies, her ritual, all her multiplied observances and her varied offices, were arranged and modelled by the same Almighty power. In wisdom did Jehovah make them all. And let it be recollected that it was not the mere outline of this peculiar system which was drawn by the hand of God, it was filled up and specified, in all its parts, with a minuteness which attested alike God's consideration for his people, and his wish that they should adhere closely to the peculiarities which he imposed upon them. Not only were the leading features of their ritual, the priesthood, the festivals, the sacrifices, and the mode of worship in general arranged by God; but these several points of the system were carried out into the largest detail, and expanded so as to touch upon the several cases which might arise in connection with them. The intention, the leading intention at least, of all this, was to mark out Israel as a singular, a peculiar people. These express and detailed rites and ceremonies were the hedge of the vineyard whereby it was separated from the surrounding wilderness. And it was not only the duty, but it was the interest of Israel to keep within the lines of her own enclosures; and to abstain, as much as possible, from departure from, or addition to, the ordinances appointed by God. Yet although the Jewish Church possessed this advantage, a ritual ordained by God,

adapted to her condition, and comprehensive in its provisions, she did not consider that she was therefore prohibited from enjoining upon her children such additions to it, as peculiar circumstances might warrant, or a desire of edification suggest. The existence of the synagogue, the ministerial services peculiar to it, the rite of baptism, and many ceremonies observed at the Paschal feast; these, and matters of the same character, were all additions to the ritual as it came from the hands of Moses. And by what authority were these introduced and sanctioned in Israel?—not by that of any extra or express revelation, but by that of the Church exercising its understood privilege of decreeing rites and ceremonies. And lest we should, on this point, be met by the objecting reply, that we are converting a case of manifest disobedience into a precedent—that Israel should meet with our censure rather than our sanction for such proceedings—we press it upon your consideration, that these additions to the ritual, not being of divine appointment, were sanctioned by the Redeemer himself. In the days of his mortal pilgrimage, he attended, “as was his custom,” upon the services of the synagogue; he joined in its prayers, he waited upon its ministry. And thus, by participation in such arrangements, he stamped upon them a dignity, an honor, an approval. The lash of censure, which he often applied to many unlawful inno-

vations, was never found to reach these. He rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for displacing the commandments of God, that they might, upon their ruins, build the weak structure of their own traditions; (Matt. xv. 6.) but he never was found to condemn them for introducing baptism into the ceremonies of the Church, for he submitted to it himself; nor for supporting the synagogue, for he both attended and conducted its worship. And thus, so far as the Jewish Church is concerned, have we seen the Church's power to decree rites and ceremonies not only claimed and exercised, but that claim virtually admitted, and that exercise deliberately sanctioned by Him who was God manifest in the flesh, the same being who had been before with Israel in the wilderness, who himself had ordained her ceremonies, and appointed her ritual.

Now this point, which has been so far established by a review of the practice of Israel, will strike us with increased force, if we turn our attention *to the character of the Christian Church*. No two communities could, in their genius and objects, be more entirely dissimilar than the Churches of the Old and New Testament dispensations. The former was intended for a single nation. Its design was to preserve that nation, in a holy, a peculiar, an insulated condition. Its genius was exclusive, not universal. It sought not to gain converts to the creed

of Moses, but to sustain around its own people a barrier line of religious peculiarities which should prevent admixture with the nations. Its field was the land of promise. The latter, on the contrary, was designed to take the whole population of mankind into its circle of mercy, to scatter the blessings of a glorious Gospel amongst the most distant tribes of the earth. It founded, not a spiritual monarchy, but a spiritual empire; and under the influence of its laws did it purpose to bring nations the most dissimilar in their character, and the most uncongenial in habits. Its field was emphatically the world. The commission which was placed in the hands of the Apostles, extended their labours to every creature. Now we conceive it impossible that a Church of this character could be without the power to ordain rites and ceremonies. It would find a necessity of conforming itself in some respects to the habits and the usages of the countries into which it was carried, of accommodating itself (so that in doing so it trampled upon no law of principle) to the varied circumstances in which it would necessarily be placed, — of becoming, as far as was lawful, “all things to all men.” If the Jewish Church, compact in its character, and limited in its extent, possessed this privilege, much more must the Christian Church have required this privilege. The circumstances calling for its exercise in the one case, would be ten-fold

more than those in the other. And this argument from a contrast of the natures of the two dispensations, strong and impressive as in itself it is, we find to be confirmed by facts recorded in the very place where we should naturally look for such confirmation, the records of the progress of primitive Christianity. By the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we learn that dissensions upon a difficult and perplexing point disturbed the peace of the Christians at Antioch; and by a reference from them to the heads of the Christian Church at Jerusalem, the Church was placed in a position to exercise or to deny its right to interfere in matters of ceremony. "The Apostles and Elders came together to consider of the matter," and they issued this decree, that "they which from the Gentiles were turned unto God, should abstain from things strangled and from blood;" an ordinance this springing from the very circumstance which Christianity might reasonably have expected to arise, and which would make it expedient, if not necessary, that she should possess this power for which we contend,—the peculiar prejudices and customs with which she would come into conflict. This decree, bearing upon the case of the Antioch Christians, touched upon no matters of faith or points of doctrine; on those the Church had received her laws from which she could not depart, and to which she could not add. It alto-

gether belonged to circumstantials; and with such the Church did interfere, because, as we conceive, she enjoyed the privilege which we are at present advocating.

And, brethren, that such power resided in the Church, to be drawn out of her privileges, and exercised as occasion called for, we would again infer from *the testimony of scripture* upon the point. It is remarkable that in the whole compass of New Testament scripture, there should be so little enjoined upon the topic of rites and ceremonies. The principles of Christianity are laid down with a precision and minuteness altogether marvellous. There is not an important, an essential doctrine of the Gospel which is not defined, and reiterated, and commented upon, and defended in a manner which shews how anxious was the Spirit of God to establish and settle the landmarks of the truth. The government of the Church is not only specified, but as we have seen on a former occasion,* the episcopal and pastoral duties are detailed and accurately enjoined. Nay, the more unimportant topic of discipline is adverted to in almost every epistle, and strict and definite rules laid down for the Church's guidance. But on the point of rites and ceremonies, the New Testament scriptures are almost wholly silent. They inculcate a few general rules, rather expressing the

* Sermon II.

principles by which such matters were to be regulated, than defining what rites and ceremonies each community should adopt. "Let us follow after things wherewith one may edify another. Let all things be done decently and in order." "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things which are worthy." "Let all things be done unto edifying." (Rom. xiv. 19. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Titus i. 5. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.) These commands are altogether of a general character. They enjoin the duty; but the peculiar shape and form into which that duty shall be carried, they leave entirely undefined. And this, while it shews upon the one hand the propriety and necessity for rites and ceremonies, shews upon the other that the power of appointing them rested with the Church. In their epistles, the Apostles recommend the thing to be done, while they abstain from entering into details as to the mode of doing it. They lay down distinct principles as the foundation of a superstructure; but the plan and order of the architecture they leave to be determined by circumstances. We ask, then, whose duty was it, whose privilege was it to carry out these general laws into special arrangement? The power must have rested somewhere, and with whom else could it have rested but with those who had the ruling and controlling authority in the several Churches, and whose duty it was to

promote the edification of the community by such regulations as circumstances might call for? This must, my brethren, be the conviction of every person whose candour is not overborne by his prejudices. It was the opinion of one to whose judgment our dissenting brethren will bow with deserved respect. The Geneva reformer commenting upon the expressions of our text makes this observation—an observation equally accordant with the voice of scripture, as with the testimony of experience. “That which Paul here requires, that all things should be done “decently and in order” cannot be had, unless through the addition of canons (or constitutions) by which as with bands, that very order and decency may be preserved.” Whether, therefore, we look to the practice of the Church of Israel, to the contrast character of the Christian Church, or to the indications which the Scriptures contain in reference to the point we are investigating, we feel ourselves warranted in concluding that that privilege denied to us as a Church by our adversaries is granted to us by the Lord, and that the mind of the Redeemer was this, that every Church should possess the necessary power of ordaining rites and ceremonies.

II. Having spoken so much in defence of the principle involved in our text, we proceed in the next place to the *application* of that principle to several cases which are made causes of objection to

our Church. The first of these to which I shall invite your attention is the *creation of offices in the Church of England*, for which there is no direct authority from Scripture. This, we have seen from a passage already brought before your notice from "The Church Member's Guide," is one of the things laid deliberately to our charge, and declared to be one of the reasons which justify secession from the Established Church. And that we may not be left in doubt as to the specific offices which thus startle the unbending consciences of our assailants, the "Protestant dissenter's catechism" enters into a most minute and pains-taking statement of these exceptionable appointments. In the fifty-seventh page we meet with the following quotation: "Q. What officers are employed in the Church of England under the king, to whom the dissenters object? A. Archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deacons, prebendaries, canons, vicars general, &c.—offices which Christ never appointed, which nothing in the New Testament warrants, but are evidently of Popish original." We pause not to dissect this answer, nor to expose its manifest falsehood:—we pause not to recal to your remembrance, that the second of these condemned offices has been proved to have the largest New Testament warrant, and to be of apostolic, of Divine appointment:—we pause not to appeal to an overwhelming mass of evidence from church history,

and the writers of the earliest ages, demonstrating that the first of these offices was in existence as early as the second century, and therefore could not be of Popish original.* But we press forward to the defence of these offices, by an appeal to the principle which has been already established,—a church's power to make such appointments as may seem to her to be called for, so that the scripture restriction be not violated. Now, this principle we apply to the case before us; and the application of it to that case we defend, first *from the practice of the Jewish Church*. It is not necessary to carry back your minds to the view already given of the peculiar circumstances of that Church, nor to revert to the fact that she was furnished with her several and many officers by the Lord himself. Our point lies with the conduct of that Church. In looking into her state in times subsequent to the days of Moses, when her ecclesiastical arrangements were made, we find not only rites and ceremonies existing in her unknown to those times, but officers belonging to her, and peculiar duties discharged by those officers, for which the book of Leviticus furnishes no provision whatever. Thus the offices of the scribes and the rulers of the Synagogue were evidently of modern formation, they rested upon no Bible command, they

* See Appendix, C.

lie not within the circle of the primitive model; and yet they are not only allowed by the priests and the people, but what is of far greater weight in our argument, unobjected to by Jesus himself. Called upon oftentimes to rebuke the men, he never condemned the office. Pouring forth the thunder of his righteous indignation against their hypocrisy, their ungodliness, their daring intrusion upon the sacredness of God's command, he never condemns them for climbing up unlawfully into the sheep-fold, or innovating without or against authority upon the Church's proper constitution. On the contrary he drew the broad distinction between the office and the holder; and while he boldly censures the latter, he requires respect and subjection to the former. "The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses' seat;" that was the office. "All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works:" that was the sanction of it, and the reproof of them. If therefore the Saviour had not been satisfied with the reasons for which these offices were created, and recognized not the power in the Church by which they were constituted, we can scarcely think that he would have bestowed upon them and it the tribute negative and positive of his approval. The inference from all this is clear, that the principle which justified the Church of Israel in adding to her offices, also justifies us. The case

of necessity or edification may call for the exercise of the power ; and the scripture limitation is the only check which can bear upon the extent to which it is to be employed.

But we defend these offices in the Church of England upon another ground—*the circumstances of the Reformation*. The Reformation in England was that glorious event which bestowed upon the land of our nativity and the homes of our forefathers those incalculably precious blessings which have descended to us. It brought, after many an unavailing struggle after them, that liberty in all our institutions, those privileges both civil and religious, which are the boast and blessedness of our country. It did more : it scattered away the dense darkness which had for centuries hung over the land, and poured out upon it the rich and celestial light of a long lost purity of doctrine. The early Church of Britain was pure and scriptural and apostolic.* It walked in white ; for the touch of Papal corruption had not defiled its garments. But in process of time, the contagion of impurity which had vitiated other Churches, the mystery of iniquity slowly but steadily working, which had planted tares in the wheat-field of many a once sound community, spread its poison into the Anglo-Saxon Church ; and step by step she fell, till

* See Appendix, D.

the mark of the beast was broadly stamped upon all her institutions. For centuries did the long night of ignorance and delusion last; it almost threatened to be eternal. But through it all there were in its gloomy watches occasional flashings of unnatural brilliancy, which just exhibited the wide-spread desolation, and left the people to marvel and ponder over the view they had thus for an instant been presented with. Abroad, the cry was heard again and again in the valleys of Piedmont, "Would God, would God it were morning;" and from the Alpine ridge of their fastnesses did a stream of light often descend upon the tracts below, and illuminate by its mysterious and sustained lustre, regions far distant from its birth-place. And at home, though that light which shone in the deep darkness did not blaze with such meteor brightness as abroad, it shewed itself by the faithful testimonies of the fourteenth century, the intrepid declarations of Cobham and the writings of Wickliffe in such vivid sparkles as, for a moment, revealed much of the iniquity under which the land was groaning. In this way the mind of England became prepared gradually, but effectually, for the reception of those saving and hallowed truths which introduced the Reformation. But, brethren, for the elucidation of the point to which we are first speaking, let us remind you of the character of that momentous event. The English Reformation was

not a revolution ;* it was not a total and unsparing overthrow of all which it found in existence, and a creation of something new and untried in its stead. It was the removal of all that was corrupt, but it was not the destroyer of what was unobjectionable. The Church of England, in its struggles after freedom, swept away with a stern determination and an unfaltering hand every thing that essentially was connected with Rome, but spared every thing that could be safely and consistently detached from her system. Against her doctrines she maintained a warfare uncompromising and unyielding ; against her superstitious observances she directed the full energies of her reforming spirit ; and every ceremony that, upon examination, was found to be vain and unmeaning, was subjected to a most rigorously executed sentence of expulsion. But throughout the whole of this most interesting and eventful process, she acted in the temper of one willing to retain all that could be justified, and to draw a clear line between what was radically unsound and what was only tinged by the atmosphere of corruption in which it dwelt. And moving in the spirit of these principles, she felt not the necessity of advancing to that temper of fanaticism which, identifying the temple with the system, impelled the Scottish Reformers to the

* See Appendix, E.

demolition of some of the noblest structures of antiquity. The English Reformers wished to re-model, not to destroy. Their object was to bring back the British Church to its former purity, by removing the rubbish and additions which defaced the spiritual building. A long continuance of ignorance had poured over it such a stream of corruption as had covered the very walls, and obliterated the outlines of the ancient edifice; but, like cities overwhelmed by the tide of a volcanic eruption, the foundations and the buildings were still there; and there needed but the work of excavation and removal to exhibit the streets as they once were, and bring to light the long-hidden beauties of the stately architecture. They found the cathedrals and their establishments rivetted in the affection and veneration of the people, and they satisfied themselves with the cleansing of the temple, without deeming it necessary to extirpate its ministry. They cast out from it the mass, the merchandize, the abominations of Popery, but they saw neither the necessity nor the expediency of discontinuing offices which were lawful in themselves, and which might remain with advantage to the cause of truth. Thus these offices in our Church for which we at present contend, are retained by a consistent regard to the sound and sagacious principles which regulated the movements of the Reformation. Had they been antiscritural, had they been unne-

cessary and inexpedient, we doubt not but that the same wisdom which expelled what was objectionable in doctrines and ceremonies and usages, would have decreed the extinction of them. And, brethren, we turn to inquire whether the judgment of the Reformers has not been vindicated by the result ;— whether, in other words, the continuance of these very offices in the Church, retained upon the ground of edification, has not been proved to be unto edification. Let it be recollected, (what is too little recollected,) that learning and scholarship are as necessary to a Church's growth and welfare, as the most active pastoral exertions—that it is not enough to have ministers who will toil in the round of ordinary parochial duties, but that we must have those also whose literary productions will lead to the clearer exhibition, the deeper confirmation of the truth,— whose writings will prove nourishment for the Church on the one hand, and a barrier against heresy upon the other. And these advantages, in which all who value the life and permanency of religion are interested, can scarcely be secured without that leisure and exemption from those anxieties and pursuits of the simple pastoral life, which these very offices are calculated to confer. The Church, the nation, the cause of truth at large, have been deeply indebted to the men who have held them ; for oftentimes when the enemy has come in like a flood, and threatened

to deluge our country with a tide of infidelity and error, the Church has found, in her hour of peril, workmen prepared to resist him, and supplied with materials for throwing up a barrier against the coming danger. So far from feeling that our Church is "secularized in her communion by the multiplicity of those offices," that we glory in the rich resources she possesses through them, and rejoice in the thought that from their learned retreats she can call forth her champions to uphold, to vindicate, and to enforce the truth as it is in Jesus. We admire the wisdom which prompted the Reformers to retain such nurseries for literature, and we see that wisdom receiving a high and triumphant attestation, when such giants in learning as Warburton and Berkeley, as Beveridge and Horsley, as Paley and Butler, have stepped forward to the field of combat, and contributed either to the revival of true religion, or the strengthening of the bulwarks around it. This is the view which every large and unprejudiced mind will take of this provision which our Church has made for the fostering of talent which has been dedicated to the service of the Redeemer. It was this view which induced a distinguished member of the Church of Scotland—distinguished no less for the power of his mind than the candour of his opinions, to put on record sentiments equally honourable to his heart and his judgment. "The scholarship has been well employed,

that rescued from the entanglements of sophistry the precious truth of the divinity of our Saviour. And well may England rejoice in those learned ecclesiastics, who have put down, as far as argument could do it, the infidelity which denied the truth of his high and heavenly apostleship. And worthier, far, than all the revenue of all her colleges, is the return of criticism and of demonstration that they have made in behalf of his great sacrifice, and of his unchangeable and ever-during priesthood." This passage well expresses the truth. It admits that the existence of these offices has tended to the Church's edification:—that brings them within the Scripture restriction. We have before proved the right of the Church to ordain them:—that brings them within the Scripture permission.

But we proceed to the consideration of another objection which has been urged against our Church, and to which we are desirous to apply the principle we have already established. We are censured not only for the appointment of offices in the Church, which rest, as we are told, upon no scriptural warrant, but for the *appointment of certain days, and times, and festivals*, which are equally destitute of Bible sanction. To avoid the charge of misstating the objections of our opponents, we shall give them in their own words. In the 87th page of the "Dissenter's Catechism," we find the following passage:

Q. "What do Dissenters object to the appointment of these holidays? A. 1. It is impossible many of them should be observed without a criminal neglect of secular business. 2. Such observances encourage superstition and will-worship, and are a tacit reflection upon the great Head of the Church, who has required no day to be kept holy, but that which commemorates his resurrection. 3. Some passages of Scripture strongly discourage them, especially Gal. iv. 2: 'Ye observe days and months, and times and years; I am afraid of you,' &c. Q. What is particularly objected to the observation of saints' days? A. It looks like the adoration of departed spirits, as practised in the Church of Rome, and thus leads to Popery, as it evidently sprung from thence." It is not our object to answer this production, even although it has received the sanction of many of our Dissenting brethren in the ministry; otherwise it were no difficult task to expose the utter want of principle, of consistency, and of candour, which is observable in this passage. We merely select it as conveying the substance of the varied objections which are taken to our Church, on account of the appointments in question; and in replying to it, we do so, in the first instance, by recurring to the principle on which we have already dwelt,—the power which a Church possesses to make such appointments in the matters of ritual and services as she may con-

ceive to tend to edification. We have seen that a Church possesses and rightfully exercises this privilege with regard to her offices, and we see no reason whatever why she may not also exercise it with regard to the observance of peculiar days. They both come under the same rule, and are alone affected by the Scripture limitation. If the circumstances of the Church extending itself into lands far distant, and amongst nations utterly dissimilar in habits, required that the rites and ceremonies of religion in general should be regulated by no fixed and universally pervading code of laws, but left open to be adapted to those circumstances, we conceive that it was and is equally allowable to exercise the same discretion with regard to the hours of service, the time to be given to public worship, and the frequency of the times for that worship. This was the principle on which the early Church acted, referring all such regulations to the well-understood privilege which the Church possessed, requiring only that all things be done to edifying: and such do we conceive of these objected-to "days" of ours. We conceive that they do tend to edification, not only affording increased opportunities to our people for assembling themselves together, but for pondering over the lives, the devotedness, and the martyrdom of those whom we then specially think of, and whose examples we are moved to place before us. And, brethren, let it

be recollected again, that this power which is denied to us by Dissenters, the exercise of which constitutes one of the many baseless objections to our Church, is not only claimed by Dissenters for themselves, but perpetually exercised by them. Where is the authority in the Scriptures for the fast, the humiliation, the commemoration, the thanksgiving days, which are observed among them? By the admission of the document I have quoted from, no such seasons for religious exercises are prescribed,—nay, they are to be censured as will-worship, and a reflection on the wisdom of the Redeemer; and yet they are continually appointed, and found, no doubt, to be unto spiritual improvement. We condemn not those who dissent from us for the claiming or the exercising of the privilege, because we hold that the one is just, and the other to edification; but we are entitled to condemn them for rebuking us for what they themselves practise—for denying to us a power which yet they assert for themselves.

But again, we justify ourselves for these appointments of days and festivals, from the conduct of the Church of Israel. We speak not now of the times and frequency of the Synagogue services, although they are clearly outside of the model delivered by God from Mount Sinai. But we refer to two feasts instituted at different times, in commemoration of particular events, in which the Church exhibited her

power to decree such appointments, and by the continual solemnizing of which, the people exhibited their acquiescence in the right thus claimed. The first of these was instituted, to keep alive in the heart of God's ancient people, a grateful recollection of their almost miraculous preservation in the times of the Babylonish Captivity. That preservation and its momentous circumstances, are doubtless, so fully in your remembrance, that it may not be necessary to advert to them. But in the book of Esther, we have the account of the appointment of the festival in question. "The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves with them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing^t, and according to their appointed time every year. And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews. (Esther ix. 27, 28.) We merely pause at present to observe, that, for the institution of this feast, there was no divine command, no express scripture authority. And yet it is neither condemned in the record, nor censured as an unlawful assumption of a privilege, but on the contrary, so recited in the inspired history, as to lead us to infer that it was acceptable to the Lord. On the principle of Dissenters, it should

have met with unequivocal disapproval, as being a species of evil worship, and an absolute reflection on the wisdom of Him, who spoke to the Church from the clouds, and amid the thunderings of Sinai. We are at a loss to understand, why Israel should be guiltless in this matter, and we justly obnoxious to rebuke. But we refer you to a sacred festival observed in the Church of Israel, the feast of Dedication. This was instituted at a still later period, and was designed to commemorate the cleansing of the Temple, after its profanation by Antiochus. It was altogether without warrant from Scripture, and rested with all its ceremonies and protracted observances, upon an ordinance of the Church. An event had occurred, which excited the Church's gratitude, and it was judged expedient to record it by a religious celebration. And that all this was not only allowable, but instructive, we have reason to conclude from this fact, that the Redeemer honoured that feast by his apparent sanction, and was found in the Temple at the very time of its observance. (John x. 22.) In its celebration, there could have been neither objectionable will-worship; nor, in its institution, an implied reflection upon the wisdom of Deity; nor in its appointment, an exercise of an unsustained authority; for had any of these been so, the Lord would have pointedly withheld his approval. So that from the example of the old testament Church,

as well as from the right which every church possesses to make such arrangements for herself, we hold ourselves justified in observing days, and times, and seasons. We appoint them to be religiously noticed, because we know we have the right to do so, and we observe them because we believe it to be to edification that we should do so.*

We have so far considered two of the principal objections made to our Church, the existence of offices in her communion, and the appointment of certain seasons for worship, which are not specially ordained in Scripture. We proceed in the last place to the examination of another class of objections which launches itself against *certain ceremonies practised by the Church*. We have already put ourselves in possession of the sentiments of our assailants on this point, and seen that for the use of ceremonies in the general, of any kind, we are as loudly censured, as though we had disturbed the harmony of the Church, by the adoption of heretical opinions. We shall presently see, that the indictment laid at our door by no means contents itself with a simple assertion that we are censurable for the use of ceremonies, but that it enters, so to speak, into several counts, and specifies with careful minuteness, the express matters for which we are condemned.

* See Appendix, F.

But before we advance to the consideration of these charges in detail, it may be well to shew that we are not altogether unsupported in our practice by competent authority, in both the primitive and reformed Churches. The writings of Augustine prove, that ceremonies existed in his days, and that he considered that different Churches, while knit together into one body by oneness of creed, might not only with safety, but advantage, be dissimilar in their customs. "Let the faith of the whole Church, how wide soever it hath spread itself, be always one, although the unity of belief be famous for variety of certain ordinances, whereby that which is rightly believed suffereth no kind of let or impediment." And this opinion, laying the stress where it ought to rest, on matters of faith, and allowing the latitude where it ought to be allowed, to matters of ceremony, is embraced by one whose judgment ought to tell upon our opponents, the sagacious Calvin. Commenting as it would seem upon this very passage of the ancient Father, he enjoins—"As concerning rites in particular, let the sentence of Augustine take place, which leaveth it free unto all Churches to receive their own custom. Yea, sometimes it profiteth, and is expedient that there be difference, lest men should think that religion is tied to outward ceremonies." We pause not to comment upon these quotations. They speak for themselves, and demon-

strate that in the adoption of ceremonies in our services (so that they be to edification) we are in perfect accordance with the views of early and reformed times. But for that adoption we rest not upon the authority of any men however exalted in character or station, upon the expressed opinion of any however entitled to respect. We rest upon our privilege as a Church. We say that the tenor and the analogy of Scripture make out that privilege for us, and that in decreeing ceremonies as well as rites and ordinances, our Church has only done that which it was her right and her duty to do.

But we now turn to the *special* objections under this head urged against our Zion. The first of these we notice, is, the posture in which we are in the habit of receiving the Lord's Supper. It is laid to our charge, as a grave and solemn offence, that we kneel around the table of our Redeemer. Brethren, we should have thought that a peculiarity such as this, so defended by its propriety, would have escaped the lash of censure. Did not experience demonstrate that even good can be evil spoken of, we should have conceived such an attitude at such a moment would have struck those who dissent from us, as being not only unexceptionable, but commendable.* The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the

* See Appendix, G.

highest ordinance in the Church of Jesus. It is above and beyond all others, calculated to spread over the heart the deepest, the most solemnized feelings of humiliation; to awaken the liveliest emotions of that gratitude which is composed of thrilling thankfulness for mercy extended, and self-abasement for guilt incurred. For, more than any other ordinance, it carries us into the contemplation of those scenes and acts of wonder in which were wrought out redemption for the lost, and pardon for the condemned. When the heart is renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost (and oh! it is only such a heart which should be found at this holy solemnity), it is perhaps then more drawn into a nearness to God's felt presence,—into a closer communion with his unseen Spirit, than in any other exercise of adoration: He that is hidden from the mortal eye, is then often revealed to his believing people “in the breaking of bread.” (Luke xxiv. 35.) Is it wonderful that our Church—expecting such hallowed and humble frames in her children, anticipating that many a worshipper, if visited by them in the moments of solitary meditation, would most naturally bend the knee when the soul was prostrate,—should at this ordinance, enjoin a posture so congenial, so adapted to the heart's feelings, so expressive of all she hoped was passing within? No, we marvel not that our Church prescribed the posture; we only marvel that

it could be censured. And yet, brethren, it is censured. It forms one of the weighty reasons why the Protestant Dissenter stands aloof from our Church; one of the points in which is discoverable a "relationship" between her and Popery. We are told that "Dissenters cannot look upon this as a trifling ceremony, when, as enjoined by the Church *it looks greatly like the adoration of the elements, and took its rise from the Popish adoration of them, as the very body and blood of Christ.*"* This is the objection of our adversaries to this most defensible custom; an objection which has been deemed by Dissenters of such weight, that (we blush to record it) even such a mind as that of Doddridge has descended to urge it.† We cannot call it a fair objection; we should be holding back the truth, did we scruple to designate it, as devoid of candour, nay, of common honesty. From the passage we have quoted, any reader would suppose that our Church had been silent as to her reasons for enjoining this posture; that she had left it open for men to put what construction they pleased upon this her usage. Now what is the fact? It is this, that the Church of England foreseeing the use which her enemies would be willing to make of her injunctions, has placed upon record the reasons which induced her to

* Diss. Cat. p. 85.

† Lect. II. p. 400.

make them—has anticipated the very surmise which Dissenters have taken up, and put the world in possession of her views and opinions in this matter. We refer you to a document widely enough circulated, and as we have seen, closely enough scanned by our opponents—the Book of Common Prayer. The last page of the Communion Service contains this most intelligible statement :—“ Whereas it is ordained in this office for the administration of the Lord’s Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling ; (which order is well meant, *for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment* of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the holy communion, as might otherwise ensue ;) yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved , It is hereby declared,—That thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine, there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ’s natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and *therefore may not be adored* ; (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians ;) and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here ; it being against the

truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." This declaration of the views of our Church with regard to the consecrated elements, and the reason for the attitude in which they are received by the communicant, we should have deemed sufficiently explicit. We should have thought that such a protestation, so plainly worded, so publicly set forth, must have for ever silenced all cavils, and removed all suspicions as to our opinions. And yet in its very face, unmindful of the disclaimer it contains, deaf to the explanation it renders, we are told that our kneeling "looks greatly like the adoration of the elements." Is this candour? Is this honesty? No; it is an assertion which wilfully tramples upon the evidence both of explanation and of history; of explanation, because it chooses to disregard our declarations; and of history, because it discovers, in a custom as old as the seventh, perhaps the third century,* a recognition of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was unknown to the Church until the twelfth. Brethren, if it be our duty to urge objections against others, may we be saved from the crime of "bearing false witness against a neighbour."

Independently, however, of the objection made to our practice, on the ground of its being an apparent act of idolatry, our opponents condemn it upon that

* Cyril. Cat. Mys. 5. sec. 19.

of its being a departure from the precedent in the Scriptures. We are told that Christ's posture at the time of the celebration of the festival was that of sitting, and that consequently ours should be the same. We reply to this, that we nowhere read that the Saviour enjoined anything respecting the posture, and that the simple fact of his having chosen to adopt a particular one himself, by no means amounts to a reason why that should be necessarily adopted by the Church. If so, every other ordinance should be conducted on the same rule, and our dissenting brethren should kneel when they pray, because Christ knelt, and ministers should sit when they address the congregation, because Christ did so in his teachings. (Matt. v. 2; xiii, 2.) If that example in such matters is to have invariably the weight of an injunction, then should they who urge these objections keep themselves strictly to the example. Their position should not be that of sitting at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but that of recumbency, for such was Christ's; (John xiii. 25.) the material used should be the unleavened bread of the East; and in the distribution of it the communicants should receive it directly from the hands of the minister, and not through the intervention of his assistants. The place should be the upper room of a private dwelling, and females should be strictly excluded from it. All these peculiarities are observable in the first celebra-

tion. Why, if that is to be a precedent from which it is criminal to depart, should they not be found in the administration of the Supper among dissenters? We shall furnish the reply to the question; because such matters are regarded as mere circumstantial, and not necessary to the perfectness of the ordinance. Our opponents in such things claim a latitude of practice, because, while the ordinance is commanded, the ceremonies or usages attendant on it are not commanded. We allow the latitude, we admit the soundness of the argument on which they claim it, and we ask a like indulgence for ourselves. We claim our right to kneel, if we think it more expedient, and we assent to their right to sit, if they think it more expedient. We conceive both equally allowable, but we hold our own usage more respectful and consistent. But with our best powers, we protest against the inconsistency which condemns us upon a principle which is not acted on by our condemners themselves, against the unfairness which attributes to us opinions we deny, and in the very teeth of explanation to the contrary, more than insinuates the charge that we approve of the errors of popery.

If it be necessary to add more on this objection, we would say, that so far from conceiving the example of Christ in the institution of the Lord's Supper, to make against our practice, that we think

it makes for it. The Saviour himself had been celebrating the paschal festival. And yet, while he made ready, and eat of, the passover, he departed altogether from the national custom as to the posture in which the deliverance from Egypt was commemorated. The attitude prescribed to Israel was that of standing—an attitude intended to remind them of their unsettled and pilgrimage condition, to tell them that, with loins girded and staves in their hands, they were travellers to the promised home. But this law was not observed by Jesus. The days were gone which made it necessary or expressive; for Israel had ended her pilgrimage, and had settled in the land of inheritance. The alteration of circumstances was regarded by Christ, by the nation at large, as a sufficient reason for departure from the original custom. In this, my brethren, we trace out a permission for ourselves to sit as loosely as is expedient to circumstantials, while we cling as closely as possible to essentials. The ordinance, in its simplicity, in its expressiveness, in its spirituality, we retain; the mode of celebration we refer to the rule of doing all things to edification. And for our non-conformity with the conduct of our master (which we deny was intended in this case to be a binding pattern), we plead his non-conformity to the rule and original usage of Israel. The same principle which induced him (who yet was exact in fulfilling all

righteousness) to depart from the ancient model, forms, for our conduct, a complete and clear justification.

We proceed to the notice of another objection,—the custom observed by the Church of England of bowing the head at the name of Jesus. Were not this advanced against us with a frequency and earnestness which indicate that our opponents view it as an offence of some magnitude, we should have pronounced it misplaced trifling to descend to its justification. It is, however, consolatory to discover that the defects in our ritual cannot be many or serious, when matters so utterly unimportant are made the groundwork of objection. The innocency (to take it upon the lowest ground) of this custom might, in our estimation, have protected it from censure; its unimportance might have sheltered it from the keenness of even a prejudiced criticism. And so it would, had that criticism which has subjected our Church to its scrutiny been of that manly and high-minded character which should distinguish divines or religionists. Since, however, it is otherwise, we have no choice but to defend what the objector has descended to attack. We do so upon this plea, that we regard the custom under consideration, as one which has long subsisted in our Church, which she classes among matters utterly non-essential, and compliance with which she enforces not upon her

members.* In her canons she has explained her views with respect to this usage, and placed it upon record that by it her people “testify their acknowledgments, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world.” Practised in times of very remote antiquity, and observed in most of the Churches of those times, it has come down to our days, and been retained amongst our customs as reverential in itself, and not fairly liable to objection. The times have happily passed away which made such a custom not only allowable, but in a high degree expedient; for the darkness of Arianism which once nearly obscured Christianity, is for the most part removed from our religious communities. But the time has been when it was far otherwise, when the world was overclouded with error, and the faithful were minished among men. In those days of peril to the Church, it was expedient to have a token which might serve as a testimony of a man’s opinions: for the Arian of the fourth century could repeat the confession of faith adopted by the Primitive Churches, and only consider himself as assenting to the dignity but not the Deity of the Saviour. The creed to which he added his assent was simple in its structure, and, not wishing to anticipate heresy, it framed no clauses bearing

* Hooker, 11, 123.

pointedly against errors which had not then convulsed the Church. In such circumstances, the line was drawn, the mark of distinction between the orthodox and heretical was found in the adoption or continuance of a gesture which implied lowly adoration. Since those times, the Church has placed upon a more abiding tablet the expression of her opinions, and erected in the Nicene and Athanasian Confessions of Faith a noble, and, we trust, an imperishable bulwark against the invasions of heresy. Though the cause which gave an importance to the act of bowing the head at the name of the Redeemer no longer subsists, we honor the act still for the good service it has rendered. It is valuable, as it serves to express the belief that Jesus is essentially and truly God; and it is beyond the range of honest objection, if it be viewed as simply a respectful gesture in devotion. If men "will be contentious," we can bear the reproach which can contract itself to touch a matter so unimportant, while we can lament over the spirit which applies its energies to the "straining out of gnats."

The last objection we shall turn to notice, is founded upon the use of the sign of the cross in baptism. We pause not now to mention the many censures which have been lavished upon our Church, the increasing taunts to which our people are subjected for the adoption and retaining of this custom.

They can easily be conjectured, from the specimens of "evil speaking" which have already been noticed. We rather press forward to the defence of this usage. In examining the materials for this, it is consolatory to ascertain that we have upon our side the practice of the Church from almost apostolic days.* We therefore have followed no novel invention, but one which has received the sanction of the most faithful and revered in the times of primitive Christianity. This practice of the Church appears to have originated in the adoption of a custom well known to antiquity,—the imprinting of a mark upon the foreheads or hands of soldiers and servants, as indicative of their connection with their respective kings and masters. This custom, so expressive of a title on the one side to protection, and on the other to services, is frequently alluded to in Scripture, and has received thereby a kind of hallowed character. Thus, in the book of Ezekiel, the angels who are charged with the office of bringing desolation upon Jerusalem, are commanded to provide for the safety of God's believing remnant, by "setting a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done." (Ezek. ix. 4.) And when, in the Revelations, a similar procedure is about to be entered on, embracing only a wider field of

* See Appendix, H.

destruction, the ministering spirits of the Lord's vengeance are enjoined to restrain the outbreaking of his judgments "until the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads." (Rev. vii. 3.) And when these redeemed ones, rescued from the overthrow, appear in glory with the Saviour upon the mountain of his holiness, the mark of safety and dedication is still discernible upon them—they have "their Father's name written upon their foreheads." All these expressions, of course, are figurative. He that knoweth all things requires not that for him a visible mark should be imprinted upon his saints. He can look into the decrees of electing love, and upon the consequence of it—the sanctification of his redeemed, and thus "can know those that are his." But the employment of the figure in the word of God shews that the custom which created it was in common use in ancient times, and was understood to signify privilege and dedication. The Church seeing an eloquence and significancy in a practice obtaining so widely and comprehended so readily, adopted it as her own, and hallowed it in the adoption. She employed it in the service of her own monarch; and by its use in Baptism, by the impress of the symbol of Redemption upon the forehead of the enrolled Christian, she reminded him that he was placed in a new and privileged position, that he stood within the circle of the covenant, that as a soldier pledged

to allegiance beneath the crimson banner of the Cross, he was that day dedicated to a cause, from which it would be treason and destruction to retreat.

It is true that all this was a ceremony, the mere using of an outward sign. But it also is true, that to that ceremony there were linked impressive and momentous truths, and that with the thought of it, there would come over the mind touching associations and solemn recollections, which might stablish the heart in a moment of doubt or of timidity. And who that is acquainted with the peculiar tendency of the human mind to be affected by the sign or the outward act, when the abstract truth has for a while lost its power,—who that knows that it is just the use of ceremonies to perpetuate truth and to recal it vividly and emphatically to the remembrance,—who that has felt the magic power which the simple deed of breaking the bread at the communion table of the Lord possesses of taking the recollections back to Calvary, of making them overleap the line of centuries, and mingle with the solemnities of the last supper,—who that has studied this character of man's mind, and experienced in himself its capacity to be touched by the rudest memorial, will undervalue a ceremony which, while allowable in itself, contains under it the inculcation of a duty, or the elements of a doctrine. The men of ancient, and of perhaps

purser times did not. They prized the ceremonies of their faith, because they preached powerfully to their feelings and their recollections. They valued the usage of stamping the forehead of the newly admitted member of the Church with the sign of his profession, because it gave them a power to appeal to it afterward, and through the act done in infancy, to point out the disgrace of becoming recreant, the peril incurred by drawing back. And therefore do we find Cyprian* and Austin, † Tertullian ‡ and Chrysostom, § resting some of their most stirring and animating exhortations upon it, and exciting their people to brave martyrdom itself, from the remembrance that they carried on their foreheads the badge of a crucified Saviour.

And now brethren, that we have shown the origin and the significancy of this custom, that we have proved that in retaining it we pay no homage to Popery, but observe that which the Fathers of the first centuries retained and respected; we draw this topic of our subject to a close by putting you in possession of the specific objections made to it by our assailants. And this we do, not only that you may stand acquainted with their opinions respecting us, but that you may see in the objection, another instance of that unfairness, that violation of the laws

* De lapsis. † De catec. Rud. c. 20. ‡ De resur. Carn.

§ In Ps. 110.

of honesty and candour of which we have had occasion already to complain. I refer on this point for the last time to the Protestant Dissenters' Catechism. In the 83rd page these questions are asked and answered. Q. What is the *pretence* for the Priests crossing the forehead in Baptism? A. It is said to be done as a token, that the person baptized shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner. Q. What do Scriptures object to in this ceremony? A. 1. That Christ never appointed it.—5. Making this ceremony *essential* to the administration of baptism, is an unreasonable and unjust imposition on the consciences of those who might scruple it." It is, brethren, to the latter clause of this answer that I more especially direct your consideration. The conviction which must rest upon the mind of every person who casts his eye upon it, must be this, that the Church of England made the ceremony essential to the Sacrament, or, in other words, united so indissolubly a Church form with a Christian ordinance, that the one was not complete without the other. Now what is the fact? That in this matter, as in another which we noticed, the Church has put her sentiments on record, and asserted as fully and explicitly as words can do it, that she considered this ceremony as *not essential* to the administration of Baptism. I refer to her authoritative documents.

The 13th canon contains the following expressions, "The sign of the cross used in baptism is no part of the substance of that Sacrament, for when the minister dipping the infant in water, or laying water upon the face of it hath pronounced these words, " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the infant is fully and perfectly baptized. So as the sign of the cross being afterwards used, does neither add any thing to the virtue and perfection of Baptism, nor being omitted does it detract any thing from the effect and substance of it." On these two passages thus thrown together, I shall make no comment. I merely observe, that the catechism asserts that of our Church which the Church had long before explicitly disclaimed; that the charge is put upon record, while the explanation is suppressed. I am entitled again to to ask, is this candour,—is it honesty?

I have now gone through the task which I imposed upon myself in the commencement of these discourses—a task, in many of its parts painful and distressing, because opening out to our view a series of aggressions equally unkind and unwarranted, a task however forced upon me by the necessity of the case, undertaken and prosecuted under the conviction that I was in the path of duty in entering upon it. In discharging it, I have sought to repel attacks, but to make none, to drive (as far as my

ability enabled me to do it) the assailant from the sacred soil of my own Zion, but not to plant the footstep of reprisal upon his. Injuries long continued and wantonly inflicted, appeared to me to call for determined resistance; and the possibility of their baneful operation upon the minds of our own people told me that it was no longer the part of their ministers to keep silence. My endeavour has been not merely to meet the inroads of the adversary, but to show you, brethren, what our Church is:—in her ceremonies, simple and scriptural; in her Liturgy, sound and devotional; in her government, apostolic; and in her doctrines, exhibiting “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Her creeds are among the noblest bulwarks which Christianity possesses. Her Articles are a compendium of revelation. They gather within their concise but comprehensive compass the jewels which are studded over the Bible, and work them with the skill of a master-hand into a diadem of sparkling richness. In them we have the doctrinal acknowledgments of our Church, the essential declarations of the Scriptures reduced into a lucid and harmonious system. They speak of man’s apostacy and fall—of his moral inability and spiritual deadness. They proclaim his salvation to be altogether of grace, the result of the counsellings of the glorious Trinity subsisting in the unity of one Godhead, flowing from the electing

love of the Father, the finished redemption of the co-equal Son, and the sanctifying operation of the Almighty Spirit. They affirm the necessity of works as the indication of the existence of a justifying faith, but they deny merit to them, and look to the sacrifice of Jesus alone as the ground of a sinner's acceptance. They raise a noble line of defence against the incursions of the several heresies which have from time to time disturbed the Church,—against the errors of Arius and Pelagius, and more largely against the God-dishonouring dogmas of Rome. They range themselves, in a word, around the Bible of Truth, and place our Church for all she is to believe and for all she is to lean on, upon this simple ground of principle, “that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation.” Such, brethren, in her doctrines, in her ritual, in her government is the Church to which we are privileged to belong. We ask you again and again to “walk round about her, to tell her towers, and to mark her bulwarks;” to contemplate her excellences and resources, that your affections may be the more strongly rivetted to her. We ask you to recollect, that not only in the matters we have mentioned she can bear to be weighed in the balances, but that her history establishes claims, many and persuasive upon your veneration. We see in her no novel institution, but one which had a being in nearly apostolic times,

which, while men slept, was covered for a season by the incrustation of the errors which overspread the world, but which shook it off and appeared in its former soundness. We see in her a Church which has passed through intense and scorching trials; and which, by the resistance made even unto death to the dominant powers of ignorance and superstition, secured for our country liberty of conscience, and for other Protestant communities many of the privileges and blessings which they now enjoy. The fires of Smithfield were fed by the Church of England, Her sons they were who "lighted that candle in Britain which has never been extinguished," but which cheers and illuminates the orthodox denominations by its clearness. Their blood it was which watered the roots of those hallowed principles which are now the boast and the glory of Protestantism at large; and if now through the providence of God, each of its sections may repose beneath "their own vine—no man making them afraid," never should it be forgotten that the nourishment that vine received was from the veins of the English martyrs. We see in our Church an honoured nursery for the truth; for from her halls and colleges, from the quiet retreats of her ministers, and the leisures of her ecclesiastical endowments, have arisen those excellent of the earth, who have, as far as talent or learning could do it, defended the faith and saved it

from contamination, from error and infidelity. It is, brethren, in favour of a Church such as this, sound in her principles, and venerable from her history and associations, that we desire to enlist your affections. Her excellences are too little felt by her laity; her trials and dangers are by them too little regarded. Identify yourselves with her interest; profit by the advantages she extends to you, and rally round her in her hours of necessity. The time may soon arrive, when our Zion will require of her people to do something more than to enjoy the privileges they possess in a connection with her. They may yet be called on to contend for them. The struggle which is at present going on between light and darkness, may yet affect the very existence of our church; the war of opinion which threatens to convulse the empire may fight its most important, perhaps its fiercest battle upon the question of the protection or the abolition of an established religion. Let "the children of our Zion" be prepared. Let them appreciate and teach themselves to feel the value of the object, and then gird themselves to a faithful performance of their duty. Let them not accumulate upon their own consciences the materials of unavailing regret, that they saw the Ark in the fore-front of the conflict, and came not out to its help against the mighty.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

SERMON II.

A.—p. 41.

“ *We are ready to concede almost all,*” &c. The argument of our opponents on the subject of episcopacy has always rested upon words. It passes over the facts of the New Testament and the writings of the early fathers, and relies upon the *title* given to ministers in the Acts and the Epistles. Their chief argument is this, that the terms “ Presbyter ” and “ Bishop ” are indiscriminately applied to the same individuals, and that therefore they are but different names for the same office. There is truth in this, but it is not the whole truth ; and consequently the inference that is drawn from this proposition, viz. that the New Testament bishop (wherever the word occurs) is nothing more than a presbyter, will be found to be wrong. The *fact* will be found to be that there was in the apostolic and primitive Church an officer totally distinct from the presbyter, and that that officer is known by the name of bishop.

It may be necessary to explain how a title which once belonged to ministers generally, became appropriated to one order in the ministry.

The word "episcopus" (or bishop), literally signifies an overseer, and so it is rendered in Acts xx. 28. — "The flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." In this passage it is given to ordinary pastors. It was a title suggested by an employment. That employment was superintendence. But ministerial superintendence is of two kinds: First, of a flock or congregation, and secondly, of a body of ministers. In the *first* of these senses every minister is an episcopus, he oversees his flock; in the *second*, only those ministers who are exalted above their brethren, and occupy over them a situation of authority and control. In the history of Christianity the flock was first to be collected. That was her first effort, and it was achieved by the missionary preaching of the Gospel. Then, to a flock so collected, a pastor was appointed. Then, if it increased so as to be beyond the energies of one pastor, or was spread over a large district of country, more ministers were appointed to it. Then, that there should be no ministerial collision, no diversity of practice or doctrine among those pastors, an individual was added to the Church whose business it was to superintend and regulate it, ministers as well as congregations. (1 Tim. i. 3. Titus i. 5.) This is the

natural order of events. Along with this progress and arrangement there appears to have come an alteration in the use of ministerial titles. The name of overseer or bishop which had been employed in the common or popular sense, became restricted to those individuals who were superintendents in the higher and more important sense. They were, *par excellence*, bishops. This change in the use or acceptance of terms is very common. The term "Angel" is literally a messenger, and as such it was bestowed upon those celestial beings who are the messengers of God; "his ministers who do his pleasure." Yet this term, once general, has become particular in its application, and is now appropriated to the highest order of messengers. While therefore we freely admit that the title of episcopus was at first given to any pastor in virtue of his overseeing his flock, we affirm that it passed to another order of ministers in virtue of his overseeing the pastors under his rule. So that it is but half the truth to say that bishop and presbyter are the same thing. In one sense it is so; in another, the bishop is totally distinct from the presbyter. Once let it be admitted, (and it cannot be denied) that there was in the early Church an officer distinct in duties and superior in rank to his brethren, to whom this name was given; and it is mere sophistry to put forward the proposition we have been examining.

It may be said that the history of the usage of this title is plausible, but unsubstantiated. That defect can be remedied by the introduction of evidence from the primitive Church and the presbyterian reformers.

“ On the decease of the blessed Apostles, those that were ordained to preside over the churches after them were not equal to those first, nor could they attain the same gift of miracles ; but appearing inferior to them in many other things, thought it not becoming to challenge to themselves the names of Apostles, wherefore they divided the names, and left to them (the inferior order) the name of Presbyter ; and the others (the governors) were styled Bishops, and were endued with the power of ordaining, that they might know themselves to be set over the churches in the fullest right.” — *Ambrose, Com. in Tim.*

“ Notwithstanding that at first, all ministers of the word were indiscriminately called pastors, bishops, and presbyters, and were also of equal authority, afterwards one began to be preferred by his other colleagues above all the rest. So that by way of pre-eminence he also was accustomed to be called by the name of Bishop and Pastor, the rest of his fellow priests being content with the name of Presbyter ; so that in every city one only began to be bishop, and many presbyters.” — *Zanchius, De Gub. Mil. Ecc. 545.*

“ They named all on whom was enjoined the office of teaching, Presbyters. They chose one of their members in every city to whom in particular they gave the name of Bishop, lest from equality as usually happens, dissensions should arise,”—*Calvin. Inst. Book IV. c. iv.*

“ By the perpetual observation of all the churches, even from the Apostles’ times, we see that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost that among presbyters there should be one that should have the care or charge of divers churches, and the whole ministry committed to him; and by reason of that charge, *he was above the rest and therefore* the name of Bishop was peculiarly attributed to those chief rulers.” *Bucer. de Curá Curat. p. 251.*

These testimonies substantiate the view that has been given of the application of this title, and help to show that very early it was used only in the restricted sense—the sense in which it is constantly employed in the fathers. As our opponents rest so much upon the argument which hinges upon a mere term, it was necessary to meet it. But this is not the strength of our position. We rely upon facts and things, not upon changing appellations. The *fact* is, that the New Testament and all antiquity speaks of, recognizes, defines the duties of a certain officer in the Church, be his title what it may, who was superior to his brethren in the ministry, to

whom appertained offices which they could not discharge, and authority which they did not possess. This is the stubborn, the uncontrovertible, truth; and it cannot be satisfactory to meet truth in facts by disquisitions about words.

That candid and able presbyterian writers have felt themselves borne down by the evidence in favour of episcopacy, may be seen from these admissions of Grotius, who wrote against it, and Melancthon, who united with Calvin in his projects respecting Church government: "Of the episcopate, that is, the superiority of one pastor above the rest, we first determine that it is repugnant to no divine law. If any one think otherwise, that is, if any one condemn the whole ancient Church of *folly*, or even of *impiety*, the burden of proof, beyond doubt, lies upon him. The very ministry instituted by the apostles sufficiently proves that equality of the ecclesiastical officers was not commanded by Christ." *Grotius de Ver. c.* 11, § 3.

"I would to God it lay in me to restore the government of the bishops, for I see what manner of church we shall have; the ecclesiastical polity being dissolved. I do see that hereafter there will grow up a greater tyranny in the Church than ever before."—*Melancthon. Apol. Aug. Conf.* 305.

To these may be added the declaration of Le Clerc, a learned divine of the presbyterian Dutch Church.

“ I have always professed to believe that *episcopacy is of apostolic institution*, and consequently very good and very lawful, that men had no right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that crept into Christianity; that it was justly preserved in England where the Reformation was practicable without altering it; that therefore the Protestants in England and other places where there are bishops do very ill to separate from that discipline; that they would still do much worse in attempting to destroy it in order to set up presbytery, fanaticism and anarchy. Things ought not to be turned into chaos, nor people seen every where, without a call and without learning, pretending to inspiration.”

Dr. Doddridge (a congregationalist,) does not go quite so far as his Presbyterian brother Le Clerc, but his admission, reluctant though it is, is a virtual ceding of the question at issue. “The distinction,” he observes, “between Bishops and Presbyters does not appear to be of earlier date than the times of Ignatius.” Lect. 116 § 17. The arguments in the text, and the above cited authorities, will convince every one who has discrimination to appreciate and candour to admit the force of evidence that the distinction was of a much earlier date. It is important, however, to have it admitted by such authority as Dr. Doddridge, that the offices were clearly distinct

in the year 107; in the times of one "who conversed familiarly with the Apostles, and was perfectly acquainted with their doctrine." It is strange that in the half-century intervening between the decease of the Apostles and the martyrdom of Ignatius, the innovation (for such Dr. Doddridge would have us consider it) was unnoticed and unobjected to by the Church.

Before closing this note, I would wish to make an observation on a theory advanced in the section of the discourse to which it relates. It is there remarked, that the ministry of the Jewish Church, being of an unequal and threefold character, was a type of the ministerial arrangements of the Christian Church; and from this is deduced the inference that its ministry must necessarily be in three distinct orders, (p. 43—44.) This conclusion is inevitable, but the premises may possibly be questioned. I desire, therefore, to support myself in advancing the theory by the opinion of others. I shall quote from ancient and modern authorities. It is a remark of JEROME, that "what Priests and Levites were to the Jewish Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons are to the Christian." (*Epist. ad Evag.*) But we can refer to an earlier authority than this, and one more competent to speak on the subject, inasmuch as he wrote before the Jewish polity and priesthood had been overthrown.

Clemens Romanus, (the same to whom Paul re-

fers, Phil. iv. 3.) in his Epistle to the Corinthians makes a strong allusion to the then orders of the Jewish priesthood, while drawing a distinction between governors and presbyters. "To the high Priest proper offices are committed—to the priests their peculiar office is assigned, the Levites (or deacons) have their own ministries, and a layman is bound to laic performances. Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his proper station, living conscientiously, and not transgressing the prescribed rule of his service or ministry." Sect. xl. xli. This passage not only conveys the idea that the Jewish priesthood was the frame-work of the Christian, but shews that before the death of the apostles, the three orders were recognized and established in the Church.

This view which Jerome and Clement have advanced, is adopted also by Beausobre, a presbyterian divine of high character. "It is said, and all antiquity incessantly repeats it, that the deacons of the Christian Church are the successors of the Levites, the pastors of the priests, and that, in fine, the bishops are the successors of the high priests."—*Serm. sur Rom. xii. 7.*

B.—p. 50.

"We see in it the Apostles' elevation to a higher

order in the ministry.—Augustine looked upon this transaction in this light. “Nemo ignorat, &c.” “No one is ignorant that the Saviour instituted bishops in the churches. For, before his ascension into heaven, placing his hands upon the Apostles, he ordained them bishops.—*Quest. Vet. Qu. in N. Test.* 97. The meaning of the word bishop was fixed in Augustine’s times. It had then, and indeed three centuries previous, but one signification, that in which it is now commonly received.

C.—p. 54.

“*The writers of the early ages style James Bishop of Jerusalem.*”—This assertion can be proved by many references. A few may speak for all. Commenting on Galatians ii. 12, Augustine says—“When he had seen some come from James, i. e. from Judea; for James then presided (præfuit) over the Church of Jerusalem.” Cyril of Jerusalem, who was a successor to James in the see, observes, “These things (circumcision and things offered to idols) are not a cause of anxiety to me only, but were to the Apostles and to James, formerly bishop of this Church.”—*Catech. iv.*

Jerome, the great authority of Anti-episcopalians, says—“James immediately after the passion of our Lord was ordained by the Apostles bishop of Jerusalem.”

Eusebius—"The Jews, therefore, when Paul had appealed unto Cæsar, turned all their malice upon James the brother of the Lord, upon whom the see of Jerusalem had been conferred by the Apostles. (*Sedes Hierosolymitanana delata fuit.*)"—*Lib. 2, c. 22.*

This point is fully admitted by presbyterian writers. In a work of De Moulin, a theological professor of the French Presbyterian Church, this passage occurs: "Our adversaries unjustly accuse us to be enemies of the episcopal order; for we must be altogether ignorant of history, if we do not know that antiquity speaks honorably of that degree. Eusebius in his Chronicle witnesseth, that a year after our Lord's death, James, our Lord's brother, was established bishop of Jerusalem; and that after James succeeded Simeon in the bishoprick of Jerusalem, from whence descended the succession of its bishops. If sometimes we speak against the authority of bishops, *we condemn not the episcopal order in itself*, but speak only of the corruption which the Church of Rome has introduced into it."—" *Buckler of Faith.*" *Lond. 1631. p. 345.*

It will be observed that in the argument in the text some slight stress is laid upon the declaration of James in the council of Jerusalem, "My sentence is, &c." I am aware that a most eminent critical authority (Dr. Bloomfield) is of opinion that the ori-

ginal word for "sentence" does not necessarily imply an authoritative decision. It would be highly presumptuous in me, in disregard of such an opinion, to build a proof upon the expression, if it were not supported by a Greek writer of such character as Chrysostom. Adverting to the passage, he observes: "τί ἐστι κρίνω ἐγὼ ἀντι τοῦ μετ' ἐξουσίας λέγω τοῦτο εἶναί." "What is this 'my sentence is' except this, authoritatively I pronounce this to be so."

D.—p. 56.

"*Episcopacy approaching nearly to its present Diocesan form.*"—There are many evidences in the ancient authors of episcopacy (which the first was confined to one place) becoming at a very early period settled in its respective spheres. Eusebius writes "Sed et Lucas," &c. "But Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, makes mention of Timothy and Titus, of whom the one was bishop in Ephesus, the other was set over the churches in Crete which were to be regulated by him." (*Lib. 3, c. iv.*) This is diocesan episcopacy in these two instances. We can show it in another: "Marcus interpres Petri," &c. "Mark, the familiar friend of Peter, and first bishop of the Church of Alexandria.—*Jerome. Epis. ad Evag.* Again, Irenæus, speaking of the bishop of Rome, says: "Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in

his Epistles to Timothy. Anacletus succeeded him ; after him, in the third place, Clement received the episcopate from the Apostles." (*Lib. 3. c. iii.*) This is diocesan episcopacy. Again, " Polycarp was not only instructed by the Apostles, but also by them constituted bishop in Asia, in the Church of Smyrna." — *Tertullian de Præscr.* Numerous additions might be made to these proofs of episcopacy being an institution of a clearly diocesan character in the apostolic age.

E.—p. 60.

" *Advancement to a higher grade.*"—It is by some alleged, that this is not the proper meaning of the original word, rendered in our translation " a good degree." In support of the use made of the word, I quote the criticism of one of the most eminent scholars of our day: " Those who have well discharged the office of deacons, gain thereby an honourable step to further promotion, namely to the office of presbyter or bishop. Theophylact explains βαθμὸν, by προκοπήν (advancement). And so almost all commentators, ancient and modern."—*Bloomfield Rec. Syn.*

F.—p. 64.

“ *The Angel of the Church was its presiding minister.*”—This, Dr. Doddridge questions, asserting “ that these angels were but simple Presbyters, or parish priests in their several congregations. (Lect. ii. p. 344.) It will be seen, that (independent of the argument with which this note is connected, and which makes such a supposition utterly untenable) this somewhat prejudiced commentator has not the support of the ancient Church. “ *Angelos episcopos dicit, &c.*”—“ He names the bishops angels, as is taught in the Apocalypse of John.” *Ambrose. in Apoc. cap. 1.* “ By the Divine Voice, the president (præpositus) of the Church is dignified by the name of Angel.”—*Augustine.*

G.—p. 71.

“ *No Christian Church could be found without its presiding bishop.*”—The negative argument in favor of the divine origin of Episcopacy is a very persuasive one. Our opponents admit that Episcopacy, properly so called, was in the Church so early as the days of Ignatius, (Doddridge, Lect. 116.) but deny that it was framed by Christ or his Apostles. If so, it must have been introduced into the Church within the first century. And yet the Church is utterly

silent on the subject of this (supposed) innovation upon the purity of the system provided by the Saviour. Is it likely, is it within the compass of possibility, that when so many anxious hearts and vigilant eyes were fixed upon every step of the progress of Christianity, such a striking novelty could have been introduced without exciting attention and remonstrance? It should be recollected also that some of the Apostles lived till near the martyrdom of Ignatius, and would not have permitted an overthrow of the original system. The truth is, that there is no alternative between admitting Episcopacy to have been founded by Christ and established by the Apostles, and denying its existence altogether.

H.—p. 71.

“*Modern Research.*”—All Churches subsisting from early times, upon whose condition light has been thrown by the investigations of travellers, are found to be Episcopal. The Coptic, the Abyssinian Churches are such; and the Syrian Church of Malabar, which Dr. Buchanan has introduced to Christian notice, not only is Episcopal in its government, but had no idea of the possibility of a Church in which there were not three orders in the ministry. The following conversation, which took place between him and one of the Syrian bishops, is recorded in his “*Christian*

Researches." "I mentioned that there was a Kashesha or presbyter Church in our own kingdom, in which every presbyter was equal to another. And are there no deacons in holy orders? None. And what, is there nobody to overlook the presbyters? Not one. And who is the angel of their Churches? They have none. There must be something imperfect there."

SERMON III.



A.—p. 76.

It is evident, from the language of the Canons, that the design of the Service for the Visitation of the Sick was to supply a help to the inexperienced minister, and not to constitute a form of prayer from which no clergyman should be at liberty to depart. Every minister who is licensed to preach, has it in his power to adopt what course he pleases in the discharge of this duty. This is obvious from the 41st Canon—"When any person is dangerously sick in any parish, the minister or curate, having knowledge thereof, shall resort unto him, or her, to instruct and comfort them in their distress, according to the order of the Communion Book if he be no preacher; or if he be a preacher, then as he shall think most needful and convenient."

B.—p. 77.

"*Baptism is Regeneration.*"—This assertion of Mr. James is contradicted not only by the Articles

of the Church of England, but by a more generally-known document—the Catechism, which is to be seen in every Prayer-Book, and found in most Church schools. The 27th Article declares “that baptism is a *sign* of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by *an instrument*, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church.” The Catechism is equally explicit:—“What is the outward sign or form in baptism? Water, wherein the person is baptized. What is the inward and spiritual grace? A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are *hereby* (by the inward and spiritual grace) made the children of grace.”

“*All go to heaven, whatever was their previous character.*”—This assertion is founded upon the expression in the Burial Service—“in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, &c.” It will be seen that the assertion is contradicted by the very document on which it relies. One of the prayers in that service commences with these words—“Almighty God, with whom do live the spirit of those *that depart hence in the Lord*, and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity;” and ends thus, “we beseech Thee, that we, *with all those that are departed this life in the true faith of thy holy name*, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in thy everlasting glory.” Another prayer in the

same service contains this petition,—“ We meekly beseech thee *to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that* when we shall depart this life we may rest in him.” The ignorance or the disingenuousness must have been great which could permit a minister of the gospel to assert, in the face of these expressions, “ that the Church of England teaches that all who die go to heaven, whatever was their previous character.” It should be observed that the Church asserts nothing respecting the individual’s eternal state, but only declares her belief in a resurrection to an eternal existence. The expression is not “ his ” but “ the ” resurrection.

“ *Indiscriminate admission of persons of all characters to the Lord’s Table.*”—This allegation is also without foundation. The Church does not admit indiscriminately persons of all characters to the Communion. She endeavours, as far as a human institution can do it, to keep back all from that ordinance who do not make a reputable profession. 1. In the rubric before the service, it will be seen that she claims the right, (and that her ministers are called on to exercise it,) of forbidding the approach of notoriously evil livers, of persons who have done wrong to a neighbour, and have not expressed repentance and remedied the evil, and of persons in an unforgiving or revengeful state of mind. 2. By the admonition in the service, which is appointed to be read at

the time when notice of the intended celebration of the ordinance is given, the characters are described whom the Church pronounces unfit to come to the Lord's table, and such persons are warned not to appear there, unless they have come under a spirit of genuine repentance. In fact, nothing can be more solemn or startling than the whole tone of this admonition, which seems to have been specially drawn up for the purpose of erecting a barrier against the intrusion of unfit characters upon this sacred rite.

3. Besides these precautions taken by the Church in her Prayer-Book, her ministers, by frequent and faithful addresses on the subject from the pulpit, provide that their congregations shall well understand who are invited, and who are forbidden, to come to the Lord's table. After this, the matter lies between them and God. If the unprepared come forward after Church and pulpit admonition, and private ministerial exhortation, the guilt is upon their own heads. The Church pretends not to the "discerning of spirits," and therefore when the evidence of the outward life is sufficiently satisfactory, she conceives that she would be usurping God's prerogative if she affected to *decide* upon the inward spiritual condition. If she exercised an authority upon the evidence (the doubtful and most deceptive evidence,) of frames and feelings, she might, by forbidding approach to the table, "break the bruised reed, and make sad those

whom God had not made sad ;” and, by licensing an approach, she might sustain a delusive profession, and foster a spirit of successful hypocrisy. In the happy expression of the able author of “*Essays on the Church,*” she “*endorses no man’s pretensions.*” She knows well that in this world no certain line, no line of which eternity will prove the perfect accuracy, can be drawn between the converted and the unconverted. We may hope and believe well of those who walk consistently, but we cannot pronounce decisively ; and on the other hand, we may be very doubtful of the state of individuals, who, to the eye of God have the root of the matter in them and are Christians indeed, although the manifestation of their faith is as yet but very indistinct. We can lay down no test which of itself can be deemed perfectly conclusive as to the determination of a man’s actual condition before God. The Church, acting upon this principle of not presuming to pass judgment upon an individual’s state, except when the broad evidence of palpable ungodliness enables her to say, “*by their fruit we may know them,*” may indeed run the risk of admitting the unconverted to the table ; but upon the other hand she avoids the greater danger of informing a man that she believes him to be converted, and thus of rocking him to a sleep of false security, if his well-sustained profession should be without inward holiness. But how is it with

the most of Dissenters? They attempt to put the Church into the condition she was in in apostolic days, when the hearts of disciples could be read through the gift of "discerning of spirits." They try to draw a line without possessing the knowledge needful for its being drawn with accuracy. And after scrutiny into character and condition being had, they enrol a man among the faithful, the approved of the Church. If after this act, the man should prove to have been a mere professor, a hypocrite, has not his Church contributed to deceive him? We content ourselves with telling communicants what they should be, and commanding them "to *examine themselves*" whether they are so, and to act upon their convictions. *They* examine communicants by a church scrutiny, and announce them tried and found faithful. This system is pregnant with evil. It fosters censoriousness, and holds out a bounty to hypocrisy. On trial it has been found to be unavailing; for the admissions of Dissenters themselves shew that there are ways and means of getting within the select and approved circle which speak ill for such church discipline. I take the following passage from "The Church Member's Guide." "If men of unsanctified dispositions be admitted into the Church, what can be expected from such individuals in a time of conflicting opinion, but fuel for the flame of contention. The danger is

considerably increased when the individuals *improperly admitted* are persons of property. For the sake of its glittering exterior, many a church has taken a serpent to its bosom, or to adopt a scriptural allusion, has welcomed an Achan to the camp for the sake of his Babylonish vest and golden wedge." (pp. 252, 253.) What awful injury must be done to the soul, to the conscience, by the Church endorsing and accepting such hollow, baseless pretensions! Surely it is better to pass no judgment than such hardening and deceptive judgments as these.

Another matter in our Liturgy to which "The Church Member's Guide" takes violent exception, affirming it to be as bad as any thing in the Mass-Book, is *the absolution in the service for the visitation of the sick*. The condemned passage is as follows: "Our Lord Jesus Christ who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy, forgive thee thine offences; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The entire question affecting this often-attacked passage, resolves itself into one point, viz. the nature of the absolution recognized by the Church of England. Absolution is of two kinds, magisterial and declaratory. It is the first of these that the Church of Rome lays claim to, affirming that there is lodged

with every priest an absolute power of absolving from offences. This is clear from the following quotation from the Decrees of the Council of Trent : “ If any one shall say that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act, but only a naked ministration of pronouncing and declaring that the sins of the person confessing are remitted—let him be accursed.”—*Session xiv. Can. 9.*

Now, absolution of this character the Church of England utterly disclaims. Her services every where assert the same opinion, that no being but Jehovah himself has the right to forgive sins and to absolve sinners from their offences. In examining, then, such a passage as this in “ The Visitation of the Sick,” it is wrong, it is unjust, to take the expression by itself: it should be taken along with the other declarations on the same point in the Prayer-Book; and the judgment of the Church should be ascertained, not by an isolated phrase, but by a collation of kindred passages. This is the way we ascertain the meaning of doubtful expressions in Scripture. We do not regard them separately, but as fragments of one consistent volume; and we discover their true signification by “ comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Let the words in question be tried by the same rule. I shall cite a few of the expressions of the Prayer-Book, that from them the opinion of the Church of England may be gathered.

“Almighty God—hath given power and commandment to his ministers to *declare and pronounce* to his people, being penitent, *the absolution and remission of their sins*. He *pardoneth and absolveth* all them that truly repent,” &c. (Morning Prayer.)

“Almighty God—who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, *have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins*,” &c. (Absolution in Communion Service.)

“Almighty God, who dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent,” &c. (Collect for Ash-Wednesday.)

“Almighty God—we do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. *Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father*; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, forgive us all that is past.” (Confession in Communion Service.)

“O most mighty God and merciful Father—mercifully forgive us our trespasses. Thy property is always to have mercy, *to thee ONLY it appertaineth to forgive sins*.” (Confession in Communion Service.)

These quotations, which are but a very few of those which might be brought forward, sufficiently declare the views of the Church of England respecting absolution; that she holds that God alone has the prerogative of forgiving sins, and that her ministers are allowed to *declare and announce his for-*

givenness to all that are truly penitent. It is not likely that the compilers of the Liturgy would hold one opinion in so many passages, and a different one in this particular instance. And, indeed, the service itself bears most decided evidence that this expression must be viewed as simply declarative. In the absolution itself, the minister thus prays: "Our Lord Jesus Christ—forgive thee thine offences." This is said in the same breath with the words censured; it lies within the same few lines which compose the whole absolution. Is it at all probable that two contradictions should or could be placed by men of sense and thoughtfulness in such close juxta-position. But let the prayer immediately *succeeding* the absolution in the service be noted; in it the minister thus expresses himself "O most merciful God—forasmuch as he (the sick and supposed penitent person) putteth his full trust only in thy mercy, impute not to him his former sins." If the sick person be absolved (judicially), which is what our adversaries would have it supposed is our belief, why should a prayer for forgiveness just after the absolution be offered up? The truth is, that the sick person, being upon his own confession—a confession made in a solemn service, under circumstances which are above all others calculated to banish hypocrisy—presumed to be repentant, the minister announces the promised forgiveness of God to him. But this is

not Popish absolution. Nothing but extreme ignorance, or a total lack of that "Christian charity" which thinketh no evil, could have dictated the charge to which this note is intended to be a reply.

The expression, "I absolve thee," as a mere declarative announcement, is very natural. In our Lord's commission to his apostles (John xx. 23), we find this declaration: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." This sounds very absolute. What is its meaning? Let Dissenting commentators reply. "Whosoever sins *ye declare* to be forgiven, they are forgiven." (Doddridge's Paraphrase.) "This is to be understood only in a ministerial way; *declaring* that all such persons as do so repent and believe, all their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, and accordingly they are remitted to them." (Gill's Commentary.) In almost the same language speaks Matthew Henry. So that the Church of England, in using an expression sounding very absolute, only follows the Bible, and claims no more in the words in question than what Christ granted in the passage on which the absolution is evidently built. His meaning, as we have seen from the above comments, was merely that his ministers should announce God's forgiveness to the penitent. It is this our Church does. The internal evidence of the Visitation Service, the parallel passages throughout the Liturgy, and the fixing of the import of the

commission granted to the apostles, all combine to prove that her absolution is not judicial, but declarative. To this can any one object?

C.—p. 89.

There are many evidences in the early writers, of the “ Lord’s Prayer” having been regarded and used as a form in the primitive Church. I select three, one from Jerome, one from Augustine, the last from Cyprian. “ Sic docuit Christus, &c.”—So Christ instructed his Apostles, that believing in the sacrifice of his body, they should dare daily to say “ Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.” *Adv. Pelag. lib. III. c. 15.*

“ Omnis vel pene omnis ecclesia, &c.”—“ It is the custom of the whole, or nearly the whole Church, to hear recited prayers, which are made in the celebration of the Sacrament, before that which is upon the Lord’s table begins to be blessed: prayers when it is blessed, and consecrated, and broken for distribution, which entire service, nearly *all the Church concludes with the Lord’s Prayer.*” *Epis. 59. qu. 5.*

“ He who hath given us life hath taught us how to pray, with the same indulgence and benignity wherewith he hath conferred upon us numerous other benefits and mercies; and when we address the

Father in the language of the Son, and in the manner which the Son hath recommended, without all peradventure, the Father will hear us," *De Orat. Dom. p. 137.*

D.—p. 105.

There is nothing unkind intended by this allusion. It is a matter of fact and history, that Arianism to a large extent infected the Presbyterian Church in Ulster. The proceedings of a late Synod, by which a separation (much to the honor of that Church) was effected between the heretical and orthodox congregations brought to light the startling amount of the evil, and proved that the pulpit of itself can never be regarded as a sure bulwark against the inroad of fatally erroneous opinions.

E.—p. 110.

This view, that we are warranted in retaining what is sound and unobjectionable in the Church of Rome, was held strongly by the Reformers. The following passage is from Zanchius, the intimate friend of Calvin. "We do not depart entirely and in all things, from the Roman Church, but in those things only in which she hath departed from

the ancient and pure Apostolic Church, and so hath departed from herself; nor do we leave her with any other mind than this, that if she, being corrected, will return to the original state of the Church, we also may return to her." *De Eccles. Mil. Vol. 8. p. 540.*

SERMON IV.

A.—p. 125.

It appears from the Preface that this Catechism containing so many misstatements and drawn up in the very worst spirit, has not only been actively circulated by ministers of the Synod of Ulster, but recommended by them to their flocks in a manner still more emphatic. The publisher expresses “a trust that those ministers who have not yet recommended the Catechism from their Pulpits, or otherwise disseminated it among their hearers, may be induced to imitate their (those who have circulated it) example; and go and do likewise.”—Page 5.

B.—p. 127.

I am aware that it has been denied by some commentators, that the expression, “Let all things be done decently and in order,” has any reference to rites and ceremonies. But it seems quite evident that the “all things” refers to the matter treated of

in the three last chapters of the Epistle, in which there is much concerning rites and ceremonies. The “in order” entirely respects discipline in the rites and ceremonies, since it has an especial regard to the ministrations in the congregation. See *Bloomfield’s Recens. Syn. in loco.*

C.—p. 140.

“*The first of these offices as early as the second century, &c.*”—The Nicene Council speaks of metropolitan Bishops as having been settled by ancient custom long before; and Athanasius speaking of a Bishop of Alexandria, who lived above sixty years before that Council, says, “he also enjoyed this power, having the care of the Churches of Pentapolis and Lybia, where Sabellius breathed his heresy, and that he *wrote letters of admonition to several Bishops, of those parts who began to be infected by his heresy.*” See *Bingham’s Antiquities. Book 2. c. 16.*

D.—p. 142.

“*The early Church of Britain was pure and Scriptural.*”—It has always been the endeavour of the Church of Rome to make the world believe that

Britain received Christianity at first through the efforts of Papal Missionaries, and consequently that the first faith of the British Church was in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of Rome. This in all its parts is utterly false; Christianity flourished in Britain and in Ireland long before the Roman Church had any connection with these countries. The first notice which Rome Papal took of Britain was in the middle of the seventh century, when Augustine the monk was commissioned by Pope Gregory to undertake the christianizing of England. But the following authorities will shew that the Gospel had been introduced and accepted centuries before that period. In his work against the Jews, Tertullian (A. D. 190.) says, "The Parthians, the Medes, the several tribes of Getulid, the many limits of the Moors, all the remote quarters of Spain, and the divers peoples of Gaul, and those parts of Britain which are inaccessible to the Romans, have been subdued by Christ." Origen. (A. D. 230) asks, in his 4th Hom. in Ezek. "when did the land of Britain, before the coming of Christ, consent to the religion of one God."

Jerome, (A. D. 378) asserts, "The British Isles adore one Christ, and observe one rule of faith."

Chrysostom, (A. D. 398) in a discourse entitled "Christ is God," remarks, "The British Islands which are situated beyond the sea, and lie in the very ocean, have experienced the power of the Word,

for there Churches have been founded, and altars have been erected.”

But this point is a matter of History. In several parts of his History, Bede, writing himself in the ninth century, admits the existence of Christianity in Britain long previous to the mission of Augustine. He describes a persecution which the British Christians sustained in the fourth century, during which, churches were burned, the innocent proscribed, and martyrs were slaughtered. In this time of trial, Alban suffered martyrdom near to the present St. Albans; (See the first book of his History. ch. 7.) It is besides upon record, that Bishops from Britain attended the Council of Arles, convened by Constantine in the year 314, and that of Sardica in the year 347. This last fact is asserted both by Athanasius and Hilary. These testimonies, to which many others might be added, put it beyond question that at a very early period, certainly five centuries before Rome Papal turned her attention towards the inhabitants of these countries, the Gospel was preached to them, and Christianity implanted among them.

It only remains for us now to enquire into the *nature* of the Christianity which the Britons of the early centuries adopted. That it was not in accordance with the substitute for Christianity which formed the religion of Rome in the seventh century,

may be gathered from many records. My limits only permit of the introduction of one. Augustine held a conference with the British Bishops, the object of which was to force upon them his own opinions, and to bring them as the representatives of the British Church into subjection to the see of Rome. His address to them is given in "Bede's Ecclesiastical History." "In many respects you act in a manner contrary to our customs, and indeed to those of the Universal Church; and yet, if you will obey me in three things, to celebrate Easter at the proper time, to perform the office of Baptism according to the custom of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church, and *with us* to preach the Word of God to the British nation, we will tolerate *all your other* customs, though contrary to our own." lib. iii. c. 3, In the reply to this arrogant proposal, it was expressly stated by the British Bishops, that the brotherly subjection of love they were ready to render "to the Bishop of Rome and to every godly Christian, but that other obedience than this they knew not to be due to him whom he called the Pope of Rome, and that they were under the government of the Bishop of Caerleon (in Monmouthshire)." From all this it is evident that the ancient British Church was separate from the Church of Rome in opinion, customs, discipline, and government. It was Apostolic, when she had departed from the faith

once delivered to the Saints. The hand of persecution, (for the British ecclesiastics were put to the sword by the cruel and exterminating policy which has ever marked the decrees of the Vatican,) and the insidiousness of error, uprooted and corrupted this once pure witness of the Truth, and overspread the vineyard with tares. The Reformation plucked them up; and restored to England its privileges, its religious independence, and its ancient faith.

E.—p. 144.

“*Reformation not a revolution.*”—This is admitted by the historian Mosheim, although his English translator has, for some reason, neglected to convey his meaning. Speaking of the Church of England by Elizabeth, he says, “By this means, that Reformation of the old religion, (*illa quidem veteris religionis correctio*) which separated the English Church equally from Popery and from the other churches which had renounced its domination, was confirmed and established.”—*See Bp. Jebb’s Corres. vol. i. 575.*

F.—p. 154.

Besides the feasts mentioned in this paragraph, there were several others observed in Israel for which no command is to be found in Scripture;

such as the fast of the fourth month, (Jer. lii. 6, 7); the fast of the fifth month, on account of the burning of the temple and city, (2 Kings xxv. 8); and that of the seventh month, on account of the murder of Gedaliah, (2 Kings xxv. 25); and the fast of the tenth month, when the Babylonian army commenced the siege of Jerusalem; (Jer. lii. 4). These are all enumerated in Zech. viii. 19, and the authority for these must be found in the power of the Church to ordain them. This was Augustine's opinion, (as (quoted by Hooker) "In these things, whereof the Scripture appointeth no certainty, the use of the people of God or the ordinances of our Fathers must serve for a law. In which case, if we will dispute and condemn one sort by another's custom, it will be but matter of endless contention."—*Epis.* 36.

G.—p. 156.

"The posture of kneeling at the Lord's Supper commendable."—It is not undeserving of remark that the custom of sitting was first brought into the Church by the Arians, who denying the divinity of the Saviour, thought it no robbery to be equal with him. It was for this reason banished from the Reformed Church of Poland, by a general synod, A.D. 1583. I give this on the authority of Wheatley in his Work on the Book of Common Prayer, p. 312.

H.—p. 167.

It appears from many passages in the Fathers, that the practice of signing with the cross in Baptism is of very ancient standing in the Church. Tertulian says, “the flesh is signed, that the soul may be fortified;”—*De Resur.* c. 8. Cyprian, “the forehead of a Christian is sanctified with the sign of God;”—*De Lapsis.* p. 122. Lactantius describes Christians as those “who have been marked upon the forehead with the cross,”—*Lib. iv.* c. 26. Chrysostom says, “that it is the glory of Christians, “that they carry in their forehead the sign of the cross,”—*Psalms cx.* Basil asserts that “an ecclesiastical constitution had prevailed from the Apostles’ days, that those who believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ should be signed with the sign of the cross.”—*De Spir. Sanc.* c. 27.

THE END.

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