

THE
MINISTRY AND POLITY
OF
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE
MINISTRY AND POLITY
OF
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH :
VIEWED IN THEIR SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL
ASPECTS ;
AND IN RELATION TO PRINCIPLES
PROFESSED BY
THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS.

BY THE
REV. ALFRED BARRETT.

"SCRIPTURA ecclesiam sustentat : ecclesia Scripturam custodit. Quandò viget ecclesia, Scriptura splendet : quandò ecclesia ægrotat, Scriptura situm contrahit. Itaque Ecclesiæ Scripturæque facies simul vel sana solet apparere, vel morbida : et ecclesiæ constitutioni subinde respondet tractatio Scripturæ."—BENGELIUS.

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P R E F A C E.

THESE pages are not written with any desire to place the subject of Wesleyan economy obtrusively before the public. The writer would gladly have spent his spare and treasured moments in thinking on subjects more congenial to his taste ; just as the people of his own communion, in general and at all times, would rather occupy themselves in fulfilling the higher claims of their Christian calling, than in apologetic controversy : but as the economy in question has been violently assaulted, and its agreement with Scripture made matter of doubt or denial, a necessity arose for examining this subject to its very foundations.

It is matter of notoriety that a rent and division from this communion has taken place. To have attempted to argue with the authors and consummators of the schism, while the whirlwind of agitation was in progress, would have been vanity itself; and, indeed, in instances where the essay was made, it proved to be vain. It had been a weary task, and fruitless as well as weary, to follow through all the windings of their course

those who began by recalling us, as they professed, to the first principles of Wesley's Methodism, and ended—if, indeed, they have ended—by denouncing those principles as being the very essence of tyrannical usurpation of the privileges of God's people. In the tumult of passion men regard neither reason nor the Divine word; and therefore, before “the wisdom that cometh from above” can be properly appealed to, it is needful to pause a little.

To have refuted at the time of their utterance the innumerable calumnies, misrepresentations, sophistries, and bitter declamations made before excited and sometimes irreligious assemblies, and still oftener written and circulated in printed publications, would have been all but impossible; not because of the amount of misconceived truth contained in these effusions, but because of the complication or universal intertexture of distortion and falsehood. No man who has any regard to the laws of righteous controversy, or has any wish to maintain the Christian spirit, would think of submitting a solemn question contained in the New Testament revelation to the vote of a public meeting, where men of all creeds and negation of all creed are wont to meet together. Methodism is, of course, as legitimate a subject for fair and honourable criticism on the part of persons competent to the task as any other system; for the Methodists have exercised it in reference

to others : but there is as much difference between this kind of criticism and the course which has been followed, as there is between the confiding converse of a Christian home, and the blind and forceful contentions of a multitude in the street. Those who have had confidence in the Head of the church have preferred, therefore, not to use the weapons of their opponents in their own defence, but rather to abide in the path of duty, and wait the issue.

The matter before us is one of simple appeal to Holy Scripture, and subordinately, by way of illustration, to church history. This Expository Essay is, therefore, written in the first place to vindicate the Conference in maintaining, at much cost and suffering, those principles of order and discipline which gradually grew up through providential suggestion, and were adopted, in that great revival of religion in the eighteenth century, by the Rev. John Wesley, and those who laboured with him ; principles which carry an antecedent presumption as to their scriptural integrity, not only from their acknowledged practical efficacy, but as they supply a religious provision for a religious and not a political need. The Conference stands strong in the affections and adhesion of the great body of the wisest and best of the Methodist people ; and the following chapters are intended to give to all candid Christian men the reasons why it is so. Those

who have attempted to turn a Protestant cry against the Wesleyan-Methodist Ministry in general, and to stigmatize its maxims and acts as Popery, are either ignorant of the relative characters of Popery and Protestantism, or else they have attempted to commit a fraud upon the public. An intelligent Romanist could only smile at such a feint. The earliest and best Protestant Confessions are all on the side of the Wesleyan view of the Christian Ministry. That Ministry labours rather to give depth and intensity to the Protestant feeling, than to weaken it, knowing well where the soul of the opposition between the two systems lies.

Another intention of the author is, if possible, to win back, by these representations of Scripture teaching, those who, although at present gone from us, are not utterly alienated in heart, but have some yearnings after the pastures which they left, and left perhaps more from yielding to the influence of others, than from any adverse convictions or dissatisfaction of their own. Many, indeed, he has known, who knew not why they had left, except that others had persuaded them that there was something wrong, and that they ought to leave. Towards such he feels the tenderest compassion; and abundantly will he rejoice if this book should be the means of restoring but one individual or household to a once-enjoyed but long-forfeited peace. Compassion, indeed, is due, and is deeply cherished,

towards those whose recovery to our own communion is hopeless, and who, in many instances, perhaps never really participated in its spirit; but these can only be followed by our earnest prayer, that they may find sustenance in other folds, and may not fail of being gathered to the Good Shepherd at last.

This opportunity is likewise used for uttering a warm protest against the unkindness of some Christian Ministers, during the late strifes,—most of them connected with Congregational denominations. Towards all Evangelical and Protestant Nonconformists, the Wesleyan Ministry from the first has endeavoured to maintain the most friendly relation: their eminent Preachers have been welcomed to our pulpits; their practical and devotional writings have been largely commended to our people. No dispute among them, nor any schism in any church, has ever been exasperated by our interference: no disciplinary act of theirs has ever in our circle been called in question. Their wisest and most devout Pastors, with whom we have had occasional intercourse, we have rejoiced and still rejoice to acknowledge as fathers and brethren in Christ. But that some should so far have forgotten themselves in the late agitations, as to throw open their arms and lend their places of worship to those who were endeavouring to subvert our order; and not only so, but that they should have sought, through the

medium of the press, to embitter those disaffected persons still more against ourselves, and to cover our own character and motives, in the same way, with the utmost odium ;—this is a return we were hardly prepared for. Placed as the Wesleyans are by Divine Providence in a middle position between the Established Church of this country, and the Dissenters, their Ministers, of course, enter upon this position with their eyes open, and make their account to meet it with all its perils : but surely, if they offer an olive-branch to each of their neighbours, the proper return from either is not a sword. Such a course, in the name of our common Master, we are bound to rebuke, rather than to argue or remonstrate respecting it ; and the merest babe in religion, who respects the high ethics of the New Testament, has an undoubted right authoritatively to rebuke it. I trust the past will be forgotten, and that the Methodist people will still keep to their Founder's principle,—that is, be “ the friends of all, the enemies of none ;” and, still more, I trust that the general and collective amity of the respective bodies will be preserved : but truth and candour would have been slurred and sacrificed, had not this brief mention of the past been made.

A fourth and final reason for publishing these arguments is, that all faithful Wesleyans may see that the stand made by the Conference against democratical usurpation, has not been a contention

for a point of self-will, or of class-dignity, but of REVEALED TRUTH. Their conscience, in the sight of God, has been called on to fulfil its most anxious and yet most unavoidable office. If they have been happy enough, with their fathers, to know the mind of God, they may safely leave all other questions to their providential issue. Good and earnest men will not desire to trouble themselves unnecessarily with a second thought. As a people, we are endeavouring to come from the controversy in charity with all men, not unmindful, however, of the lessons which affliction has taught us. Our ranks have been thinned by defection and desertion; but they are unbroken, and we trust their compact is getting firmer.

Wesleyan Methodism at large is deeply indebted to the fortitude of those Ministers and eminent laymen, who, in a time of unparalleled trial, have kept against all assaults the deposit committed to their trust. Future generations will thank them for it. We utter no note of exultation; we are too sorrowful, and too much humbled, and have too much reason for confession of sin before God; but we trust we shall come purified from the fire. The present aspect of the world shows that there are higher things to attend to, than matters of church-government; though these last, as being part of the whole counsel of God, have their peculiar and relative importance.

The Great Husbandman is purging His floor ; and inexpressibly solemn is the duty of those concerned to gather the wheat into His garner.

For the present work the author has had no learned leisure. It has been composed in snatches of time, and amid innumerable anxieties and distractions. Under such disadvantageous circumstances he has done his best to serve a great and good people : and he must now leave the result to the blessing of God and the candour of the Christian public, and in the hope that he may never have to recur to the same theme.

A. B.

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THE
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CHAPTER I.

ON THE NATURE OF GOVERNMENT, VIEWED AS CIVIL
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“THE dignity of the commandment is according to the dignity of the commanded:.....the just and lawful sovereignty over men’s understanding by force of truth rightly interpreted, is that which approacheth nearest to the similitude of the Divine rule.”
—LORD BACON.

§ I. THE Supreme Governor of all creatures is God, whose scrutiny none can evade, and by whose final judgment the everlasting state of intelligent and responsible agents must be determined. His right to rule is absolute and illimitable, and naturally flows from His perfection, as He is the only Infinite and Eternal One; so that, instead of being amenable to any for the exercise of His power, He is the sole source from which power can proceed: which doctrine the Apostle sums up in ascribing to Him this title, “the blessed and only Potentate; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” (1 Tim. vi. 15.) God the Father is “the only Potentate” *legislatively*, as being

the original fount of law : God the Son is the same *administratively*, as being Mediator, and authority being given Him to execute judgment, because He is also the Son of Man : (John v. 27 :) God the Holy Ghost is the same *executively*, as He is the Agent by whom human minds are directly affected, and all intelligent actions are linked to their issues. All this arrangement has to do at present with a state of trial, and will be followed by an act of final adjudication ; after which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is all in all.

Angels, as far as we can judge, are governed by the simplest intimations of the Divine will ; the rectitude of their natures being such, that they answer at once, and with tremulous sensibility, to every, even the lightest, breath of the Spirit : and as there is no repulsion of the will of God in their bosoms, so there can be no want of harmony and consent between their ranks and orders ; insomuch that with them light and love, approval and will, flow into each other ; and whatever distinctions there may be among them of “ thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,” such terms can never imply the holding in varied degrees of a forceful authority to constrain unwilling natures, but rather a higher power of influence and thought, communicating its bliss to those who are below,—a graduated dignity of nearer access to God,—a power to reveal a fuller heaven, and draw others towards it.

With men on the earth it is far different ; at least, with men so far as they stand related to each other in civil society. The guilty and corrupt estate in which we are plunged has made a coercive government necessary. Broken off from God by the carnal mind, our bond of mutual union is lost, and a con-

flict necessarily takes place between the warring wills of men; and where individual powers approach nearest to equality, there in disputes the fiercest struggle for the place of government will be; for there the claim of pre-eminence of one over another is with greatest difficulty set up. Civil or coercive power is therefore, as St. Paul teaches, "an ordinance of God," and the necessity for it arises out of our loss of the sanctifying Spirit; for, if all had retained that blessing, we might have been swayed by the simple and direct rules of revelation,—our wills answering to the Divine will as face answers to face in a glass.

This power is created by the providential investiture of some men with physical prowess, or mental force, or patriarchal relationship; by their being gifted with rectoral wisdom, or by their being conducted through tangled and difficult circumstances into the position of benefactor and deliverer. It is a power to devise and administer law, and secure obedience to the same, by guarding and defending the loyal, and punishing the disobedient with pains and penalties proportioned to their crimes. The end to which it is directed is the external peace and prosperity of the commonwealth, the application in the best way of the energies of each member to the welfare of the whole, restraining the personal will or liberty of that member at the same time, so far as its exercise might injure the whole; and then reflectively making the elevation, wealth, or honour of the community or nation tell upon the advantage of the individual. Thus the influence works in a circle; but it is a circle which belongs to this world,—taking

care at the same time to remember that man is made for society, and society for God.

Such an ordinance is a merciful provision for man in a broken and fallen state. It secures, in our condition of estrangement from God, a steady share, by guarding us from violence and wrong, of such benefits of this life—for instance, the fruits of industry, skill, and commerce—as shall fit us for becoming the subjects of a higher, even a spiritual, administration; for, without the tranquillity afforded by the one, there would be no leisure or opportunity for fulfilling the requirements of the other: and besides this, as civil polity certainly brings out some of the fruits of man's moral agency, and shows especially the happiness that flows from a wise and just rule, it cannot fail to suggest to thoughtful natures the idea of a yet higher happiness, to be realised through a system which shall appeal to more delicate and less selfish motives, and aim at a nobler end.

§ II. With the teaching of such scriptures as Rom. xiii. 1, and 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, the theory which some hold, of the sovereign power of the whole community, is quite untenable; except in the sense that the community in question is held to include those superior persons who are designated and qualified by God as judges and rulers; for it is only through the medium of these latter, that power, predicated of a society of men, can, from an abstract idea, be made an efficient reality. If the persons who constitute a civil society were all made to a low and even standard, as to intellect, knowledge, disposition, and strength respectively; if there were no might under which weakness might shelter, no

wisdom or learning from which ignorance might draw light, no fatherly—involving filial and other—relationship from which sympathy might rise and grow; government would be impossible, and a body politic could no more be formed of such materials than an arch could be constructed of right-angled stones. In every society, tribe, or nation, there are those who are drawn, driven, or permitted by the Almighty to frame and promulgate law; a work for which tens of thousands of others have neither knowledge nor any other qualification,—no matter whether the administration of it be invested in one or in several: so that the people, as distinct from rulers, can never make rulers; they can only accept those whom God has made. Nor can they determine to live without rulers; for civil government is an absolutely necessary condition of human society; the obligation to submit to rule being anterior to any appointment of man, and flowing from the constitution of things by God, as that is seen from a simple family or household, to the highest form which society takes.

If the proposition were this,—that the *people*, apart from parliament, councils, or King, are the source of all sovereign power,—it would not be true; for power, in the political sense, is a mere abstraction or chimera, unless defined in intelligent legislation, and brought into prompt and orderly execution. Nor is it true that the whole community, including even its counsellors or rulers, is the *source* of sovereign power; it is only the primary subject in which that power inheres: the origin or source is God: “There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” (Rom. xiii. 1.) And He, in His

wisdom, has left the investiture of it in one individual or more, that is, in monarchical or other forms, to the united wisdom or willingness of society; inso-much that, while the source of the power is Divine, the form of its application is, as St. Paul declares, an “ordinance of man,” to which we are required to submit ourselves, yet still “for the Lord’s sake.”

Sovereign power is, therefore, rather intrusted to the whole community of each tribe and nation by the Lord of the whole earth, than originated by that nation; for He has always secured in His providential rule that superior persons shall be found, in whom the visible and administrative government, with the consent of the whole, shall be vested, and through whom it shall inhere in the whole. The analogy of this is found in all nature: one particular instance in respect of the ruling bees, and their communities, is referred to by the elegant Roman poet Virgil:

“*IPSI per medias acies, INSIGNIBUS ALIS,
Ingentes animos angusto in pectore versant.*”

—*Georg.*, lib. iv., 82:

and as to the obedience of the rest, and the necessary connexion of the Kings with the commonwealth, to make it a commonwealth:

“*Rege incolumi, mens omnibus una est;
Amissa, rupere fidem; constructaque mella
Diripuerunt ipsæ, et crates solvere favorum.*”

—*Georg.*, lib. iv., 212–214.*

* “The Kings themselves amid the hosts, signally set forth by their wings, exert great souls, each within the confines of a narrow bosom.....The King being safe, one mind pervades the whole: but, lo! he being dead, they have dissolved their union; they themselves have rent the fabric of their honey, and demolished the structure of their combs.”

A lowly figure may illustrate a great subject. The minor acts of the Divine administration reveal the principles of the original council. A sunbeam is a sunbeam still, though it may have radiated very far. And, to show how entirely the whole ordinance of temporal government is secondary and under Divine control, history is full of evidence, that when nations have been given to wickedness, then, in spite of legislative wisdom, literary riches, physical resources, and martial power, they have perished away, their judgment-day being as sure to come in this life, as the judgment of individuals when this life is no more.

The whole arrangement is made for man as he is a dweller on earth,—for man in his greatest distance from God; in order that he may not perish by the wickedness of his fellow-man, nor be the cause of any one's perishing; and that the earth, with all its tribes and tongues, may be in a position to hear the word of the Lord.

§ III. But church-government is an arrangement of a more spiritual character. It has to do with men as they are regenerate, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, or seeking to become such; with men who have delicate and holy principles within them; who can feel the power of appeals that a mere civil subject could not understand. There is a fearful list of moral evils cherished in the hearts of men, and manifest in their life; such as anger, malice, pride, envy, falsehood, which afflict and damage society, and can never be reached or removed by any civil law whatever; and therefore, in our Saviour Christ's order, another kind of rule comes in, where the constraint is adapted not to man's natural fear of pains and penalties, but

rather to those higher and unselfish motives which belong to what St. Paul terms "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Church-order stands in close connexion with the kingdom of heaven: not that the church on earth, however it may be defined, is itself the kingdom of heaven, but that it is subordinate to the purposes of that kingdom, affording a plan for the general and outward embodiment of its members, and a sphere for the discipline which they must pass through. This order makes a nearer approach to the economy of the angels; the supreme Head and Ruler is nearer; the operation of the Holy Spirit is more direct, and more adapted to that new and inward creation which He has produced, than to a mingled state of things in which the confused motives of a secular multitude are overruled to the ends of civil society. Here the statute-book is clear and all-authoritative,—at least, in its primary or fundamental enactments. It must be regarded as containing the whole mind of the Lawgiver, insomuch that nothing may be taken from or added to these decisions; and all minor rules can be nothing more than forms of engagement made by mutual consent, to carry out in various places, various ages, and in various forms of society, the spirit of the higher code.

In some particulars there is unquestionably a likeness between the two forms of polity; as, for instance, they both acknowledge one original source of power; both are instances of remedial rule fitted to the state of imperfect beings; both acknowledge and accept of their rulers by consent of the community: but as they include a different class of subjects, there

will be a broad distinction in such particulars as these :—

Civil rulers are raised up by the ordinary methods of Divine Providence, working in the laws of social life ; while spiritual overseers are called directly by the Holy Ghost, where the gift is found to be imparted in connexion with the sending of the summons. And though mistakes, no doubt, in this erring condition of life will often be committed by those who are to judge, whether this or that man be indeed called of God, and sorrow and trouble will be the result, as well as the reversal often of their decision ; this is an evil inseparable from our imperfect estate, though a less one by very far than those which are merged in the alternatives upon which men are cast when they make ordination, on the one hand, a sacrament conveying grace, or, on the other, a mere solemnising of popular election. Civil law is immediately directed to the guardianship of society against injury and wrong, and also to the social elevation and comfort of all the classes composing it ; it knows no higher end : Christian or church law is as directly turned towards the training of the baptized, the awakened, and the weak in the knowledge and love of God, the edification of believers in faith and piety, the censure of the unfaithful who might corrupt and injure the rest by their example, the preservation in active purity of the truth, and the maintenance from age to age of all the ordinances of Christ. ITS END IS CHRIST, His glory and universal rule as connected with the salvation of men from sin ; although the happiness of all the flock is indirectly secured all the while ; and therefore its rules are conceived in the truthful, merciful, humble, and loving

spirit of the Gospel, and are never stern, except against impenitent transgression.

Civil law, in convicting or acquitting an accused individual, appeals only to outward and palpable evidence, such as is manifest to all men; deeming that so far as such evidence can be furnished, as to any sin or crime having been committed, so far only outward injurious effects can have been felt; and thus here its province ends, however the accused may have within him a world of iniquity which no laws can bind, and which, in a thousand ways of speech or writing or subtle evasions, may distress and injure his fellow-men. Christian law, on the contrary, appeals to conscience in the sight of God; and, where outward evidence is wanting, may require on momentous occasions a plain answer to a serious question, like that which the Apostle Peter put to the wife of Ananias, saying, "Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much;" or when Joshua exhorted Achan to give glory to the God of Israel by telling all he knew respecting the accursed thing. It was doubtless to provide for some such necessity that the Church of Scotland adopted its oath of purgation.*

If serious men feel that the order and restraints of civil society are insufficient for them, as to their moral discipline and in securing the well-being of their souls, and if they, as children of the light and of the day, therefore put themselves into another kind of fellowship, where conscience, truth, and love are all supposed to bear sway, instead of Acts of Parliament and of muni-

* DR. HILL'S "Practice of Judicatories. 1830," p. 17.

cialties, and where they receive the benefit flowing from the working of these higher principles; how can they object to have their own conscience and truth tested, when it is necessary that some question should be answered which has for its object the clearing of a clouded fact, the bringing to light of concealed sin, or the vindication in some other way of practical holiness? so long as no higher penalty of guilt or contumacy can result than the loss of this peculiar fellowship. Is it not right that a spiritual communion should be rid of those who claim to violate its fundamental principles?* And, on the other hand, can it possibly be right, that where purity and truth in Christ are the professed object of all, any one should refuse to respond to an appeal in his own case? If men take up with a lowered Christianity, where their social position and temporal prospects are made better by an *accommodated* piety, and where considerations drawn from their worldly standing lead them in their religious course to do this or that, then they will be repulsive and reserved in answer to Christian inquiry, just in proportion to their worldliness. But it is not of such a standard of Christianity that these pages are intended to treat: we would not superstitiously refine or magnify the Scripture notion of personal godliness; neither would we in one iota lower it.

In this way the Class-Leader in the Wesleyan communion examines weekly each member of his class, as to whether he has a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and whether he is so ordering his religious walk

* See Note (A), Appendix.

as to secure this end; the Leader himself is statedly examined by the Minister, as to his views, attainments, and practice; and so is the Minister, once or more in the course of the year, on the same points, by his official brethren. No doubt, any of these might repel inquiry, as being an infraction of his personal liberty, and might tell his kind interrogator to satisfy himself with outward evidence; but then this would be defeating the whole end of the fellowship. All these persons come together to have their abstract liberty controlled, so far as the restraint may be made subservient to the good of others, and to their own salvation; in one word, to watch over each other in love.

Civil law, as we have before hinted, in punishing a transgressor, may inflict loss of goods, or upon his person restraints and pains, even unto death: society, being a sufferer from him in these very respects, is made the executioner of immutable justice. But Christian law can inflict nothing but corrective censures, or, in extreme cases, exclusion from the body: the whole family having suffered only in moral or spiritual respects, the punishment can only take that form. This is said, not to lower the conception of its real moment, but to define its nature. Thus the rules of a Christian society are constructed only indirectly to the comfort and unity of its members, and the development of their liberties and gifts. They are made, or ought to be, to aim at once at the rights and interests of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in promoting these there must be the crossing of individual wills, and the withholding or taking away of individual conveniences, in innumerable instances. The best laws of nations are so far different from this, that they are

never framed with a supreme regard to the Sovereign ; but the Sovereign himself, with all his interests, is subordinated to the good of the people.

§ IV Not to anticipate instances of more special scriptural proof, the difference between civil and spiritual polity may be deduced in general from our Lord's parable of the new cloth put on to the old garment, and the new wine put into old bottles. (Matt. ix. 16, 17.) The disciples of John wished Christ's disciples to follow the rigorous customs observed by themselves and by the Pharisees, as to fast-days and the like ; that is, to adopt in perpetuity the institutions of a religion which, as men had made it, was half secular and half spiritual, and in which secular rewards held out some lure to the bigoted and formal to go to excess in their formality. Our Lord repelled this movement, by showing, in His own manner, that His religion, being unworldly and spiritual in its aim, and seeking the happiness and sanctification of the man, and, through the renewal of the man, the welfare of the world, would always form and call forth its own congenial ordinances. Jewish modes of worship and order could no more express the lowliness, purity, expansion, universal love, and devotional fervour of Christianity, than new cloth could be put upon a worn-out garment, or new wine contained in old bottles : and for our present argument the idea of secularised Judaism need only be put for that of secular law. While the Bridegroom is with us, there needs no conformity to a lower standard ; but if He be away,—that is, if His unction and blessing be withdrawn,—the compromise will take place, whether it be lawful or not.

Some writers, who contend that the principles to be observed in the government of the church and of the world are the same, are wont to cite such passages as Rom. xiii. 2, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation," in order to show that no such strong language is used in reference to obedience to spiritual guides, as that is which enjoins submission to the civil power. But the attempt fails. This is not to expound Scripture, but to discredit its testimony on both sides, by putting two alleged extremes together, to make them neutralise each other, thereby leaving the impression that they are indeed extremes.

Obedience to Pastors is enjoined on the ground that "they watch for souls, as they that must give account;" (Heb. xiii. 17;) but in reference to the Magistrate it is urged on the ground of his being "a terror" to "evil-doers," and because "he beareth not the sword in vain:" and the damnation or condemnation which transgressors receive to themselves must, in all fairness of interpretation, be understood in harmony with these representations; that is, such a condemnation* as the Magistrate clothed with terror can inflict; for Christianity makes no provision for sheltering any man from the vengeance of the justly offended civil power when it judges in civil actions: and though this Magistrate is said to be "a minister of God," it must be taken in the same sense in which flaming fires are said to be His ministers. (Heb. i. 7.) It is the *power* which is of God in the case of the civil ordinance, not the direct appointment of the individual ruler; while in the church we have the

* 1 Cor. vi. 7, *et alibi*.

sanctification and calling of the very person who himself must give account to the Sovereign Head of the church,—a statement never made in Scripture respecting any King or Government whatever. Many of those, indeed, spoken of in the Bible, as doing His work and executing His pleasure, were no more than Heathens. The secular power has to do with secular matters, inflicts a secular condemnation, and is itself judged in this world ; so entirely has the word of God distinguished it from the order and rule of His household.

And this calling of the Minister by the Holy Ghost is not a mere accident, but a leading principle in the administering of Christianity, affecting every other part of the outward economy. The attestation of the flock is, of course, necessary, in order to bring the influence of the doctrine to bear practically ; but when this is given, and the gifts and graces of the Spirit are likewise present, (which last always present the leading proof of its truth,) then the Evangelist, or Pastor, becomes not a mere constituted authority, but a necessary one,—he cannot help, if he move freely, but become such. He is a spiritual father ; souls are begotten to Christ through his ministry, who look up to his wisdom for guidance and nurture ; and by the same wisdom subordinate fellow-labourers are guided in their work, and all the members of the household sustained and enriched by the treasury of truth which he provides and keeps open. Where all hearts are right, the rule of such persons is felt to be no other than a benefit ; and even where discontent and murmuring have crept in, its just and moderate claims are to be asserted ; for so St. Paul asserted the grounds of his authority

against the schismatic Corinthians : “ Though ye have ten thousand” *παιδαγωγοὺς*, “ instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.” As the above term among the Greeks generally signified those who had the guidance of children to and from school, the Apostle in this sentence contrasted the pastoral title of the Corinthian party-leaders with his own. The contrast was not founded upon that particular in which St. Paul differed from all his modern successors, namely, his inspiration, but on that which he had in common with them,—a fatherly relation to the Christian community under his care, involving an influence like that of the sun, which continually turns the sun-flower toward itself.

§ V All this shows the utter unsoundness and opposition to the Bible of a democratic theory of church-government. When private Christians claim, as many do, their right to take a personal part in all church acts, whether of legislation or administration, on the ground of their membership in this heavenly family, and declare that it is their inalienable privilege as the children of God ; we are at a loss to know in what place of Scripture, in what analogy of nature or of the Gospel, this ground of claim is to be found. That a Christian society shall, by the assent of its wisest and best members, affirm the rules by which it is proposed to carry out, amongst the whole of those members, and at that special time, the laws of Christ, is a necessary principle of all spiritual government ; for here force can have no place. But that each one of the flock in the fold shall have a part of the pastoral care in admitting and excluding mem-

bers,—that each child in the household, young or old, foolish or wise, shall take part in its economy,—is a state of things not more opposed by the figurative representations of the New Testament, than, as we shall see, by its direct preceptive teaching,—to say nothing of the principles which are acknowledged in every *naturally* organized community.

Laws, in the primary sense, no church, or class of persons in it, has authority to make. This belongs to Christ alone: all that we have to do is to devise regulations or BYE-LAWS, by which His general precepts as to individuals and the whole may be applied, according to the period in which we live, and the circumstances by which we are surrounded; and therefore in this matter comprehensive wisdom and experience are the chief aids on which we are to rely. But if Christ, in His primary and all-authoritative legislation, has decided that certain persons shall perform certain functions, and be held responsible for a certain charge, then this is no matter to be set aside or lowered by a bye-law, but rather a settled feature in any scheme of rules whatever, and one not to be altered.

A man who has the Lord for his Shepherd has a right to demand that no under-shepherd but one of the Lord's appointing shall be placed over him: he has a right to say whether or not, in his judgment, the Lord has so appointed him: he has a right to require the removal from the fold of those who disturb his peace, or by their example and influence are likely to mar his purity: and he has a right to ask such scope for the use of his gifts as may enable him to stand clear with his Master, though he must not be the sole judge of those gifts. But he has no right to

set up a shepherd of his own, or, uncalled, to turn shepherd himself. As a child, he has a right to the best ordering that the household can furnish, the best nurture, aliment, and training that it can possibly yield, and even to have his feelings and wishes considered in its constitution: but he has not a right to share in the functions of tutor, steward, watchman, so as to interrupt, distract, and confuse them all. The proper idea of the order is, not that these officers act through the household, but that the household acts through them.*

Where a matter has to be regulated on which human wisdom can alone be brought to bear, it is most reasonable that this wisdom should receive such gain to its resources as the mental wealth of the united society or societies can furnish, and that both clergy and laity should have a reason for respecting what should be binding upon all: but who are they that bring this quota of tested knowledge and experience? Not surely every man, woman, and child, in the whole congregation; those who have absorbing and domestic cares,—females, servants, and the like; those who are just escaping from the world, and, as to spiritual sight, are much in the condition of the half-restored person who saw men as trees walking; those who are just rescued by conversion from gross ungodliness; those who would not then have been in this communion at all, except they had come thither to be guided, alimented, and saved from themselves? Who will affirm the contrary of this? Who will say that individual suffrage in civil constitutions was ever so universal;

* See ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S "Kingdom of the Messiah" on this point, Essay ii., § 2, p. 73; also Note (B), Appendix.

or that, if written in theory, it was ever found possible in practice?

No, it is a war against the eternal law of arrangement and subordination which prevails through the universe. Where the Christian life flows freely through the community, and it is not hindered by worldly restraints or barriers, there is a co-working amongst souls by which those who are fit to govern are made to govern, those who are qualified to counsel are admitted to advise, those who can strengthen are brought in as an increase of strength; the various orders take their places, and keep them, just as elements of various density, shaken together in the same vessel, soon take their places uncommingled.

In all instances where simplicity and love are in defect among the governed, the authors and executors of Christian rules operate to great disadvantage. The universal experience of this has given the weight of an aphorism to Hooker's well-known initial saying: "He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers." In a family those children who most need a gentle but firm restraint are not always those who have the most clear and just convictions of the reasons which prompt the authority that restrains them. Indeed, there are many, and not the youngest either, who require the guidance of household rule almost in proportion as they are incapable, through their passions or prejudices, of justly estimating it. The authority itself, and their reverence for it, must be in place of such convictions. Proceed in devising church rules, with a very spiritual and world-excluding Christianity in your eye, as your

standard, and you come in collision with those who are yet partly carnal. Act upon a widely realised experience, and you check the young and impetuous; upon a far-seeing wisdom, and you stagger the head-strong and thoughtless; upon the history of the past and the knowledge of human nature, and the unlearned cannot see your drift; upon the plainest deductions from the written word,—which, amid the roll of ages and the shifting theories of human polity, liveth and abideth for ever,—and you come in conflict with the disciples of movement, and worshippers of the spirit of the age, who can hardly be persuaded to stay and examine by the light of that word whether these things are so.

This, too, is the case, in general, with the least learned and least sanctified in the community, who are perhaps more to be compassionated than blamed; while there are others, who can see the beauty and symmetry of a compact society, and admire it as an object in its total impression, though they can form no idea of the treasures of piety, thought, and experience which have formed the complex parts of the structure, and placed them in their positions of relative order and dependence, and therefore are often led to speculate upon alterations which, contrary to their intention, might prove ruinous. They would only slacken a cord, when, lo! the tabernacle trembles to its very base. As Hooker observes in substance in another place,* there are many who admire the stateliness of houses and the goodliness of trees, who little think how these qualities are indebted in the one case to a foundation, and in the

* "Ecclesiastical Polity," p. 1, § 1.

other to a root, and what trouble it would cost to reveal that foundation and lay bare that root,—a trouble unprofitable to the operators, and not always satisfactory or interesting to the lookers-on. It will be seen, too, by those whose spiritual senses are exercised to discern good and evil, which is to have the curse of the Fall turned into a blessing,—that where a person is providentially shut out from the means of gaining legislative gifts and knowledge, by having the charge of a numerous family, or an absorbing business, being nearly uneducated, or by having that form of piety which vents itself more in the effusions of a warm heart than in the utterances of a clear and large understanding; if he possess the primal Christian grace of charity or love, it will be in him a faculty without an object, unless there be exercised a simple and noble confidence in his fellow-Christians who are a little higher in church-position, especially where probabilities are immensely in favour of the conclusion that they are wiser than himself, whether, indeed, they are better or not. If that confidence should sometimes be abused, as in this fallible world it will be, there is far less of loss to personal dignity in abiding by the principle, and calling the defaulter to account, than in wrestling with burly and vulgar eagerness, amid all disqualifications, for the post of dignity, whether it be of counsel or of rule, to fill it with alternate self-sufficiency and confusion, even where this is all. It is better far to take the lowest seat in the synagogue, as our Saviour teaches, and be invited higher, than to press at once to the chief place, and then be shamefully ordered to sit lower, or by the necessity of the case be compelled to do so.

§ VI. It will be seen, too, by the candid student of Scripture, that minute details of order are not laid down by the Apostles, and that our great work, which in fact forms a part of our mental and moral trial, is, to interpret and apply fundamental statutes. Of all the unreasoning and impracticable dogmatism which men have ever shown in their religious controversies, there is none like that which refuses to obey any rule of religious discipline which is not stated in plain words of some chapter or verse of holy writ, and requires on the other hand that every primitive custom, as well as every Divine and apostolical precept, shall be binding upon believers.

The book of God is a book of principles, addressed not more to children than to young men and fathers; and when we consider the continually altering circumstances of human things from age to age, we may safely say, it comprehensively involves the sanction of a thousand arrangements which have been made in past days, and a thousand more which have yet to be made in days to come, when providential acts of the Redeemer's government, or special fulfilments of prophecy, shall by their reflex illumination more fully light up obscure rules, the leading spirit of which has only just been seen. This is a nobler way, too, of dealing with human nature, which is being educated under the free Spirit for heaven, than by laying down a platform, from the very lines and angles of which there can be no departure, and so stereotyping minor regulations as to give them the air of mathematical detail, while they only purpose to carry out a primal obligation. Holy Scripture is silent in a hundred instances in which another principle of sacred constraint

is understood to have force. "Let all things be done decently and in order," it says; but what decency and order in religion and God's worship are, the law of nature—which makes youth defer to age, ignorance to wisdom, and prompts men to adopt the social customs of their time; which is the intuition of whatever is favourable to composure, unity, moral beauty, and energy—must determine. So that the very same felt religious obligation, which in primitive times adopted as a form of expression the kiss of peace, and the *ἀγάπη*, or "love-feast," now manifests itself in forms which are different, though congenial; more in harmony with a state of society which, even without the pale of the church, is now affected by Christianity: so that the Methodist may meet in class, and the Episcopalian or Dissenter take godly counsel with his friends in private, under equal sanction of Holy Scripture.

§ VII. So far we are speaking of cases in which the Christian life has free course, unimpeded by restrictions and enactments of the civil power. The question may, therefore, be fairly asked, How are these principles of government to be carried out in churches connected with the state, and established by law? Although it is no part of the purpose of this work to answer such a question, it may be freely conceded, in the first place, that where the civil power does interfere to prevent the internal economy of a church from arising out of those relations of believers to each other which are formed by the Holy Spirit in His production of intellectual and regenerate life; so far it does interfere with the glory of Christ, the beauty of the Lord our God, and the handywork of His people,

to mar, obscure, and sometimes destroy both; but whether this hurt and interference be the necessary effect of any and every alliance with the secular power, and whether it be not a fault of administration rather than of principle, this is a question which human wisdom can hardly be said to have answered, and which perhaps the acts of Divine Providence can alone determine. In proportion as all connexion of a state with Christianity is denounced as an evil, civil government itself must be regarded as partaking of the nature of evil, and as removed from the presence and sanction of the Almighty. Thousands who contend for the essential difference of the two polities, there are, who would not be disposed to deny that by wise arrangement they might work in harmonious relation; provided that no dissentient were coerced, nor his conscience oppressed. Where a Christian society is so extensively established in a land as to include the great majority of baptized and professing inhabitants, where by its institutions it sways the form of Christian opinion to all that extent, and especially where it holds territorial property and endowments which are the means of giving social influence, it thereby becomes possessed of a political power apart from all positive arrangements on the subject, which may turn the balance of legislation this way or that. In such case the civil ruler who would not be a persecutor must make terms with it. What those terms should be, it is not the purpose of these pages to answer.

§ VIII. It is not with a Christian society, however, of this kind that we have at present to deal. In the history of primitive Christianity we see pastoral

rule and popular acquiescence gradually growing up side by side, out of those relations in which believing men were placed to each other; and then these very relations, and the duties involved in them, solemnly confirmed by the Apostles, thereby showing that the main series of causes and effects were fulfilling the will of the great Builder of the temple, who should bear its glory, in anticipation of bringing up its top-stone. We therefore take apostolic sanction to be Christ's own sanction; and what they acquiesced in and left, to be His sealed institute, even up to the recognition of the seven presiding angels of the churches of Asia. So if, in the rise and establishment of the Wesleyan communion, we find a similar process, a similar conclusion is inevitable. If the preaching by faithful Ministers of the long-neglected doctrines which range around the theme of Christ crucified, resulted in the salvation of thousands; if previously-existing arrangements made no provision for their nurture, but rather repelled them; if the old bottles of "the Establishment" could not contain the new wine of the revival, and fresh means of edification had to be secured by the formation of these people into classes; if those who were wholly separated to the work of the Gospel found the amount of labour too great for them to fulfil, and appointed some of their spiritual children, engaged in worldly concerns, to act under their direction as Leaders and Local Preachers; if the call of others by the Holy Spirit, and the desired extension of the work of God, made more Ministers necessary, and the first existing Presbyters appointed these as additional Presbyters to fulfil the entire pastoral care; if the proffering of contributions on the part of the people, for the support

and promulgation of the Gospel, required the appointment of financial officers, as Stewards or Deacons ; if the building of places of worship made Trustees also requisite ; if the oversight of so many flocks and office-bearers, the preservation of doctrine and discipline, the perpetuation of the ministry, and the union of the Societies into one body, made ministerial intercourse needful, and a Conference arose ; if, in progress of years, to gain additional energy and power of expansion, the Conference committed a large portion of its details of business to District-Meetings, or smaller associations of Ministers, and invited to its Committees laymen, of wisdom and piety, in numbers equal to its own members ; if, in each pastoral sphere called a Circuit, all the office-bearers were directed to meet quarterly, arrange their economical affairs, and judge as to the claims of those who professed to have a call to the ministry, and in all other matters of an economical nature likewise to “judge in the church,” excepting nothing but the Pastor’s function ; and if the whole of these arrangements are made subservient to the work of diffusing the Gospel through the world ; then there is, I submit, an assurance as ample as can be expected to be given in this state of being, that such a religious association is in its main aspect, to say nothing of its results, a scriptural polity, agreeable to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, and calculated to serve His cause and kingdom, by rescuing men from sin, and training them in faith and holiness ; and, as to its influence on good men, securing the greatest amount of permanent co-operation with the least sacrifice of individual liberty.

In making this still more plain, the course followed

in the succeeding pages will be to show by exposition how the churches of the New Testament were developed; and then all the way along mark the formation of their Wesleyan antitypes by a parallel process, and test the latter, as far as we may be able, by their authoritative type.

Where a religious communion is large and extended, its economy is necessarily adapted to meet the cases of various orders of men, and its relations will become many and complicated. It will be related to the different orders of the people it has to cherish and provide for; to the churches by which it is surrounded; to the world which lies in wickedness, and especially the unenlightened and Heathen portion of it; to the years of the past, that it may be faithful to the principles which gave it birth, and guard those special truths which were committed to its keeping; and to the years of the future, that succeeding generations may reap the fruit of the toil, experience, and patient suffering of evil which previously have been passed through. To thousands of the unthinking and the uneducated, the great breadth and involution of the scheme will furnish particulars of detail, the reasons of which are not very apparent; and the less the foundation of a law is considered or known, the more the law itself may seem liable to objection; and persons of this class have always been ready to yield to the influence and representations of those who would fain parcel out the whole Christian world into little separated societies of a few scores or a few hundreds each, and commit them to their several spheres and simplicity of self-regulation.

But, leaving for a moment the consideration whe-

ther this kind of distribution is according to the principles and history of New Testament Scripture or not, it has always been found impracticable; for, no sooner has a heavenly charity longed to do something great and effective for the world, than it has looked around for the elements of Christian authority; leagued the churches together, where they were previously separate, in pursuit of the one object; and brought them all to bear upon it under the influence of some central administration. How else could Missionary Societies have arisen? It may be made, too, to appear that simplicity, and freedom from constraint in a narrow circle, affords not so noble a religious discipline of human nature, and so efficient a preparative for our great future, as an endeavour after a harmonious adaptation to an enlarged one. Zeal has a wider sphere; love, a more sustaining and surrounding flame; humility, a better test; self-estimation, a juster standard; and the victory of every Christian grace over its opposite evil is a sublime victory, in proportion to the amount of surface over which the influence of its example rolls.

This, indeed, is a large moral question which we cannot fully discuss: but all the reasoning which Bishop Butler directs against the objections of those who, on the ground of the supposed recondite character of Gospel doctrines, oppose Christianity, is applicable here. That great teacher shows that this Christianity, in unison with universal analogies, must be a scheme imperfectly comprehended; and therefore it must present to the mind of man details of doctrine and obligation, the harmonious connexion of which with the great design itself cannot all at once be made plain.

It is descending, certainly, to a lower link in the analogical series, to fix upon an ecclesiastical constitution for the illustration of the same thing: still, where the leadings of Divine Providence alone, not human forethought, have builded the constitution, it is really a link. But here even the free expansion of a system which has guarded Christian doctrine for a century, without suffering the minutest alteration, and promulgated the Gospel to so great an extent throughout the world, must present portions of economical detail which, on the part of thousands, are rather to be regarded with confiding deference, than rudely clamoured at with hasty dogmatism. Errors of administration, yea, of minute and minor legislation, there may be, which occasionally bring on their own punishment; but those who cannot separate the consideration of these from the consideration of the constitution itself, are hardly qualified to reason on the subject.

§ IX. Equally void must be the theory of those who would make church-order conform to the spirit of the age, when that spirit, an intangible and changing thing, would control the *fundamental* provisions of that order. Progress must be allowed in all things, no doubt; it is as necessary a law as any other that operates: but real progress must lie in the more perfect bringing out and applying of the very principles which belong to each department of truth and inquiry, without their being encumbered by those influences from other quarters, which often falsify. Thus progress in politics must consist in a more perfect development of individual resources towards the good of the social body, and then back again, in the influence and elevation of the social

body being turned to the liberty and comfort of the individual, whatever armies and conquerors may have said on the subject and against this view of it. Progress in science must involve a wider induction of facts, a more simple interpretation of nature according to laws actually found operating in nature, whatever theories of systematisers may have been found to fight against the conclusions which have in this way been brought out. Progress in art cannot be any other than giving a purer expression to an intense and more delicate perception of formal or ideal beauty, by minds schooled into the true notion of beauty through a deep and child-like study of its archetypes, fabricated in heaven and earth by the hand of God, to the rejection of whatever in human rules might interfere with the simplicity and authority of this intuition. So, true progress in Christian ecclesiastics can only be based on a deeper reverence for Divine authority; a closer copying of the Apostles, as much in their firmness as in their love; a greater anxiety to have respect unto one of the least of Christ's commandments; a growing sympathy with holiness; that humble, loving following of Christ, amid popularity and unpopularity, which asserts its eternal dissent from the decisions of the carnal mind; an unearthly tendency of soul, which aims at fulfilling the loftiest and holiest purposes of the Gospel, while constituting a meeting, electing an officer, or giving a vote; which attempts to maintain the purity of all the precepts of Christ as binding upon all, even while maintaining, under the sanction of the same precepts, the privilege of the single soul; and this, however all the while the civil community may be settling or unsettling its affairs. Such a pro-

gress as this the most conservative amongst us rather ardently longs for than fears.

§ X. One more principle it is needful to observe and hold,—the necessary connexion between a definite form of doctrine, and a suitable, as well as definite, church-regimen, in which to conserve and teach it to all around. These two must and will always go together. Doctrine creates its own diffusing agencies, as an overflowing stream hollows out its own channels. Thus a Romanist creed will require a priesthood of graduated dignity, sacraments alleged to be effectual *ex opere operato*, and a human head: High Church divinity will at least require mitred Bishops, and rigid order: German latitudinarianism of teaching will have, and has, Erastianism of administration: Calvin's view of the dignity in this life of God's people, and their claim to influence in secular affairs, demands ultra-Presbyterianism with its Ruling Elders: then, to some minds, by further consequence, his enunciation of absolute predestination and election of believers to eternal life, will seem in such respects to assert the equality of them all, as to require, for a fitting external order, the Congregational equality and freedom. The subjective or intuitional philosophy of which we hear so much, which was originated by the ancient Gnostics, and is revived in the modern theosophical teaching of Germany, whose course is general unbelief, whose goal is pantheism, and which can see nothing distinctive in inspired as contrasted with other men,—this system of thought, when admitted into Christ's church, even in its more insidious or ethereal forms, will allow of no regimen but that which one powerful or skilful intellect exercises in overthrowing

the theories or positions of another, and so, like every other departure from God, brings us back to chaos: while Quakerism, and the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren, (though not by any means ranking these among the last tremendous errors,) cannot hold with any settled and separated ministry whatever.

The Wesleyan doctrines, which deal largely with the possible attainments of life in Christ, and hold out these attainments unto all; which assert especially that real holiness is derived from the filial communion with God of men who are justified by faith alone in the blood of Christ, and that such holiness must needs be attested to others by a spotless life; but that the heavenly treasure thus gained may, however, be lost by slothfulness and sin:—these require for their guardianship and extension, especially among the industrial classes, a strictness of spiritual examination as to office-bearers, a subordination of one to another, with a putting away of reserve, a mutual watchfulness amongst the ministry, a jealousy every where of the arising of sin in insidious forms; and such rules of action have therefore grown up in harmony with its polity.

Let no one, then, fall into the popular delusion, that discipline may be altered, and yet doctrine remain entire. Let no one too soon applaud, when they hear some men in their controversies say, “We approve of the doctrine of this community, but recoil from the system of its administration:” for this can really never be. The schismatic Corinthians disapproved of Paul’s presidency over them, because he stood in the way of their errors. Arius denied the claim of the episcopate to be reckoned in a separate

status or order, (whether he was right or wrong, I do not here say,) because the authority of his friend Eustathius, a member of that body, withstood in his official capacity his tendency to doctrinal and practical asceticism and Arianism. Cartwright opposed the English Episcopacy, because he deemed it unfriendly to the Calvinian doctrines and the privileges of the people of God: and every Supralapsarian preacher that has ever arisen, has spurned alike congregational, individual, and synodical control, on the ground that a special heir of heaven should not be subjected to any order whatever.

When, therefore, some guiding regulation of long standing in any administration is assailed, then some doctrine, in the great majority of cases, is either slurred or doubted: the difference is one of professed form, but it will soon merge into a difference of exposition and teaching. Men never contend long for forms as forms, but only as they involve the awakening of peculiar thoughts, and sustaining of certain affections. Let all those who entertain proposals for change of outward order in churches, open their eyes well to this fact,—that such changes are sought for from narrower or broader, more secular or more spiritual, more scriptural or more traditional, more earnest or more heedless, conceptions of Christianity itself; and let them act accordingly. We have no right to confide in God, as the Guardian of His own truth, unless we obediently adopt His own method of guarding it.

Are not the warnings of Holy Scripture, as respects a corrupt ministry, all directed towards the particulars of doctrine and practice? Men are enjoined in several

places to beware of false prophets, false teachers, as also to avoid and forsake them; but where, in what place, are they besought to resist certain forms of rule, or to maintain as against that rule certain hypothetical rights? Such supposed precepts as these last have NO PLACE in the inspired word; the inspired writers never deemed that there was need of them; and the reason of such silence is this,—that DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL PURITY in a Christian ministry, they held to be EVERYTHING; that where these are held and preserved from generation to generation, they involve by infallible consequence that just balance of the Ministers' and the people's rights which, in contrariety to the false balance, is "God's delight." A ministry that is in this condition, tried by the touchstone of Scripture, is as sure to be mainly right, as a horse that rushes into the battle, an eagle that sustains her flight, a ship that holds on her way, or the hind of Judah that bounds upward on her native hills.

§ XI. And from all this it will follow, that the best condition of an ecclesiastical body is that in which there is no legislation going on, in the popular sense, at all; where all are rather occupied, in their various degrees and orders, in attending to the practical work of the Gospel, gathering and saving souls, and training them for the better inheritance, reserving the making of new rules for rare and momentous occasions. The love of debate, and of novel legislation, and of floating changes, exists just as the spirit of the world finds entrance, and draws away the minds of men from the absorbing obligations of personal and relative godliness. When disorder arises, it arises chiefly from sin: therefore in such a case the relief

is to be sought by putting away sin, and trusting the great Head of the church with the consequences of so doing, rather than by vainly attempting to silence warring elements in mutually compromising them. If love and fidelity suffer, they will one day have their reward: if individual pride and passion and class-jealousy break out in evil hour into overt act, there is likewise a tribunal for these, where purity by examination is an object paramount above every other.

In conclusion, if a man will insist upon such a state of things as that he will have all his own personal rights, and that nothing short of the last farthing will satisfy him; that he may act upon others, but none shall act upon him; then he must, in reference to religious matters, live alone. Ordinances must not breathe their living influence upon his soul; stars in Christ's right hand must shed upon him no lustre; wisdom and experience must not wait on his eager footsteps, to enforce its lessons; none must restrain him from stretching forth his hand to lay hold on the ark of God, when it seems shaken a little in its troubled journey; no man, however he may have known more than he of the Divine life, and have had a clearer insight of the beauty of holiness, must interfere with the current of his thoughts and acts, let them meddle as they may with the deepest things of God. He must have nothing but what his own resources can furnish. Christianity in spirit and in form is what his own perceptions make it: the standard can never rise; it bears his own image and superscription. There is no access of constraining light from without; there is no egress of loving light

from within. Such solitude is awful,—the solitude of the unruled.

But when a Christian association is entered for the sake of seeking or securing personal salvation and glorifying God; so many minds, and orders and states of mind, are there, all involving a natural tendency to repulsion, which come to receive the common and counteracting benefit, that there *must be* an authority somewhere, if the most common degree of respect be paid to the rights of all. An enlarged view of the just claims of all God's people, from the almost prophetic and advanced saint, to the almost infant catechumen, requires this boon. Its preservation is their shield from oppression, and the guardian rock under which they repose in the day of fiery heat and trial. It is needful as "the sweet influences of the Pleiades, the bands of Orion," or the great law of gravitation, in regulating the harmonious movements of worlds.

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 11.

"EVERY society recognises peculiar offences, arising out of and depending solely on the peculiar nature of the society; so that, in proportion as the latter is understood, the former are defined. Now this right [of imposing sanctions] is either inherent in the society, or conventional, or both, as is the case in most confederate bodies. When the right is limited to what the society exercises as inherent and indispensable,—inherent in its nature, and indispensable to its existence,—the extreme punishment is exclusion, and the various degrees and modifications of punishment are only degrees and modifications of exclusion."—DR. HIND'S "History of the Rise and early Progress of Christianity," Second Edition, 1846, pp. 226–228.

Note (B), page 18.

“WHATEVER may be the character and whatever the proposed objects of a regularly constituted community, officers of some kind are essential to it. In whatever manner they may be appointed, whether by hereditary succession, or by rotation, or by election of any kind; whatever be the number or titles of them, and whatever the distribution of their functions; (all of which are matters of detail;) officers of some kind every community *must* have. And these, or some of these, while acting in their proper capacity, *represent* the community; and are so far invested with whatever powers and rights belong to *it*; so that their acts, their rights, their claims, are considered those of the whole body. We speak, *e. g.*, indifferently of this or that having been done by the Athenians, the Romans, the Carthaginians; or by the Athenian, the Roman, or Carthaginian *government* or *rulers*. And so, also, when we speak of the acts of some University, or of the governors of that University, we are using two equivalent expressions.”—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY, “Kingdom of Christ,” Essay ii., sect. 2.

All this, of course, applies to the organization of a community, naturally or self constituted, and leaves untouched the question how far and in what particulars a Christian church is *à priori* defined to be constituted by an authority superior to itself.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S INITIAL TEACHING.

Θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός. (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

§ I. IF a wise and accomplished ruler, who had a most perfect insight into all the details of his administration, as well as a minute acquaintance with the wills and tempers of those whose conduct he had to sway, were to dictate a letter of any length to a confidential servant of his on the subject of that administration, the fulness of his knowledge and feeling might be expected to betray itself, as well in brief hints, apt images, and happy allusions, as in plain and direct statement. The energy of his forethought, always looking to the issue of things, would break forth from some sentence which was only then concerned with a passing particular: it would embody itself in some expression which, while it asserted a truth needful for that moment, involved also the conception of something beyond, with which it was akin or in harmony: just as, if he were speaking, his soul, full of high purposes, would flash out from his eye, or kindle deepest sympathies by gesture and tone. If his words were ever brought into question, it would not be just or honest to interpret them by the rules of dry grammar or forensic evidence merely, and take no account of his position, nor of his auditors, with their circumstances and relations. The proper spirit of interpretation would be, that which resulted from

a study of his own spirit in connexion with his aims.

So in the New Testament. The Author of it has such an infinite knowledge of all the springs of action in human nature,—of all the agents who shall move and affect each other in the continuous history of His household; of that household itself, its dangers, its needs, its varying fortunes, its final state,—that even hints and images in the evangelical narrative, often thought to be matters of rhetorical adorning, are particulars of a pre-gushing revelation; flashes of the Spirit, so to speak, which tell by their pathway whence they come and whither they go,—of that fountain of light which angels and saints would alike explore.

What would become of the truth, if *παράκλητος* were rigidly understood as “advocate,” or *πολίτευμα*, “conversation,” or *σαββατισμός*, “rest,” or *ἐκκλησία*, “assembly,” or *σημείον*, “a miracle?” All these terms, as to meaning, and many others like them, shine out from the light which impinges upon them, like gems in the sunshine.

Although the church had no real existence until after the death and resurrection of Christ, yet it would be most natural to expect, that in the course of His personal ministry there would not be wanting intimations of its nature. This expectation is realised. There are two expressions used in the narrative books of the New Testament to denote the visible aspects of the Gospel dispensation: one is the word “church;” the other, the phrase, “kingdom of God,” or its equivalent forms, “kingdom of heaven,” and “kingdom of Christ.” The term “church,” as we shall see more fully hereafter, describes a company of persons who

are united together by a common profession of the faith of Christ, whether that company be a single congregation, or the aggregate of all congregations throughout the world. Still, both in its totality and in any of its distinct sections, this church includes many—for none pretend to maintain the contrary—who have nothing of Christianity but the name,—persons who are yet carnal and unregenerate : whereas the kingdom of God is an idea essentially distinct ; and, saving those places where it designates the Jewish Theocracy, it is restricted in the New Testament to three meanings.

1. The reclaimed authority of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit over all the powers of human nature ; or the dominion of Divine grace, abstractedly considered, by which grace men are saved and sanctified ; as in Luke xvii. 21 : " The kingdom of God is within you ; " Rom. xiv. 17 : It " is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

2. The fellowship in living union of those who are brought under this dominion, thereby constituting a spiritual community of real believers ; as John iii. 5 : " Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ; " John xviii. 36 : " My kingdom is not of this world."

3. The state of the finally redeemed in heaven ; as in Mark xiv. 25 ; Acts xiv. 22 ; *et passim*.

The CHURCH is the outward institute, or union of persons, composed of those who confess the Christian doctrine, and are designated as such confessors, whatever their real character may be, by the sacramental seals ; but the KINGDOM, in its concrete aspect, is the company of Christ's *faithful* disciples and subjects,

watched over by His eye, though seen, no doubt, by the eye of man as well, especially of spiritual men, yet not with that absolute and unerring discrimination which belongs to the Searcher of hearts : and thus the idea of an invisible church, distinct from the visible, as it makes clearer no truth, and removes no difficulty, may be safely discarded.

To the church belong those who profess to repent and believe the Gospel, and who request to be enrolled amongst Christ's disciples, or who offer their adhesion to the Christian cause through being prompted by "the will of man;" not supposing the absence altogether of gracious influence; but still through the will of parents, pastors, friends, or their own as yet unhumbled will : but the kingdom consists only of those who by their possession of repentance, faith, and holiness,—the first or all of these,—give a character to the general community, and confer upon even the church itself the scriptural title of "holy."

The church stands in analogy to the outward sign in the sacraments, because men are made members by baptism, and retained as such by communion in the Lord's Supper. It is the mystic body of Christ; (Col. i. 24;) the vine spoken of in the parable, (John xv. 1,) on which there may be continually appearing fruitless branches, which are to be taken away; the earthly thing alluded to by our Lord in His discourse with Nicodemus, to a share in which baptism by water might admit a man. (John iii. 12.) But the other is either the inward rule of redeeming grace, or the company of those who are the very subjects of the Spirit's baptism. It is the life of the vine, the spirit which is in the body, the heavenly thing con-

trasted with the earthly which was mentioned to the Jewish ruler, and which faith alone apprehends. Thus the kingdom of God is *in* the church, but it is not one with it : the limits of the one are not the limits of the other : faulty communions may be found to contain some who are God's, and the purest and best some who are Satan's, children. This kingdom, though set up on earth, is not of earth : it brings all its appliances from above, and does not accept of a single aid from this world, until it has changed that which is proffered into its own nature. This is the uniform doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount, of the parables and the discourses of Christ, as well as of apostolical teaching. Into this kingdom the poor in spirit and the regenerate can alone enter.

The parable of the wheat and tares, though often loosely quoted to show that the kingdom and the church are one, and that bad and good are blended in the same aggregate notion, really shows the contrary. It shows that none can interfere with the discriminating and judicial acts of the Sovereign of this state, in admitting to, and separating persons from, it : that especially harvest-work belongs to "the Lord of the harvest." The kingdom itself in the parable is likened unto a man who sowed GOOD SEED in his field : the sowing of tares by an enemy is another thing altogether, and quite distinct from the consideration of the kingdom : and if these tares in the field of the world—which world territorially includes the Christian community—are found growing up by the side of the wheat, they are not to be rooted out of the world by religious persecution ; that is, by the servants of the household seeking the aid of the

secular arm, and putting men to death for alleged heresy.

Fallen and unfaithful men, however separated from the church by its discipline, as the Scripture elsewhere directs, can only be finally severed from the kingdom by Christ, whose ministers in that act will be infallible angels:—infallible, not merely because of their perfect rectitude and holiness, (Matt. xiii. 41,) but because they act under His eye. This parable leaves the question of church-discipline untouched altogether, as it never could oppose that inspired teaching of the Apostles, which uniformly enjoins the putting away of a wicked person. It treats of what is done in the FIELD OF THE WORLD, not of what is done in the more restricted sphere of the Christian domain. The parable of the good and bad fish is to the same effect; (Matt. xiii. 47;) where it is to be observed, that although the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a net which was cast into the sea, and gathered of both kinds, yet this is only part of the scene in the parable, and, taken by itself, would be a broken representation. The whole uninterrupted action or simile by which the reign of grace is portrayed, ends with the sitting down on the shore, separating the good into vessels, and casting the bad away,—a prefiguring, as our Lord declares, of the last judgment.

Only one place in the parables, as far as I have been enabled to discover, even seems to refer to the kingdom as containing the evil as well as the good; and that is where Christ says, “The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather *out of* His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity:” (Matt. xiii. 41:) but the Greek preposition

ἐκ, “out of,” as frequently means “from,” and often bears the sense of “away from.” Indeed, the first verse of the parable before noted, which confines the good seed to the children of the kingdom, restrains it to this meaning here :* so that the whole import is,—Angels shall separate from external conjunction with His kingdom those who are not found at last to be members of it, who have had no other connexion with it than connexion by the church, or by an equal place in the kingdom of Providence.

And we must not lose sight of a truth in reference to this matter, which is elsewhere declared,—that persons, once even *in* the kingdom of heaven, may forfeit, by sin, their place in the sight and judgment of the Lord, even before the open and declarative judgment takes place : just as the foolish virgins represent those who were once the subjects of true piety ; or what do their lamps, which, from the same oil, shone and burned for a while, as well as those of the wise, signify ? They portray those who are condemned for the misuse and consequent defect of grace, not those who never had it. But the kingdom of heaven clears itself of everything which is contrary to its own character. The vessel of the church may carry good and bad, and the field of the Christian world may bear wheat and tares ; but the kingdom only acknowledges the good in the one case, which is the same thing as the wheat in the other : and the kingdom of heaven

* Thus, the passage in 1 John ii. 19 is full to the point, both in philological and theological respects : “They went out,” ἐξ, “from us, but they were not,” ἐξ, “of us,” &c. Again, James ii. 18 : “Show me thy faith,” ἐκ, “without,” that is, “APART FROM,” “thy works, and I will show thee my faith,” ἐκ, “by my works.”

itself is never identical with the church, until the latter is introduced into its indefectible and glorified state. Then it is "delivered up unto the Father," and God is "all in all."* (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.)

§ II. Against this view, the words of our Lord to Nicodemus have been urged; and that, too, by opposite parties, as, for instance, Baptists, and Tractarians or High Churchmen: "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) It is said that, as baptism is the door of entrance to the church of Christ, and the badge of Christian profession as well, therefore all rightly baptized persons, and the members of the kingdom of heaven, are one and the same community,—all parties being agreed, that the phrase in question refers to the earthly, as well as to the heavenly, state of its fellowship. This, however, could only be true on the assumption that baptism by water, and baptism by the Spirit, in sufficient measure to produce absolute renewal, took place at the same moment of time. But no such absolute connexion of these things in one act is here implied, any more than when Peter says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you," (Acts iii. 19, 20,) he means to teach that repentance, conversion, forgiveness, the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the advent of Christ, are effects which all happen together. The connexion of blessings in both cases, as in many other instances

* See Appendix, Note (A).

which might be adduced from Scripture, is not simultaneous, but successive ; and depends on the fulfilment of conditions, which are elsewhere stated. This is not to separate baptism from the Spirit,—for an ordinance of Christ cannot be without His grace,—but only from the direct regeneration of the Spirit. The fact is, the ritual use of water, signifying separation and purity, was no new thing in our Lord's time ; and His words have this force and meaning, at least, until the sacrament of baptism was absolutely instituted :—“ Know that your wonted use of water as a religious sign must, in the case of those desiring to enter the kingdom of heaven, be necessarily connected with the baptism of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus was a member of the Old Testament church at the time of his visit to our Lord ; and persons admitted into that church by circumcision and (probably as the result, on the part of Jewish teaching, of a merely literal view of Ezekiel's prophecy, chap. xxxvi. 25) by the affusion of water, were said to be new-born ; and as the thoughts of the ruler were, doubtless, occupied respecting the kingdom of the Messiah, which all were then looking for,—whatever the verbal form of his greeting might be,—our Lord spoke rather to his thoughts, than in direct answer to his first address, and His doctrine, as gathered from both statements above, would altogether be to this effect : “ Except thou, already a church-member, yea, except any man be born of the Spirit as well as of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” A church-member a person may be by sacramental designation, and submission to denominational rules, and, at the same time, a subject of the Spirit's prevenient

grace; but he can only be a child of the kingdom by being regenerated, and made a child of God. The third and fifth verses of the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, when rightly understood, are, therefore, in perfect harmony with the doctrine of this section; namely, that although the kingdom of heaven is in the church, it is not one with it, but signifies either the abstract dominion of grace itself, or the actual subjects of that dominion.*

* The terms used in this passage are most expressive: *ἐὰν μή τις*, "unless *any one* be born again," &c.; making the requirement as universal as the race; while *γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν* may be rendered *born from above*, and many ancient and modern interpreters have preferred this reading, to say nothing of the fact, that *ἄνωθεν* in the other places of this Gospel means, unquestionably, "from above." Nonnus, the poetical paraphrast of St. John, who lived in the fourth century, and who wrote in Greek, renders it, "a birth," *αἰθέρος αὐλῆς*, "of the ethereal mansion," that is, heaven. The Evangelist, moreover, explains his Gospel by his Epistles; *e. g.*, 1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 2; v. 4, 5; showing that the new birth is, INITIALLY, the result of faith in Christ: in the last place, most plainly; for he does not say what he would have said, had he taught the Tractarian theory, namely, "Whosoever is born of God," (or baptized,) "believeth that Jesus is the Christ;" but the reverse: "He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Still, to explain the words above in the sense of being born only of "the Spirit, as emblematised by water,"—thereby drying up the water, as Hooker complains,—is not only a violation of constructive propriety, placing an exegetical illustration before the object it is intended to illustrate; but the whole explanation proceeds from a principle of interpretation which, if applied elsewhere, would take serious and damaging liberties with Christian doctrine. The great stream of interpreters, from the beginning, have expounded "the water" to mean baptism, *i. e.*, baptism anticipated; and it is remarkably in harmony with our view of the present passage, that wherever Christian baptism is subsequently referred to in the New Testament, the possible severance of the sign from the thing signified is clearly recognised, inasmuch as the saving power is referred to the latter. Thus, Acts ii. 38: "Repent, and

Whether we take the very simplest forms of Christian fellowship, or the most elaborate, none can be hardy enough to say, that those forms can be made so true and perfect as to melt into and become the same thing with the sublime spiritual administration of the Redeemer, which saves and sanctifies the souls of men.

§ III. So far, at present, as it respects the kingdom of God. With regard to the word “church,” in the course of our Lord’s own teaching it occurs only twice: first, in reply to the confession of Peter,

be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,” *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*. Now, why should the Apostle’s baptism be thought to be here immediately efficacious to the production of pardon and regeneration, any more than the baptism of John, which was *ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν*, (Matt. iii. 11,) was efficacious unto repentance? John’s converts were, or professed to be, penitents before they were baptized; the ordinance did not confer repentance: then, why should the Christian rite *ex opere operato* confer the Spirit? for the form of expression is exactly the same: “for the forgiveness of sins” clearly means “in order to forgiveness,”—this seal of the covenant which promises forgiveness. Besides, the narrative would show that, although on the day of Pentecost the three thousand gladly received the word, were baptized, and added to the church, and so obtained great grace; yet the general reception of the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Spirit by all the converts was a subsequent event. (Acts iv. 31.)

Gal. iii. 27, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” has often been quoted as sustaining the opposite view; but it can only serve that purpose by being torn from its connexion in the Epistle. The whole argument of the Apostle, of which it is a part, appears to be this: “As those who are circumcised are laid under an obligation to observe all the Jewish law, so those who have received Christian baptism are laid under a similar obligation to fulfil the conditions and seek the privileges of the Christian covenant.” “Put ye on,” is a figurative expression variously used; and even the already baptized Romans are exhorted by St. Paul to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. xiii. 14.)—See also Appendix, Note (B).

(Matt. xvi. 18,) where it is used in its comprehensive meaning; and next in Matt. xviii. 15–18, where it has its more restricted sense. In the first passage our Lord declares that He will build His church upon the *πέτρα*, “foundation-stone,” of apostolical doctrine; making the promise direct to Peter, as he was to be the first preacher of that doctrine: and in order that he might be qualified for the work, the promise is appended of his plenary inspiration, but couched in the figure of the gift of keys, by which the kingdom of heaven was to be opened, or its doors shut upon any one; that is, by which he was intrusted to disclose the terms on which sinful men were admitted into the favour and pacific covenant of God, or cast out from both. The church here is manifestly the whole company of professing Christians, as it shall exist by succession of persons from age to age; and the keys which the Apostle received were not the keys of the church, but a binding and loosing authority in expounding the terms of that spiritual administration that Christ carried on within it. In the other place in the Gospel of St. Matthew the same authority is confided to all the Apostles, thus leaving Peter no higher position than that of *primus inter pares*.

It should be clearly perceived that the Romanist doctrine on the subject of the church is drawn from assuming its identity with the kingdom of heaven,—the theory we are now refuting: and so the doctrinal deductions of this system are such as these,—that the primacy of the Apostle Peter is the foundation of the great Christian incorporation; that to him directly, and by him in some way to the incorporation itself,

is confided the gift of infallibility in promulgating doctrine, exercising discipline, and devising means, whether mild or forceful, of extension; that the acts of this incorporation are made as valid and spiritual as though made by Christ in person; and that reception into, or exclusion from, the Church of Rome, or its dependent branches, is therefore the same thing as reception into, or exclusion from, the kingdom of God. Now, supposing that our Lord intended to inculcate this doctrine,—namely, that the church in its corporate character should be the kingdom of heaven, where not only Peter, but his successors in the episcopate, should personally be the vicegerents of Christ, and sources of law and authority,—then the other doctrines—such as those of apostolical succession in the episcopal line alone, the conveyance of grace in that channel, sacramental efficacy, baptismal regeneration, sacerdotalism, indulgences, and the like—all seem to flow from it by natural consequence. If the body of the Christian church which consists of persons, or any part of it which likewise consists of persons, be made infallible,—as spiritual in the efficacy of its acts as though it were all spirit,—then of course the Holy Ghost must be in its ordinations, its baptisms, its eucharists, its excommunications; in fact, all its deeds on earth are then ratified in heaven. Romanism is fearfully consistent with itself.

Nor is the case greatly altered by those who, although not of the Roman communion, so far sympathise with it as to restrict the work of the Holy Spirit, in renewing and sanctifying, to an external church organization, which rests upon a similar succession of

princely Bishops, linked originally to the Apostles. No wonder that men of this sort look around with such feverish anxiety to find Catholic *church* unity; for with them it is a matter of life and death. Whatever system connects the judicial authority of Christ absolutely with the functions of a body of Christian professors, also makes that body at once, as distinct from others, the subjects and administrators of the Gospel on earth. The wind, then, *cannot* blow where it listeth, but must move in one direction. Men, then, *can* tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, whether they hear the sound thereof, or not. This is a most momentous point in our inquiry, and the entire character of Christianity turns upon it. In the case we are now supposing, this Christianity is not a thing to be tested by inward and outward holiness, or the fruit of the Spirit; opening out a sphere for the free exercise of all the ennobled and regenerate powers of the human soul, and thus raising a ministry, and extending the knowledge and love of God wherever faith, and zeal, and the call of God in His living kingdom, shall open the way. It becomes rather the prison-house of mind and conscience, putting man in the place of God.

But as to Holy Scripture, the question returns:—Did our Lord intend to teach His Apostles that His church should be *SUCH* an incorporation? The answer is,—It is an utter—a blank impossibility: the entire strain of the Gospel contradicts it. The kingdom of heaven of which the Apostle held the keys, was, as we have seen, either the spiritual inheritance of Gospel blessings, or the spiritual fellowship of those who were favoured to enjoy it,—of the poor in spirit,

the childlike, the contrite, the humble, the sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus; and the Apostle's binding and loosing power was not over persons, but in respect of things, (ὁ ἐὰν δήσῃς or, when they are all spoken of, Matt. xviii. 15-18, ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε,) not over "whomsoever," but "*whatsoever*;" that is, doctrines, laws, determinations. That power had to do *directly* with the kingdom, but with the church no further than as the authority of that kingdom had to determine the principles of its constitution and order. With the Apostle, as conjoined with his fellow Apostles, the holding of it terminated, excepting so far as others might apply without altering it: for, when the Apostles died, then the Gospel dispensation was founded; and in the fact that uninspired and fallible men subsequently applied it, lay the certainty of frequent mistake.

Connected with this power, and flowing from it, was likewise the collateral authority given to the eleven by Christ in John xx. 23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." But this must be taken as the power to declare authoritatively on what terms God forgave guilty sinners, and not to administer pardon or condemnation in their own persons. So we are sure the Apostles understood it; for they never undertook to absolve or condemn men in the course of their personal ministry: they only declared the Gospel in this respect. According to the terms of their commission, the church was to be constituted by preaching, teaching the Gospel, and baptizing: but the kingdom was to be opened only to him who believed, as well as was baptized; and it

was to be finally closed to him who believed not, whether baptized or otherwise.

The church was to be builded on the Apostles' doctrine; in carrying on which work many mistakes would unavoidably be made, and many improper persons received. This was the human and formal part of the constitution: but that more restricted fellowship, consisting of those who were renewed by grace, and intended to be admitted to perfect redemption and glorification in heaven, was only attained to by an entire and believing acceptance of those terms which were propounded to men under the full inspiration of the Holy Ghost, according to Christ's engagement and promise.

Very little fruit results from arguing with Rome, or with other High Church communions, on the distinct dogmas of prelatical succession, sacerdotalism, baptismal regeneration, eucharistical pardon, and the like, when the grand fallacy is *in limine*, and lies in an assumption which confounds things that are in this world essentially different, and which Christ has so often declared to be different. This scheme of wilful confusion lies at the foundation of the *great apostasy*, which revealed itself partially in the third, and plainly appeared in the fourth, century, when a religion, *ex opere operato*, of sacraments was too generally established; a system which, while it professed the name of Christ, practically denied Him, by introducing a human mediatorship into His place. And strange it is that no less a man than Cyprian should be lured into a theory of defence against the schismatics of his day, which rested mainly on this view: and yet his Tractate "*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*" is constructed en-

tirely on the assumption of the church being one with the kingdom of heaven, and has tended more than any other book of antiquity to deepen and strengthen the current of anti-scriptural tradition. The great Augustine, from his own deep inward light, saw this tendency of things ; and hence his theory, whatever otherwise might be its value, of the election of grace ; and hence his controversy with the Donatists, who fain would make *their* separated community the kingdom of heaven ; and, most of all, hence his profound and elaborate book, "*De Civitate Dei*." They all arose from a consciousness, more felt than expressed, that no outward organization, not that even of the catholic church, as he defined it, could embody and represent all the true subjects of the Redeemer's grace. Doubtless, the sealing of twelve thousand out of every tribe in the professing Israel, in the Book of Revelation, is the figurative setting forth of that act of Christ, by which He acknowledges and puts His sign on the children of the kingdom, as standing apart from that more general and diverse community in which they are found and trained : and as the chronological order of the figuration would point to the beginning of the fourth century, as the time when this sacred restriction was observed, it appears all the more probable that the recovery and emphatic reiteration of the evangelical doctrines by Augustine, whose testimony more or less has been sustained ever since, was in fact the setting forth of that restriction to the living church.*

Many advocates of that kind of formal unity which

* See ELLIOTT'S "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*. Fourth Edition. 1852," vol. i., pp. 243-253.

thus involves the identification and confusion of two distinct things, have reiterated, again and again, our Lord's saying in His parable of the Good Shepherd, recorded in the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, as being on their side : " And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." (Verse 16.) But they have either fallen into the amiable fault of relying exclusively on our own English version ; or else, with less candour, have presumed too much on the general indisposition on the part of their readers or auditors to consult any other version ; for the distinction of terms used by our Lord in the above passage is such in the original as to overthrow the argument which is founded upon it. In the first part of the verse, where a distinct community in a given locality is referred to,— " And other sheep I have, which are not of THIS FOLD," (the company of believing Jews,)—the word is *αὐλή*, which signifies generally " an enclosed place," and here specifically of course " a sheep-fold ;" but where, in the succeeding clause, the reference is to the aggregation of the children of God, all notion of limitation *ab extra* is discarded, and the word is *ποιμνὴ*, " a flock ;" *q. d.*, " There shall be one flock, and one Shepherd."

Scripture evidence, indeed, is not wanting against the points of Romanising error above specified ; and history refuses to substantiate the theory which High Church writers would set up : but a serious and candid student of the Gospel must, apart from these considerations, feel it to be an all-authoritative and determining course with him, to obtain a just and

clear conviction of the nature of the economy under which he lives, and expects everlasting salvation. That there has been, and is, however, a real succession, from age to age, of true Ministers of Christ, irrespective of prelatical, episcopal, and other distinctions, called and qualified to preach His word, and guide His flock,—is not only a plain historical fact, but it may be regarded doctrinally as connected with the *Scripture* view of the kingdom of heaven: for the permanence of Divine grace in the world, moving, as in a channel, through the hearts of faithful men in all ages, involves the presence and varied gifts of the Holy Ghost; and these again involve a repeated ministerial call, wherever Ministers are needed. It is not that we deny a real spiritual succession, but only that the prelatical or any strictly formal line defines it.

The church or churches of Christ must be constituted according to the inspired decisions of the Apostles beyond question; but it is not to be assumed that these laws are uniformly and infallibly obeyed, and that the spiritual subjects of Christ are exactly represented in the outward *ἐκκλησία*. The purity and efficiency of the church will be in proportion to the degree in which the kingdom of God bears sway within, and its purposes are promoted by ecclesiastical organization and discipline: but still the church of Christ in the figure which our Lord uses in the present passage is the aggregation of persons throughout the world, who formally and sacramentally profess the faith of His name: it is the outward building on the rock of apostolical preaching, where, however, there are twelve foundation-stones, (Rev. xxi. 14,) and not one only: it is not the spiritual administration

which is carried on within that building: it is the city on the rock or hill of Zion,—not the Davidic rule which sanctifies it.*

* The Old-Testament reference to the keys, as the symbol of authority, in Isai. xxii. 20–25, appears not only to be the foundation of all subsequent allusion in the New Testament, but contains itself one of those wondrous analogies which are found so frequently to disclose themselves to patient and reverential minds,—analogies which, from the authority which quotes and acknowledges them, may be fairly regarded as coming under the typical department of revelation. Thus: “And it shall come to pass in that day that I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah: and I will clothe him with thy” (Shebna’s) “robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall the” former (Shebna’s) “nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it.”

Here Hilkiyah, the holder of the keys, is under Hezekiah the King, just as Peter, representing the apostolate, is under Christ. As holder, he has the ordering of all the sacred things; his rule is mild and paternal; his appointment displaces that of the lofty and unfaithful Shebna, just as the Apostles and their spiritual offspring displaced the Jewish Rabbins. The keys and the kingdom, that is, the primary authority, were the same in both cases, just as it was the same kingdom of God, though in different form, which was once in the Jewish church, as is now in the Christian, according to Christ’s own words to the Jews, Matt. xxi. 43: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” And when Christ has fully entered upon His kingly glory, and drawn attention to Himself, as the supreme authority under which Apostles and all are to act, He thus describes His own character and function: “He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” (Rev. iii. 7.)

§ IV. The other passage in St. Matthew clearly refers to a different import of the term ; it runs thus : "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 15-18.)

The term "church" here does not signify, as in the last passage, that great community, existing through all ages, which professes the Gospel, to which no distinct function is assigned in Scripture. It rather means the congregation, or minor and specific society of Christians, which is organized in a particular place. Before, however, we note the full import of this passage, it will be necessary to dispose of an interpretation which is put upon it by some advocates of congregational independency, as well as some theologians of a very different school.

It is argued from this text, that not only does the term *ἐκκλησία* here signify the whole assembly or congregation of believers, but that this congregation is represented as judging and disposing of every case of discipline that arises within the circle of its influence ; and that its decisions, when deliberated and executed in the name of Christ, are to be taken as ratified and confirmed in heaven ; in other words, that the power

of the keys, understood in its improper or accommodated sense of binding and loosing in discipline, belongs to the whole community. The interpretation so far differs from the Romanist, that it shifts the *potestas διακριτική*, or “judging power,” from the Church Catholic assembled in council, to the single assembly, or ordinary worshipping congregation;* making, in each case, the community to represent the actual subjects and spiritual members of Christ. For our part, we equally repel a Congregational and a Papal infallibility.

It must be first observed in answer, that there is a foregoing improbability that the power here spoken of should be understood to be given to the congregation, inasmuch as, in the two other places where it is mentioned, it is expressly confided to the Apostles, as a peculiar privilege, by the use of which they should be

* The accurate and learned George Lawson, Rector of More, (author of “*Politica Sacra et Civilis*,” London, 1689,) the late accomplished Dr. Arnold, (Sermon xvi., vol. i., pp. 184, 185, London, 1845,) and Archbishop Whately, (“Kingdom of Christ Delineated,” Essay ii., sect. 7,) have all been misled, by their confusing of those premises which are taken to lie in this and in collateral passages. They identify a given church, or union of particular churches, such as the Church of England, with the kingdom of heaven; and then make the keys of the kingdom represent the power of ecclesiastical discipline; given first to the Apostles, and then transmitted from the Apostles to this Church of England, or whatever other church it might be; that is, to its whole communion, though only to be exercised through the Pastors. To the whole communion, however, it cannot, as expounded above, be given, except as through the Pastorate; and to Pastors only in a secondary and accommodated sense. Lawson would have but small thanks from democratic theorists and Congregational writers, for putting the keys into the hands of the whole assembly or *ecclesia*, when that assembly is very possibly to his apprehension a national church.

able to fulfil their apostolic responsibility. The plain sense of those places—Matt. xvi. 19; John xx. 23—should therefore determine the sense of this, supposing it to be doubtful. But we are not left to argue from improbabilities; for, on referring to Mark’s account (chap. ix. 35, 36) of this very conversation, which was introduced on our Lord’s part by His taking a child and placing him in the midst, and making him the salient point of discourse, we find it is said, “And He sat down, and called THE TWELVE, and saith unto THEM,” &c., thus restricting the teaching on the child-like temper, and on the subjects which grew out of it here, to the Apostles. We willingly acquiesce in the reasonings of Dr. Davidson,* and Dr. Ralph Wardlaw,† by which they urge that the word “church” here signifies, not the representatives, but the whole aggregation of members; as also in the candid comment of Campbell on this text, where he takes the same view. But when the two former would ward off all considerations, in interpretation of the passage, which are drawn from any allusion it might make to the Jewish synagogue then existing, or from any analogy in which the church in question might stand to that institution, in order thereby to harmonise their arbitrary conclusion, that the very form of church discipline is here pointed out, and the Congregational *dictum* is rectoral and final; then we must interpose our firm protest and objection.

* “Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament unfolded.” (Congregational Lecture.) London, 1848.

† “Congregational Independency, as distinguished from Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, the Church Polity of the New Testament.” Glasgow, 1848.

That there is the very highest probability that the organization of the Christian church would be formed on the model of the synagogue, is evident from the fact, that Christ trained His Apostles and disciples to the use of the synagogue worship; (Matt. xii. 9, *et al. freq.*;) that, after His death, they continued the practice, and defended themselves before that high court of appeal which all the synagogues acknowledged; (Acts iv. 7;) that in large cities they had not, for many years, any other accessible congregations than the Jews and devout Gentiles whom they might find in these places of worship; (Acts xvii. 2;) that their first converts were drawn from thence: (Acts viii. 8, &c. :) and thus, as Archbishop Whately says,* “it appears highly probable,—I might say, morally certain,—that [the synagogue] was brought—the whole or the chief part of it—to embrace the Gospel. The Apostles did not, then, so much form a Christian church (or congregation, *ecclesia*) as make an existing congregation Christian, by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were necessary for the newly adopted faith; leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the Rulers of synagogues, Elders, and other officers, (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both,) being already provided in the existing institutions.” It must be observed, also, that all this was in perfect harmony with that Divine economy by which Hebrew circumcision was changed into baptism or the *περιτομή τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, (Col.

* “Kingdom of Christ Delineated,” p. 88. Fifth Edition. London, 1851.

ii. 11,) and the paschal supper, likewise, into the Supper of the Lord; besides minor analogies, which we cannot here trace. And such is the character ever of the Divine procedure; gentle and noiseless in transition, never violently interrupting an established order, but leading on, by almost imperceptible links of progress, the direct issues of Christ's remedial work unto its final consummation.*

* Dr. Davidson seeks to weaken the evidence in favour of the fact that the Jewish synagogue was the platform of the Christian churches, by referring to the differences of opinion between learned men, as, for instance, between Vitringa and Lightfoot, as to what particular office-bearers in the Jewish assembly represented the Christian office-bearers in the times of the Apostles, and the age immediately succeeding; Lightfoot comparing the *Chazzan* with the Bishop or Overseer, and identifying the same with the *Schliach Tsibbur*, or "Angel of the church;" and Vitringa making him to be the type of the *διάκονος*, or "Deacon:" the former, again, regarding the *Parnasim*, or "Pastors," as having charge of the poor; while the Dutch divine believed the designation to be general and characteristic, rather than official, (excepting the modern *Parnasim*, which formed a sort of lay-council,) signifying learned men who were able to feed and govern. Not only, however, is this last difference perfectly reconcilable; "almoner" being, as Dr. Campbell shows in his "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," the accidental function of the Pastor, even from the Apostles' times; but the main feature of the synagogue regimen is not at all affected by these discrepancies, namely, the unquestionable administration of its affairs by a council of teaching and guiding persons, however they might be appointed, and whatever share the people might have in their appointment. Nor if later Jewish authorities, such as Maimonides, refer to institutions and regulations in the synagogue which may possibly (the probability is small, considering the uniform tone of the Jewish temper against Christianity) have been copied from the Christian church, is the argument any way affected; as all the main points of agreement are the most ancient, and those that come out in the Scripture history. For our present purpose it is enough to know that excommunication from the synagogue was not by popular vote, but by the Council of Elders. So the blind man in John ix. was expelled by the Pharisaic Rulers, the pseudo-

It must be evident that our Lord's disciples must have formed their idea of a church from the Jewish notion attached to that term, accordingly as it implied (in the LXX.) a polity, or, more ordinarily, a congregation; unless their Master had guarded and corrected it by some explanation or comment. There is nothing, however, of this kind; the natural tone of their conceptions is not interfered with: and if He intended to refer the injured and complaining person to a church then existing, there was no other known than the synagogue, the decisions of which were liable to be reviewed by the great council. He could not refer to the band of His present disciples as being the church: for He was their sole Ruler and Head, and Himself settled all their disputes. But if He alluded—which, the context shows, is the only true understanding of

shepherds or hirelings with whom our Lord, the Good Shepherd, contrasted Himself: yet He did not impugn their official authority; and Vitringa is not contradicted in saying, after he has gone through the details of the argument, and treated of the jurisdiction of the city synagogue, "*Summa est, academiæ synagogarumque rectores viros literatos, simul constituentes consessum aliquem, aut synedrium ecclesiasticum, cujus membra dicta fuerunt Magistri, Presbyteri, Pastores, Doctores, summam apud Judæos omni tempore habuisse potestatem excommunicandi.*"—*De vetere Synag.*, lib. iii., pars i., cap. 9. "The sum of all is this,—that learned men, rulers of synagogues and schools, at the same time constituting a sort of ecclesiastical consistory or sanhedrim, of which the members were called Masters, Elders, Pastors, Doctors, had in all times among the Jews chief power in excommunicating." So Augustine: "*Synagoga—nurus ecclesiæ.*"—*Enar. in Psal. xlv.*, sect. 12. This feature of Jewish polity has been handed down unimpaired to modern times: for the chief Rabbi in every synagogue has still the unshared responsibility of administering church censures, even excommunication, neither Chazzan nor lay-Parnas being able to prevent or alter the sentence. See also Appendix, Note (C).

the case—to His church, or any of His churches, as hereafter to be constituted after the Holy Ghost should be given; then there is nothing here to determine what kind of constitution that should be,—whether the congregation should include Bishops, after the higher prelatical view, or merely Elders for its spiritual office-bearers, after the Presbyterian notion; whether discipline should proceed according to the forms of one regimen or the other. In fact, nothing here is stated by Christ on the subject of church-discipline at all; and it could only be conceived of by the disciples according to the analogies furnished by their own institutions.

This discipline had nothing to do with the present subject. “Tell it to the church,” said our Lord; “and if he will not hear the church, let him be *to thee*” (not *necessarily* and *now* to the church) “as an Heathen man and a publican.” The direction of our Lord refers to the church, so far as it takes the case out of the hand of the complainer, when his brother is unmoved and impenitent. There is no trial of guilt implied,—for this is never brought into question,—but simply the committal of an unsuccessful private attempt to remove evil and scandal into the hands of the Christian society to which the parties belong, which society was to be so constituted as to deal with a matter of this kind, even to the possible extent of excommunicating the unreconciled party,—though this is not stated here: and, without defining by anticipation its form of regimen, in order to show what should be the authority on which its decisions should rest, He adds the clause which promises to the Apostles (not the church) the binding

and loosing power. "Tell it to the church," does not mean, "Tell it to the people alone," any more than it means, "Tell it to the Ministers alone;" nor does it impugn the doctrine which we shall find the New Testament elsewhere teaches,—that there is a special obligation and responsibility attaching to the latter; nor does it discredit the notion, whatever otherwise may be its value, that the congregation might be so large that, while on great and solemn occasions it might meet in one place, yet, for teaching and disciplinary functions, it might be distributed into smaller assemblies, thus requiring the acts of those smaller assemblies to be confirmed by the whole; but that, in order that an unerring authority may be provided, to which all may appeal, the Apostles themselves shall be empowered by their plenary inspiration in revealing doctrine, and enacting rules for making that doctrine practical, to furnish, in conjunction with their Master, the statute-law of the kingdom of heaven, by which all churches should be governed. The Jewish Rabbins assumed the keys, which were the scriptural symbol of power, and applied it to their traditional interpretations and *dicta* WITHOUT AUTHORITY, so as grievously to darken and oppress the consciences of men; practically they took away "the key of knowledge:" but here Christ's disciples are assured that the doctrines of the apostles shall have the authentication and stamp of PRIMAL authority, that all matters referring to peace and salvation might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; so that, while our Lord casts a glance upon His future church, the transition of His discourse confirms REVE-

LATION, as opposed to, and distinct from, uninspired TRADITION.

§ V At the same time, the whole doctrinal lesson is a lesson on the purity and spirituality which our Lord required to be observed by His disciples in their fellowship with each other through all the ages of time. According to His teaching in the context, sin is so great an evil, that he who furnishes an occasion of it, even to a child, so as to endanger that child's salvation, had much better be placed in circumstances to suffer temporal death, as, for instance, to be drowned in the sea; for even angels, who behold the face of God in heaven, are deeply concerned in the salvation and purity of little ones, whether children in age, or children in grace; and therefore, in His church about to rise in the world, sin is so to be dreaded as a fearful and increasing evil, as well as opposed to the Divine perfections, that, when it rises in an individual bosom, it must, if possible, be quenched in the spark, and prevented from spreading further; and the person most concerned is exhorted, with child-like candour, to lay open his thoughts to the sinning brother, and thus seek his purity and restoration to confidence by the method which is least likely to exasperate chafed affections, and most calculated to vindicate truth as associated with love. An incorporation of human beings acting continually on these principles, would little need an elaborate legislative system; yet, as the church had to be composed of erring and imperfect men, its Lawgiver left the detail of minor rules in the hands of His Apostles, making them His plenipotentiaries in this matter; in conformity with which rules, according

to the best of its judgment, but not infallibly, He left each assembly to act.

The intention, then, of our Lord's reference to the church in the two passages of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, is to point out its foundation on apostolical preaching, and its spirituality and purity, as distinguished from secular conventions. A member of any mere body politic would spurn this searching converse, and demand an open charge and evidence; but a member of Christ is, as a first resort, enjoined both to allow and seek it.

§ VI. The next references of the sacred narrative to our Lord's teaching respecting the church, have respect to its order. In Matt. xx. 20–28 we find the controversy with James and John.

Here the mother of Zebedee's children comes to our Lord with the request that her two sons may have places of power and authority in His coming kingdom; a request to which the sons were likewise parties, as is evident from St. Mark's account of the same transaction, and from the indignation of the ten against them; (x. 35–45;) clearly showing that the disciples had not understood our Lord to assert, in the last-mentioned discourse, that all His people hereafter in administrative acts were to be joined in a perfectly equal position. After referring to the baptism of sorrow and cup of trembling which He and His followers must needs receive in founding that kingdom, Christ tells them thus respecting the place of authority which they aspired after, (leaving out the *italics* as they stand in our Bibles, and obscure the sense,) “It is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father,”—that is, There *shall* be

persons holding a place to which deference is due ; but the appointment shall take place under the joint administration of the Father and Son, and in especial harmony with that of the Father. After asserting that *there should be* government in His church, He proceeds to tell how the right to govern should arise, and how particular individuals should be invested with it. “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The compound verb *κατακυριεύω*, “to exercise dominion,” is sometimes taken intensively to signify a very *harsh* and *oppressive* rule ; and those who would make the sense of the passage turn simply upon this emphatic intenseness, would lay open our Lord’s words to this inference,—that men might rule in the church as do Gentile Kings or Magistrates, provided that their government were not unduly rigorous. But St. Luke, (xxii. 25,) in relating the same sentiment as uttered by Christ at another time, uses the verb in its simple form *κυριεύω*, and thus takes away the argument drawn from the use of the intensive preposition. The meaning is better gathered from the scope of the conversation. Zebedee’s children evidently entertained the notion, that the kingdom of the Messiah, however it might prove a purer institute than the Jewish commonwealth, should nevertheless be embodied in the form of a civil government over

the Jewish nation, and, through that nation, over the world.

Our Lord opposed this notion by showing, that while Gentile rulers based their authority upon external position, and were thus *ἄρχοντες* and *μεγάλοι*, “Princes and great ones,”—a position usually then sustained by hereditary prescription and military force,—the overseers of His flock should gain their authority and position by moral and spiritual character, formed in a course of disinterested labour. St. Peter, who was present at this conversation, introduces the subject with the very expression quoted above into his First Epistle, written towards the close of life, saying to the Christian Elders, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords” (exercising lordship) “over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” (1 Peter v. 2, 3.) The words of the Master and of the Apostle mutually explain each other. It is not spiritual rule which Peter forbids, because the word *ποιμάνετε* implies that very kind of oversight and constraint; and this kind of eminence associating no outward grandeur with it, but only labour, he finds it needful to urge that it may be willingly taken, possibly as a trial to be submitted to for Christ’s sake. It is *Gentile* rule and authority—that which rests on external appliances, which has no respect to the moral character and influence either of the person exercising it, or of the persons over whom it is exercised—which he disallows: and as among the Jews the chief men in social and civil respects had often been made office-

bearers in the synagogues,* much to the debasement of religion itself, and seeing that, as the Gospel advanced in the world, the Christian church would be liable to the same hurt of its spirituality, he uttered this warning,—a warning the wisdom of which history has justified,—and admonished the lowly and spiritual Elders that they should not imitate nor affect the secular Magistrate, losing the persuasiveness of the shepherd in the imperious bearing of the civil ruler.

The contrast in both these places is not, then, precisely between the harsh and the mild,—for, as it is said in St. Luke, even the worldly Sovereigns were called benefactors, (Luke xxii. 25,) such as Ptolemy *Soter*, Ptolemy *Euergetes*,—but between the secular and the sacred; between appealing to the fears which men feel as to temporal loss or pain, and dealing with their spiritual convictions and perceptions. The whole lesson is here, as elsewhere, that the oversight of Christ's church is not conformed, in spirit, form, or end, to the civil establishments of the world, but rather founded upon the spiritual relations which subsist mutually between the members of the kingdom and its Head. “Whosoever,” said Christ, “will be great among you, let him be your” *διάκονος*, “minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your” *δοῦλος*, “servant,” or, as St. Mark expresses it, “servant of all.” The unappropriated sense of *διάκονος* in the New Testament will be, “one who waits upon others,” whatever may be the quality of his actions; while *δοῦλος* rather indicates “one who performs laborious functions for others.” And here

* See Note (D), Appendix.

the Christian ruler answers both conditions. And still further to show the character of that ministration and service, Christ refers to His own conduct, as its true exponent archetype, and adds, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The teachers and guides of His church are here "Ministers" in the same sense in which He is Minister Himself. He lives, labours, and dies for it, and thence derives His unquestionable right to govern it. His Ministers (for they are such by following Him) obtain their position in the same way, so far as in their measure they can ; that is, by labour, self-denial, and suffering in behalf of the souls whom He came to save. They are not set over the flock by the flock itself, any further than the latter may recognise their call : they are raised by the Supreme Ruler, through various grades of testing and trial, to represent Him.

"Let no one among you," our Lord in substance commands, "presume to inflict temporal penalty or pain, or in any way assume the magisterial office ; the rule of the nations is no example for you : but let him who undergoes wasting labour, and suffers odium and privation, for the purpose of saving men from eternal death, and edifying them in faith and holiness, be deferred to and obeyed." And the evangelical history shows that the most venerated men in the primitive days of the church who contributed to its establishment and extension, Paul, Peter, John, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Epaphras, and others, all rose to influence and a commanding position through the lowly path of self-denial, toil, and prayer. As regards several of them, it is on record that, while they disowned all

secular and Gentile lordship, smiting none, oppressing none, they winked at no iniquity, and allowed no obstinate offender to remain in communion with the church. "The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable." (James iii. 17.)

Another suggestive and germinant text on this subject is that which occurs in the long discourse uttered by our Lord upon the Mount of Olives, in which the parables of the Ten Virgins and of the Talents are included: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 45-51.)

The word *δοῦλος*, "servant," in this text is represented in Luke by *οἰκονόμος*, "steward;" (Luke xii. 42;) and here again the language of Christ is the key to unlock the meaning of the Apostles, especially when St. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and" *οἰκονόμους*, "stewards of the mysteries of God. It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.) "A Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." (Titus i. 7.)

The whole cast of this discourse—which was *privately* given to the Apostles, (compare Matt. xxiv. 3; Mark xiii. 3,) and therefore chiefly concerned them, however legitimate may be its application to all Christians, as a monition to fidelity and watchfulness—shows that it is to be regarded as a warning from the Chief Shepherd to the under-shepherds, summoning them to fidelity and preparation against the unknown hour of His coming. The virgins' lamps represent ministerial light and lustre, as it may be failing or sustained and quenchless, according as they are borne by wise or foolish; and the “faithful over a few things” are to be rulers over many. When we come to the present place, the occupant of the position of trust is “a servant,” or “steward,” though a faithful and wise one: as such, he must answer to his Master in respect of all things confided to his care: yet, though a servant in relation to Christ, he is *over* the household, and over other servants who are not stewards. He is placed over by the supreme authority; and therefore the place is not to be struggled for, but submissively taken. All smiting,—that is, carnal and Gentile violence, such as the secular arm inflicts,—and all collusion with disorder and sin, while wrapt in carnal security, are threatened with terrible punishment.

Against the doctrine involved here, some have attempted to quote the direction of our Lord in Matt. xxiii. 8: “Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” But, except to a person who takes a very superficial and isolated view, it will soon be seen to stand in perfect harmony with it. Christ is here rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees for assuming titles of teaching autho-

rity, and warns the disciples from adopting this practice, on the ground that He is the sole authoritative Teacher,—the Master of the household in fact, to whom the stewards and all others must be subject. It would be absurd to suppose that our Lord had in His eye the private members of His church, when He said, “Be not ye called Rabbi;” for this title was used to distinguish a class of men who bound or ruled others in all matters of conscience by those wretched traditions of theirs which they set up above the word of God. He rather enjoined His servants to remember, that it was their function to administer the WORD of ANOTHER; and that in this particular they were all equal to each other, as brethren, whatever subordination of an economical kind they might observe. It is further added, “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father who is in heaven:” that is, Call no man “father” in the sense of ascribing to him such a teaching and imposing authority as is an invasion of the rights of the Supreme. Christian Ministers may be brethren, and yet acknowledge a mutual subordination in respect of each other. Christian persons may recognise those who are over them in the Lord, and yet know only a Supreme Master in heaven; just as they may acknowledge their earthly parent, and call him “father,” and yet, with reference to Him to whom primal and paramount obedience is due, may confess to have only one Father, “the Father of spirits.” None can suppose that our Lord forbids the use of this title to one who is the human author of our being; and therefore it is equally impossible that He should forbid the name and position of teacher and guide to those who, in

subjection to Himself, give meat unto and provide for His household. These words have been said to form the palladium of Presbytery, viewed as contrasted with Episcopacy and Congregationalism : but it remains to be proved how they necessarily include either the juxta-position of brethren in the pastoral office on the one hand, or exclude the idea of a first or chief on the other. Let no meaning be put upon the words of the Saviour, over and above what they will bear ; but this they must be held to declare,—that is, when the teaching of all the places considered in this section is regarded in its totality,—that His household is composed of persons in various positions ; some to rule, and some to be ruled ; some to lead, and some to be led ; some to teach, and some to be taught ; that those who take the eminent place must deserve it, and be qualified for it by character and service ; and that therefore the only proper form of Christianity in the world is one of spiritual *order*. However men might act in future ages with regard to the church, these were the principles recognised in the kingdom of God.

§ VII. The last text to be quoted, as involving a fundamental provision or rule of Christ's church, is that where the great evangelical commission is given to the Apostles. From the retirement of Bethany we hear these words : “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach ” (*μαθητεύσατε*, “ make disciples of ”) “ all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matt. xxviii. 18–20.)

It must be here observed, that this commandment is not given, as many Congregational writers assume, to the whole body of the disciples,—the church; but distinctively to the Apostles. The commission appears to have been published twice: first on “the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed,” (Matt. xxviii. 16,) where it is stated, that it was to “the eleven disciples” that “Jesus came and spake;” and then where the narrative records that He led them out as far as Bethany; (Luke xxiv. 50;) in which place, likewise, it is of “the eleven” alone that this is asserted; and to them the command was finally uttered, “Go ye [Apostles] into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,” &c.; for the Evangelist Mark says, “After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven.” (Mark xvi. 15–19.) It is highly probable, indeed, that the five hundred brethren mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6) saw our Lord during some hour on the occasion of His visit to the mountain in Galilee; for it is difficult to fix upon any other period, as equally likely to afford the opportunity: but to conclude at once that they were blended with the Apostles in receiving these special last commands of Christ, is notoriously arbitrary, and opposed to fairly-collated views of the sacred history. In vain do writers give loose to the reins of imagination, and swell the amount of our Lord’s auditors, and gather them around His person throughout the whole period of the forty days intervening between His resurrection and ascension: St. Paul gives most emphatically and minutely, as revealed to him, the whole order of the events: “I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures : and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve : after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. AFTER THAT, He was seen of James ; THEN of all the APOSTLES. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” (1 Cor. xv. 3–8.) Thus the audience of Christ with the Apostles, first and last, is distinctly marked, as being different from His audience with the greater body of disciples : and the two occasions of seeing the Apostles distinctively were the very occasions of giving twice over the charge.

The commission was given unto men who had been taught and trained in reference to it,—trained as private Christians could not be. Appended to it was the assurance, that Christ’s presence should be vouchsafed to them in all ages, even to the end,—a promise which, of necessity, had respect unto all persons who should succeed to their labours and responsibilities, inasmuch as the Apostles themselves were not to be exempt from death, the common lot of man. And the presence itself must be understood to be a peculiar nearness and influence of Christ, over and above that common pacific presence of His, which is the lot of every believer : for, as our Lord had already explained, that He would take up His abode with every one who kept His commandments, (John xiv. 21–24,) any manifestation of His presence beyond this could only be regarded as special support, granted to sustain with due fidelity a special charge. It may,

indeed, be inferred, that the promise involves the assurance that Christ will be with His whole church, in such respects as all its members should need. He could not be so nigh the Pastors without being nigh the flock as well : and such a view harmonises with Bishop Pearson's application of the passage in respect of the church's unity ; in which he is joined by one or two ancient interpreters. But, let it be observed, this is *mere* inference,—the inference of a truth which Scripture elsewhere enunciates fully : it is not the prime matter declared : that prime matter rather is, that Christ is in a peculiar sense present with those who in all ages are called to exercise the blended functions of the evangelistic and pastoral care. Strengthened by such a promise, and authorised by such a commandment, the Apostles went forth with the conviction that, whatever deeds of holiness and love were, and ought to be, done by other Christians, this was *their* work, the work of their life-time, and the work they had to transmit to others,—the raising up and extending the kingdom of Christ.

This is the link by means of which the personal ministry of Christ was to become connected with the work of practical Christianity throughout the world, and through all its future ages. A little society, after having been called together and made holy, was not sent out into the world to take its chance as to what Teachers and Preachers it should train, or whether, indeed, it should train any ; as to what evangelical enterprises it should attempt, if, indeed, it were sure that, in continuance, it would attempt enterprises at all : but the Lord Jesus charged Himself with the work of providing, through the Holy Spirit's agency,

a succession of evangelizing and pastoral Teachers, whose work it should be, not merely to preserve and edify little communities, still less aggrandise them, but through innumerable trials and perils to bring the world to God. Every single church of persons baptized and taught is to be fostered and built up in holiness; yet so that it may be another advanced post against the enemy, out of which the Lord may select other leaders, in multiplying order, to bear upon the general issue. Because, under the Gospel, some men are divinely visited with a special constraint to preach the word, and are endowed with gifts to rule Christ's church, and are conscious of a manifested presence to them of the Saviour, which is super-added to their common Christian attainments, firing them with zeal, nerving them with fortitude, and melting them with love to all mankind; the instruments of this great work are provided. Men so visited and summoned, when their summons is tested and confirmed, are answerable for its fulfilment; and God's people are answerable for their sustentation. To set up a church here and there, is not the final object of good men in this life; it is rather, by means of churches which yield a powerful ministry, to reduce the world to the obedience of faith. (Rom. xvi. 26.) And this is the law of *expansion*.

Reviewing these four places of St. Matthew's Gospel, it seems most clear, that Christ lays down to us the fundamental laws, or principles, of PURITY, SPIRITUALITY, ORDER, and EXPANSION. In various other places, too, and by implication in these, the law of *peace*, as founded on the authority and design of the Prince of Peace, is no less declared. These were

the primary considerations vouchsafed beforehand, that the Apostles might fall back upon them in framing His church, and devising minor and special precepts for its guidance.

Another *law*—using the word in a somewhat different sense, and meaning thereby the active principle of the regenerate nature, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”—was to be given when the Holy Ghost was given : and this is anticipated all the way. The principles just laid down are too holy, too remote from the maxims and practical considerations of worldly and mere political theorists, to find a moment’s favour ; and hence they are propounded to those who either are, or shall be, “new creatures in Christ Jesus ;” whose sympathy with the Saviour, and His ultimate object in the world, is so complete, that they lose all narrow notions of what is simply due to themselves, in absorbing desire to be ready for all His good, and perfect, and acceptable will.

Christ here speaks as Supreme Master and Teacher. The souls of the Apostles were to be filled with these expansive and germinant precepts, that, when the Holy Ghost should be given, they might not only take the form of authoritative truth, but merge themselves in the Spirit’s fire, as elements of the life which He produces ; insomuch that it should be as impossible for believers not to know, acknowledge, and obey them, as it would be not to watch, and pray, and delight in God.

And now let us show how these foundation-statutes of Christ’s kingdom have been observed in the building up of the Wesleyan communion. And first as to the law of *purity*, or the required separation

of the regenerate and child-like from the sinful, and those who will not be admonished.

It was a simple but momentous event, when, in the year 1739, several persons came to Mr. Wesley in London, "who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption," desiring him, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. For after he had complied with their request, and found that the number of applicants was continually increasing, he was led to institute "Classes," or small companies of individuals, under the special care of a Leader, whose spiritual function should be, in relation to all the members, 1. To inquire how their souls prosper; 2. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion might require.

The Gospel had already been powerfully preached, by Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, to the awakening and salvation of many; but hitherto there was no provision for gathering the spiritually-minded and penitent into one practical brotherhood, thus separating them from the ungodly around. It was an expedient which greatly fostered a disposition on the part of any brother to go to his fellow in any case of misunderstanding, offence, or sin, and tell the erring one, or supposed erring one, of his fault between himself and him alone. The whole arrangement was one which appealed to mutual candour, as that candour was connected with their common fear of hell and desire of heaven, and their common purpose of working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Nor was this

all: the appointment of a Leader originated the practice of inquiry,—that is, inquiry into the spiritual state of each person,—into the character of his attainments, encouragements, hinderances, difficulties, and the like; which, with its subsequent admonitions, and attendant devotional exercises, is recognised by the Apostle Paul in Rom. xv. 14,* and Col. iii. 16.† An act of sin generally arises from some latent evil affection, which has rendered the person that cherishes it spiritually weak and liable to temptation; and therefore, what is so likely to search out evil in its origin, and nip it in the bud, as the practice of a serious, loving inquiry, continued from week to week?

Christians, according to this provision, follow out St. Paul's injunction to the Thessalonians to “comfort *themselves* together;” “edify one another;” “warn the unruly;” “comfort the feeble-minded;” “support the weak.” (1 Thess. v.) And then, as several Classes are united together under a conjoint pastorate of several Ministers, who are, according to the same testimony of the Apostle in the same chapter, “over *them* in the Lord,” and appointed, in the higher sense, to “admonish *them*,” another form of inquiry and watchfulness is rendered necessary, namely, that over the Leaders and their Classes, and over any other collateral office-bearers who may exist. Then, lastly, as the same St. Paul, mindful of the will of

* “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

† “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

his Lord and Master, has addressed himself in his Miletian charge to all Ministers, saying, "Take heed to yourselves," as well as to "all the flock," (Acts xx.,) the inquiry proceeds, in its last and highest form, from the assembled Conference to each of its members,—an inquiry founded on the mutual understanding, all the way through, that as all are joined together to put away sin, and obtain vital holiness, there is nothing to be evaded, and nothing hid; no other consequence being at stake, in respect of man's judgment at least, than that any offending brother, if unbending and impenitent, shall be disowned and avoided by the rest.

We thus see that the commandment respecting purity, given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew, is expounded by the Apostles, and so explained as to make it apply to the repression of sin in its very source by the practice of watchful inquiry. All this, as before said, is perfectly intolerable to an individual who stands upon the privileges of a citizen of this world: and therefore it is a test of simplicity and spirituality. When these are gone, or hastening to decay, all solicitous questioning will be repudiated; and he who claims the privileges of this world's law, such as that of not criminating himself, must be content to retire from Christian fellowship, and be a simple member of civil society. There are evils which distract and ruin a church, which in the eye of the civil law are no crime at all: and therefore he who cannot submit to spiritual discipline, has no cause for deeming it a hardship, if he have to take his lot with the "heathen man" and the "publican," that is, the mere civilian. The whole Wesleyan discipline, grow-

ing out of the Class-Meeting, so providentially originated, and so thoroughly necessitated in all its steps, up to the culminating point of Conference inquiry, is pervaded throughout by the principle here expounded.

And as to *spirituality* in its rule, involving the absence of Gentile lordship over God's heritage, one can hardly deny that here in particular it is the servant of all who obtains any right to fill an influential or governing position. Let any man look over the names of those who have been invested with the highest offices,—Presidents of Conference, Secretaries of the Missions, Chairmen of Districts, and the like ; and then ask if social position and adventitious circumstances have been of any avail. Let him mark whether or not these servants of Christ have slowly arisen, as their graces have developed, through years of toil and self-denial for the good of God's people, to their successive posts of eminence ; and whether the laws of election have not been suited to harmonise with this spiritual rule, and secure its observance.

Many assailants of the Wesleyan cause and discipline have laboured to lay open the lowly origin of many of its most eminent Ministers, with a view to expose them and their coadjutors to the sinister regard of the world : but if there be any authority and truth in the discourse of Christ with the sons of Zebedee, the argument, to those who understand Christianity at least, and who are not of the world, may point in a very different direction. The law of ORDER is obeyed in accepting and acting upon those distinctions which are already created by Divine Providence, in

which we trace the minds of Christians variously endowed, as their persons are marked by a difference of form and feature. If there are rectoral minds, why should they not rule? If there are ardent minds, why should they not have a sphere in which to burn? If there are educated minds, why should not they in their turn educate? If there are meditative and philosophical minds, why should they not have matters given them to ponder? If there be souls which throb with high enterprise, why not send them on great designs? All these arrangements will involve mutual subordination,—an overseer, by analogy, or a steward there, and a fellow-servant a little lower here: but does this useful and voluntary submission, yea, or if it be recognised by rule, (so long as they are parties to that rule,) interfere with either the real freedom of the servant, or the glory of the Supreme Master? No man is free in a position for which he is unfitted, and it is unkind and unjust to place him there.

If, notwithstanding the palpable facts of varying degrees of ability and power among the pastoral servants of Christ, there be no practical acknowledgment of them amongst each other in discipline and legislation, it is difficult to understand how souls so unaccustomed to defer to authority can acknowledge, with anything like intelligent faith, the supremacy even of the Head in heaven. How is this to place the right stone in the building, and in its proper position? Nay, indeed, One is their “Master, even Christ, and all” they, notwithstanding their diversities of gifts, and consequently of place, “are brethren.”

And finally, with regard to *expansion*; or the law of

aggression upon the world : a stranger to the Methodist constitution, or passer-by, can perceive this feature, when he hardly knows of or understands any other. The removal of Ministers from their present stations to other Circuits at the end of every three years, is a constant counteraction—whatever may be its attendant disadvantages in another way—of the disposition to settle down and find rest in one circle. The healthy financial support of the ministry and ordinances in a new place, which have been introduced there with difficulty, is generally dependent on making further advances, enlarging the Circuit, and gaining a greater number of supporting members ; the raising of a new congregation rather strengthening than weakening an old one ; while the simple line written by Mr. Wesley in his “Twelve Rules of a Helper,” “It is your business to save as many souls as you can,” describes a prime function of practical religion, in which every one, from the Minister to the youth on trial, who thoroughly imbibes the spirit of the Class-Meeting, finds both his labour and his rest.

Here, then, are rules of action adopted, which provide for the first, broadest, and best purposes of the Christian religion ; yea, by means of which Christ’s primary statutes, as explained and applied by the Apostles, are all brought out into authoritative control.

Various Christian communities may each have their peculiar modes of bringing these general obligations to bear ; and whatever special church-rule, like that which requires a Wesleyan to meet in Class, or a junior Minister to submit to his senior, be honestly regarded as the best means of fulfilling the will of the

Great Head as declared in His Word, it is surely not to be thought unscriptural because it is not formally recognised in Scripture, or because it may happen to differ from some other regulation adopted to promote the same end in another department of the household. *Radii* from the same centre are not to be regarded as out of the area of the circle. He alone who cannot take a large and spiritual understanding of the precept, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," will expect to have all his Sunday employments or omissions of employment set down in the sacred text; and, in like manner, he only who is unable to see the full depth of Christ's words to Peter, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs," or Paul's word to the Elders, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock," will expect to find in the New Testament any chapter of canons as to what things he shall have a right to do or not to do, or what liberties and restraints, in respect of applying Christ's principles, he shall be made to feel.

The ancient love-feast and kiss of peace were peculiar social forms which were sanctified in passing, but not imposed on all ages; even as, when Christ commanded His disciples to have their loins girded, He did not mean that they and all believers should wear the kind of clothing which made that peculiar action necessary. Communion and love are now better represented on the one hand, and watchful vigilance on the other, than by those obsolete forms. Not to know how to derive even minor precept from Divine principle, is to be ignorant how to draw water from the living rill of Scripture. A part of our moral trial, as we have already said, lies in the manner in

which we do this ; but moral trial is inevitable, flee where we will, and adopt what church-rules, or what freedom from rule, we may.

Simply and sincerely to look to Christ, His aims and purposes, and the final issue of building His church below, is the only way to test the true spirit of our denominational rules. If there be so glorious an effluence of law from those two great maxims of heaven, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself," that the whole world of God's intelligent creatures is filled with wisdom and righteousness ; so the words of Christ and His Apostles form together the church's day-star, a light shining in a dark place, which casts its beams upon every honest and loving measure taken, in mutual counsel, to promote PURITY, ORDER, PEACE, SPIRITUALITY, and EXPANSION, and especially where trial and success have already encouraged the toil. These all glow under the sacred light-stream, as under the pillar of fire in the wilderness did the tents and tabernacle of Israel,—a furniture fabricated by man, but generally devised and specially owned by God.

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 45.

MATT. xvi. 18, 19.—Olshausen admits that this is the only passage where [even according to his opinion] the *ἐκκλησία* stands as equivalent to the phrase "kingdom of God." The figure used by our Lord is, however, so far from involving the identity of the two, as to suggest directly their diversity. The designation of Peter as Simon Bar-Jona, "son of Jona," contrasted as it is with Peter's confession respecting Christ, "Thou art the Son of the living God," thereby

making "son of Jonas" antithetical to "Son of God," evidently sets him forth, when he is called *πέτρα*, in his mere human ministry,—the first or foundation-preacher of the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile. In addition to this, and apart from this object, though in relation to it, he was favoured with the superhuman endowment of authoritatively declaring the terms on which men could enter into pacific communion with God: all this our commentator seems to admit in his subsequent note, and thus neutralises the present annotation: "It is certainly true, at the same time, that the ideal church exists nowhere else than in the real, as the kernel within the shell. If this be overlooked, we are lost in empty idealism. But certainly the outer form is not the same thing with the higher being which animates it, just as the soul is not without the body, yet the body must not be taken for the soul itself."—OLSHAUSEN, "Commentary on the Gospels," vol. ii., p. 220. Edinburgh, 1848.

MATT. xx. 24, 25.—"The comparison of the *ἄρχοντες* and *μεγάλοι* has positively no meaning, if it was intended that there should be no *πρώτοι* and *μεγάλοι* in the kingdom of God. Their existence is obviously taken for granted by our Lord. Amidst the relations of the *αἰὼν οὗτος*, dominion rests on physical force, and the advantage of it is seen in the subjugation of others, and the service rendered by them. In the *βασιλεία* all pre-eminence rests on love and truth; and love teaches us to serve others, and not to let ourselves be served. The mistake of the disciples consisted rather in confounding the character of earthly and Divine authority. The former, owing to the sinfulness of human nature, is combined with oppression and slavery: the latter has, as its result, a blessing for all who yield themselves to its influence. But, in order to be delivered from sinful self-will, which often knows how to assert its power even under the form of spiritual influence, man requires to have his soul, in the first instance, thoroughly humbled, and to pass through that baptism of suffering, in which the old man is wholly given over to death. The new man thence arising, who belongs to the kingdom of God, can, in that case, according to the measure of his calling, have dominion."—OLSHAUSEN, "Commentary on the Gospels," *in loc.*, Matt. xx. 24–28.

Note (B), page 48.

"THERE is a great difference, as between the making and confirming of a covenant, and the keeping it; *so likewise between the solemn admission into the visible church, and the mystical,*" [*i. e.*, the kingdom,] "*which consists of real saints and loyal subjects.* What kind of profession and promise is required in the party to be baptized,

may be considered afterwards. By all this we may easily understand, that if we will expect any benefit by our baptism, we must have a special care to perform our promise, confirmed by this solemn rite : for these sacraments are special and distinct laws added to all the rest for this end,—to engage man more strongly to observe them : and baptizing is a kind of naturalising such as are baptized.”—LAWSON’S *Theo-Politica*, book ii., chap. 17, p. 329, “On Baptism.”

Note (C), page 63.

“*Primò dubium non est, quin, subsistente Judæorum republicâ, Synedrii maximi Hierosolymitani summa auctoritas recepta fuerit in omnibus Judæorum synagogis, ubicunque fuerint locorum ; pariter ac Presbyterii Hierosolymitani inter Christianos, quandiu Apostoli illi præsederunt. Dioris Filius in Kabbala signatè de R. Gamaliel : ‘Ecce novimus, quòd R. Gamaliel Præses fuerit Senatûs summi, ejusdemque princeps, et quòd instituta ejus recepta fuerint per universam terram Israël et in omnibus exilii locis, neque rege neque ullo alio homine intercedente.’ Alia hac spectantia produximus libro superiore. Et id solum sufficere poterat hîc monuisse. Etenim ubi regimen ecclesiæ comparamus cum regimine synagogæ, quisque intelligit, id præcipuè pertinere ad ecclesiam primò institutam, quæ synagogæ filia fuit, et inde originem traxit.*”—VITRINGA *De Vet. Synag.*, lib. iii., pars i., cap. xvii., § 3, p. 866.

“First it is not to be doubted that during the Jewish commonwealth the chief authority of the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem was received in all synagogues of the Jews, of whatsoever places they were ; equally as the same authority of the Jerusalem Presbytery was received among Christians as long as the Apostles presided. Dioris Filius, on the Kabbala, says specially concerning R. Gamaliel, ‘Lo, we know that R. Gamaliel was the President and chief of the great Sanhedrim ; and that its institutes were received throughout the whole land of Israel, and in all places of exile, no King or any other individual interfering.’ Other things tending this way we have produced in the book above. And this alone might suffice to have here hinted. For, when we compare the regimen of the church with the regimen of the synagogue, every one understands this especially to appertain to the church first instituted, which was the daughter of the synagogue, and drew its origin from thence.”

The same learned author shows that, although the mutual dependence of the synagogues was broken up when the Sanhedrim was

dissolved, yet that dissolution did not take place till long after the destruction of Jerusalem; and that other great central synagogues and schools, especially in Syria and the East, continued for a long time, on a smaller scale, and under Patriarchs, to represent its power and influence; and yet, that in most cases the concurrence of the people was sought in all important acts of the administration.—*Vide* p. 867.

Note (D), page 70.

“JOSEPHUS, in his ‘Jewish Wars,’ speaking of the strife at Cæsarea between the Jews and Syrians, says, ‘The Elders of the Jews were unable to restrain their own people;’ and in the account given by him of this sedition, no other rulers are mentioned but these Elders. In the fourteenth chapter of the same book, when narrating another tumult that occurred at Cæsarea, he speaks of the rulers of the Jews, and these twelve in number. In another book, making mention of one Antiochus, he says, that ‘he was a man of repute amongst the people, because his father was the chief Archon’” [one of the terms used by our Lord in His reproof of the sons of Zebedee] “‘of the Jews at Antioch.’ And, to give one instance more, (one which proves the union of the ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction in the same individuals,)—one Jesus, the Ruler of Tiberias, is represented as ‘ordering the multitude to depart from the synagogue, and permitting the Senate alone to remain.’ This last passage is conclusive as to the form of synagogal government: there is in it mention made of a President and a Senate, and also strong evidence that the President of the synagogue was also chief Magistrate of the city; for he is styled ‘the Ruler (Archon) of Tiberias.’”—BERNARD’S Abridgment of Vitringa, *De Vet. Synag.*, p. 55. London, 1842.

Where this work avails, I quote it rather than the more minute Latin original, for the sake of the mere English reader. It must be remembered, that it was AT THIS VERY CÆSAREA that St. Peter, by his preaching, opened the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles; and that it was AT THIS VERY ANTIOCH that he spent some considerable time more: and probably the scenes which he would witness, in the exercise of his ministry, in this place and elsewhere, of civil oppression by spiritual rulers, would prompt, in after-years, the exhortations in his Epistles.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH, WHAT, AND OF WHOM COMPOSED.

“WE cannot, then, take a better occasion to search into the true notion of the Church of Christ than by looking into the origination and increase thereof; without which it is impossible to have a right conception of it.”—BISHOP PEARSON “On the Creed.”

§ I. THE last chapter, it is hoped, has opened out views, more or less clear, as to the will of Christ in reference to the constitution of His church; and especially such as these:—that it should be composed of persons in different positions,—different by His providential appointment; that while all were accountable as individuals to Himself, the final Judge, in respect of His requirements upon them in their ordinary Christian walk, some should be made specially responsible for its oversight, its purity, and its extension. These views are amply maintained and enlarged in the teaching of the Apostles. The church of God in their days was not a kind of archetypal community, set up by the personal witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, fraught, as such, with a sufficient patrimony of truth, and then left to shift for—that is, to enlarge and propagate—itself, as it best might do. It stands rather in constant connexion with the kingdom of heaven, which is the ever-present reign of Christ

within it ; under which certain men are raised up and endowed to influence and direct other men ; and servants and stewards are ever provided, in their necessary degrees, orders, and mutual relations, for the preservation and expansion of the whole.*

With this great work of ordering the kingdom—one of the principal functions of which is calling His Ministers, and appointing them their work—Christ charges Himself : for, even when Peter would busy his fancy in vain curiosity as to the future designation of John, he received this rebuke from his Master : “ What is that to thee ? Follow thou me : ” (John xxi. 22 :) *q. d.*, “ Leave all anxieties respecting the servants of the Lord to their Master.” According to this Divine arrangement, the private Christians of any generation are, in effect, the spiritual children of contemporary or preceding Ministers of Christ. As the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep, after having toiled through His humiliation on their behalf, and thereby acquired His right to rule them supremely ; so His servants, who, after His example, toil for their edification and salvation subordinately,—that is, in a degree unspeakably lower,—acquire their obligation to rule subordinately, remembering that *their influence can only extend over those who voluntarily acknowledge that influence and the relation which arises from it* : and thus, making exception for cases of extraordinary interference for the revival of religion, the church has an historic connexion through the links of spiritual paternity and filiation from age to age. (1 Cor. iv. 15).

* See Note (A), Appendix.

It will not be enough, then, to look around us upon a pious company, and say, "Here are two or three professing Christians met together to worship God, to watch over and edify each other; and so here is a church." For a band of Sunday-school Teachers might do this at any time, and under pretence of simplicity produce endless confusion. The question arises,—Are they met in *Christ's* name? that is, subject to His LAW and ORDER, and subject to the law and order of His Apostles,—those whom He empowered to bind and loose in regard to the ordinances of His household?

§ II. When holy love was allowed to spread all its influences through the first societies of believers, these principles of spiritual relationship were rather spontaneously felt and obeyed than minutely defined and spoken of: but when that love failed, and it became necessary for the Apostles to explain what the church was, how it was originated, how maintained, and for what end existing, nothing could be more clear on this subject than, for instance, the statements of St. Paul. He gave no general definition of the word: he rather rested on the twofold Old-Testament idea, already mentioned, which was generally received and understood; but instead of the Old-Testament mode of constituting the church, we are presented with the following formula: 1. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." "One body" is an incorporation of persons; "one Spirit" is the Holy Spirit, the efficient Agent of the kingdom of heaven, who rules within their fellowship, among those who obey the Gospel call. 2. "One Lord," (as Supreme Head, whose humanity

in that office excludes every mortal Pope or what else,) “one faith, one baptism.” 3. “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all:”—in order, indeed, above Christ, as being His Father, and therefore Father of all who are created in Christ Jesus, Ministers or not. 4. “But” (notwithstanding there is but one paramount authority and source of spiritual life, one Father) “unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ :” and, as to this gift, 5. “He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” &c.

Now, when the Apostle says, “Unto every one of us is given grace,” he obviously means that, as far as the Ephesian believers were concerned, the grace given to them was that of a sanctified and divinely appointed ministry. The gift of Christ spoken of in this place, at least, was not the gift of spiritual blessings in various degrees directly to the souls of the congregation ; but the gift of particular *individuals*, specially endowed in order that they might make it an organized Christian institute. “He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men :” that is, He gave these gifts unto men, not as they were a church, but as they were *mere* men, spiritually destitute and dead in sin ; and He gave these gifts that He might make them Christians,—might build a church, or constitute a body, according as the figure might be. And the three forms of expression in the twelfth verse which describe the end for which these gifts are granted, are not to be taken, I apprehend, as

varied phases of one object merely, to be accomplished by the Christian ministry, but as defining THREE DISTINCT OBJECTS, all of which are linked to each other. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastors were given, first, *πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων*, “for the perfecting or putting fully in order of the saints,” or Christian believers, simply viewed as such, without regard to any relation in which they might stand: and as Christ originated the primitive disciples, and so formed the nucleus of the church, this was the first work in order of time, because the first-formed Christians had yet to be nurtured. They were given, also, for “the work of the ministry,”—a work which, when spoken of by the Apostles as “THIS ministry,” or emphatically “THE ministry,” means the preaching of the Gospel to the ungodly,—the great EVANGELISTIC FUNCTION, by which the world is brought to Christ. And also they were given, in their joint and several contributions to the object, for “the edifying of the body of Christ;” which is the placing of believers in such relations to each other in order, discipline, and service, and doing this with such intelligence and simplicity of view, that a spiritual and organical product shall arise, having the knowledge, strength, and unity of a man, and the compactness and symmetry of a building; and this building, according to the already observed notion, may be either a distinct section of the Christian family, or the great Christian family itself in its mature condition.

Christ, it must be carefully observed, has given all these to do all this work; and therefore, if some of these, that is, if distinctive Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, are no longer found, the Pastors and

Teachers who remain must still be responsible for such apostolic, prophesying, evangelistic, as well as nurturing, functions as the world needs. The *προφητεία*, or unfolding the truth of God under Divine unction, must yet, in its still allowable degrees, be cherished; the Gospel must yet be preached to the nations; loose and half-formed Christians must yet be wrought into a living frame; and Pastors and Teachers must now see that all this *is* done.

The persons mentioned above are not to be regarded as graceful and fitting appendages to a communion of good people, which might be a church in the Christian sense without them. They are rather a part of its essence: they constitute that element, through which the rule of Christ is made continually to bear, and the religious body to increase. For, although, in another place, (1 Cor. xii. 28,) St. Paul speaks of these as being by God SET IN the church, yet so in David He is said to have set "the solitary in families," (Psalm lxviii. 6,) meaning by those who are so "set" the progenitors of those families,—a real parallel to the case in hand, and more than a parallel; for, when we consider the evangelical character of the whole Psalm, which is the very inspired composition quoted by St. Paul in this place of his Epistle to the Ephesians, as showing forth Christ's victory over death, His resurrection, and bestowment of royal gifts, and the subsequent triumph of His Gospel, it is within the limits of sober interpretation to say that the raising up of the New-Testament church, and its enlargement, under the part apostolic, part prophetic, part evangelistic, and part pastoral ministry of the Gospel, is the very "setting the solitary in families"

of which the Psalmist speaks. Bishop Pearson is therefore only asserting a just and necessary principle, when he says, "We cannot take a better occasion to search into the true notion of the church of Christ, than by looking into the origination and increase thereof; without which it is impossible to have a right conception of it." *

§ III. With regard to the Ministers thus enumerated, the Apostles were first; and, as they received their commission immediately from Christ, were endowed by Him with miraculous powers, and were the special subjects of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that they might complete the canon of revelation, they stand alone, and have no successors. So, likewise, the Prophets of the New Testament; who appear to have been intended by their holy and devout utterances of evangelical truth, both original and expository, to stand in contrast with those cold and jejune teachers who had hitherto been heard, and without effect, in the synagogues. The Evangelists, too, were extraordinary; for they made no provision, nor did the Apostles make any, as to the perpetuation of their distinctive order. The other one of these classes, which are said in both enumerations (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11) to be constituted by God and Christ, is in the last described as that of "Pastor and Teacher." The expression, "Pastors and Teachers," cannot be understood to mean two offices, but one, as will abundantly appear from a due collation of Scripture, as well as from the structure of the Apostle's language; for, had he intended two offices, the verse would have run on

* "Exposition of the Creed," p. 503. Dobson's Edition, 1832.

in the style of the former clause, “*Some Pastors, and some Teachers.*”

These Pastors and Teachers, in 1 Peter v. 1, 2, are called “Elders,” who are required “to shepherd the flock of God;” “to act as Bishops over the same.” So, also, in Acts xx. 28. In 1 Tim. iii. 2, they are required to be “*apt* to teach.” In Titus i. 7, the Elder or Bishop is *οἰκονόμος*, “steward,” as in our Lord’s discourse. In Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, the official persons above referred to are governors or guides, from *ἡγέομαι*, “to guide, preside, or rule.” In 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, they are described as *προϊσταμένους*, “acting as rulers.” In all the places the same union of functions is involved which makes up the compound idea in the first two; namely, *ποιμαίνειν*, “to shepherd:” and, taken singly as well as collectively, they enable us to look at the standing ministerial office from various points of view. They show what the Minister of Christ is to those individuals severally who, in different stages of spiritual attainment, are placed under his care.

Another order of church-officers is found mentioned in Scripture,—the Deacons; but these will be considered in their proper place. So far we see the leaders and spiritual overseers of God’s household,—the fathers: now we turn to the numerical majority,—the multitudes of their spiritual children.

§ IV The church of the New Testament, then, in harmony with what has been stated in the preceding pages, cannot be regarded otherwise than as *the great company of persons throughout the world who profess the faith of the evangelical covenant, and are designated by its seals*; that is, those who are baptized

into Christ, who worship in His name, and statedly communicate in the sacrament of His death.

This definition is to be so understood, as that, while it includes all truly regenerate persons, "children of the kingdom," it does not exclude those who are sincerely seeking or desiring to be such ; and therefore comprehends, and is intended to comprehend, a great variety of spiritual states,—all holiness, in connexion with remanent weakness and imperfection. With this view the statements of the New Testament will all be found to agree. As this church is on earth, all its members are still on probation, and have not gained their indefectible state. It is "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ;" (Heb. xii. 23 ;) that is, if this text refers to men, and not to angels. But this allusion to Exod. xxxii. 33, when candidly interpreted, must be allowed to include its counterpart, namely, the possibility of having any name already written there blotted out through sin. It is Christ's church,—that for which He gave Himself ; but it is in circumstances to need that He should "sanctify it with the washing of water by the word," before He can "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v. 26, 27.)

In some places where Christ is spoken of as the Head of it, the term includes the whole of the redeemed in heaven and earth,—the former portion of whom only are perfect and secure,—the other being imperfect and on trial ; as, "Unto Him be glory in the church of Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end :" (Eph. iii. 21 :) "And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which

is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all :” (Eph. i. 22, 23 :) “And He is the Head of the body, the church.” (Col. i. 18.) Viewing it as one in its relation to both worlds, it is only of the heavenly state of it that we find it written, “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” (Rev. xxi. 27.)

Of course, then, it will follow, that whatever THE church is, in point of spiritual character, that a church will be,—a section of the aggregate one ; or a congregation or community of baptized persons, confessing the faith of the Gospel, and especially the doctrine of the Great Head and His atonement, by oral service, and the observance of His last established ordinance ; adding, more or less, to these conditions the use of such special human institutions, derived from wisdom and experience, and recognising the authority of such special interpretations of doctrinal truth, as they may mutually agree upon, in applying the revealed and fundamental law of Christ. Dr. Wardlaw, and other Congregational writers, contend that churches are regarded in Scripture as being intentionally composed of none but the faithful, that is, true Christians ; and that, in consequence, they should therefore be so composed now. If by the “faithful” they mean those who are turning to God, who, under the influence of prevenient grace, are leaving the practice of sin, and coming to the Saviour with more or less of desire after Him,—those whose hearts God “has touched ;” then we have little or no cause for controversy ; the whole matter may turn upon that view of the Calvinian theology by which repentance, or godly sorrow for sin with gracious desires, is taken to be the evidence and

fruit of regeneration; by which the grace of the Father drawing a soul to Christ is to be regarded as the same thing as established spiritual life, or the life of regeneration. According to this view a penitent, or a seeker after salvation, (who, I am far from denying, may be called, in the sense in which the name was first given at Antioch, "a Christian,") is taken to be a "saint," or "believer," or "faithful one." This, however, will not bear the test of an enlarged collation and comparison of Scripture;* and as from vague premises mischievous consequences may be drawn, it behoves us to be a little more explicit.

A believer in Christ, one who is really such, whose state and privileges are drawn out in the eighth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, is a person who is justified by faith, is *in* Christ Jesus, has power over sin, and is the subject of peace, love, and immortal hope. He, in one word, is the individual who has

* It must strike every one that by far the greater number of instances in which men are exhorted or commanded to repent, are those where the requirement is directly made of the sinner; such as, "Repent, and be converted;" "Repent, and be baptized;" "God commandeth all men every where to repent;" and the existence of moral power (received through prevenient grace) to comply with this demand must be admitted, if a slur of a very awful character be not cast upon the Divine perfections: and, however profound and meditative minds, from Augustine's time to the present, have vainly endeavoured to explore the boundaries of the sovereign and the creature will,—the freedom to evil of nature, and the constraint of grace,—the grace that is resistible, and the grace that is effectual,—it cannot be denied that the above is the Scripture order, namely, repentance first, pardon and regeneration after.

We must needs rest upon the plain teaching of inspired truth, rather than encounter and resolve metaphysical difficulties, often intangible, cloud-like, and shifting. We would rest on the wisdom of God in a mystery.

attained the Gospel salvation;—that of which Christ spake when He said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” But there is evidence that the Apostles in forming Christian churches admitted many, very many, who were yet short of this attainment; that is, deeming all the while that they might be so deficient.

It is said that the members added to the first church at Jerusalem were *τοὺς σωζομένους*, “the saved;”* but this is hardly a more exact rendering of the words than that which stands in the terms of our own version, “those who should be saved.” The present or imperfect participle passive being used, the sense rather is, “those who were being saved;” that is, they were passing through the process of inquiry on those solemn subjects treated of by Peter, through the stages of incipient repentance and belief in the Gospel, and, with salvation in view, had turned to the Lord.† It is no more likely that the previous three thousand persons could have been submitted in one day to the test of individual examination as to their spiritual state, than that they could have been baptized by immersion.

§ V It is said that the terms which are used by the Apostles in addressing the churches, are such as cannot be applied to any but real Christians; but it is evident that those terms, when used with reference to companies of persons, are to be taken in their con-

* DR. WARDLAW.

† See also Bloomfield *in loc.*, who sustains the same view from the Syriac. Archbishop Whately, too, to the same point, though paraphrastically: “Those who were entering on the road of salvation.”—*Essay ii.*, p. 84.

ventional sense, though with much greater strictness of meaning than when used by the Old-Testament writers with respect to the Jewish church. As for instance, Christians are "called of Jesus Christ," "beloved of God," "called to be saints:" (Rom. i. 7 :) that is, they are, as a *church*, beloved of God, and called; though vocation does not necessarily imply the possession of the blessings to which the call refers: the being called in the parable did not necessarily involve the sitting down to the feast with a wedding-garment on. The eighth chapter it is which explains who are personally united to Christ. The spiritual state of individuals is described in the body of the Epistle in distinct and different terms. Again: the several societies are addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," (1 Cor. i. 2,) "saints," (2 Cor. i. 1,) "faithful in Christ Jesus," (Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 2,) "elect;" (1 Peter i. 2;) but the verb, "to sanctify," in its sense of "to separate to God," (as John xvii. 19,) may well be used in reference to baptized persons set apart from the world, in order to indicate their *privilege* of holiness, rather than, as to the whole of them, their attainment of it. "Saints" is a term which designates those actually holy persons who gave a character to the whole community; but the very word which is here used is the word which St. Paul applies to the children of parents, one of whom only is a believer or church-member, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) plainly showing that even infants in covenant relation to God are not to be excluded—that is, in the anticipation of their Christian nurture and instruction—from *initial* membership; and among the faithful and elect there are those who are exhorted to put off the old

and put on the new man, (Eph. iv. 22,) as also those who are spiritual, (Gal. iv. 1,) and those who are, in certain respects, yet carnal. (1 Cor. iii. 3.)

§ VI. From these considerations, I feel satisfied that the Apostles did not so frame the early churches, that they were understood to consist of none but truly regenerate persons, or established Christians ; but that they admitted those who had a serious belief of Christian doctrines, a desire for salvation, and who gave evidence of it by breaking off their sins by true repentance ; as well as many others who, although craving spiritual good, had need to be instructed in the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ. In any other view I can make no sense of great portions of the apostolic writings. Exactly adapted to this character and condition of the family of God is the ministry we have been considering. It is easy to understand why there should be persons designated and acting as Pastors, Elders, overseers, stewards, and guides, if according to Divine intention there should be so many, in respect of whom no reason could be assigned why they were placed in the church at all but to be fed, tended, overseen, ruled, and guided. If all were to be, according to intentional arrangement, established Christians, whose conversion and regeneration were confirmed, it is not so easy to see why such a ministry as these titles describe should exist. It is natural that our brethren who contend for the democratic form of the church should be desirous to adopt a high theory of pure communion ; for a community must be pure, loving, and intelligent in a very high degree, in which subordination and deference on the part of some, and a mild, guiding

influence and authority on the part of others, form not a condition of permanent existence. Subordination seems to be recognised even in heaven ; but on earth, when we come to practical duty, it is as necessary as its analogy is universal : and disparity is always linked to it ; for where all things are equal, there is neither order nor disorder ; for disparity is the very element out of which order arises. A community of real saints, with nearly equal knowledge, might, perhaps, for a while direct everything with uniform personal influence and common consent ; but where there are the young, the ignorant, the weak in faith, the penitent, they must have those associated with them who have a position elevated enough and graces sufficient to meet these needy conditions with a proper supply ; in other words, who are over them in the Lord. Let me not be understood as pleading for even the least degree of sin in God's household. HE hates it with perfect hatred ; and our hatred of it ought to be as great as our nature is capable of. I am pleading for God's way of putting down and removing it, rather than our own. The constitution thus recognised does not derogate from the Divine purity, and throw down the barrier between the church and the world ; for no man can be supposed to bear a stronger testimony against sin, than he who has tasted of its evil and bitterness, and is coming to a right perception of his condition : none does more honour to the " father's house " than the hungry and reft prodigal, leaving his husks and wretchedness, and proclaiming his resolution to return to that father's lawful authority. Confessing sin glorifies God, even before sin is pardoned. It does not impugn the mercy of God in our Lord

Jesus Christ, viewed as exercised either towards the world or the church. To the drowning world it opens the ark-door, even while fear is the prompting influence of the applicant for admission, rather than love. It fulfils and illustrates in Christ's people the character given by the Prophets of Himself: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (Isai. xlii. 3.) "He shall gather the lambs with His arm." (xl. 11.) And in the church it calls forth all the agencies of zeal and love for the salvation and confirmation of souls; or how else would the eloquent Apollos have been taught by Aquila and Priscilla the way of God more perfectly, when he knew only the baptism of John?

§ VII. To come back, then, to our general conclusion:—*The church of Christ is the great company of baptized and communicating persons throughout the world, the real believers amongst whom are only known to Him.* There is no need, again we say, to adopt the theory of an invisible church, because real Christianity in any one will be always visible; and where do we learn in Scripture that a member even of Christ's universal church must, *as such*, be finally saved? Does not our Lord Himself say, "Every branch IN ME that beareth not fruit He taketh away;" (John xv. 2;) and, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned?" (Verse 6.) By consequence, *a church of Christ is a distinct section of like individuals, specially joined together by peculiar ordinances and forms, and by consentaneous agreement as to special interpreta-*

tions of holy Scripture. It will follow that so long as the *Divine* conditions of communion are observed and acknowledged amongst each other, churches may adopt other and *human* conditions, so long as they are adopted in accordance with the primary principles laid down ; and it will follow, also, that the putting away or exclusion of an individual from a distinct congregation or community does not *necessarily* imply excision from the body of Christ, still less from the kingdom of God. He may be put away for a persevering violation of a peculiar compact of order. But if the offence be perpetrated in the schismatic spirit so severely reprehended in the Epistles, it is so far a breach of the law of Christ, and *may endanger* his pacific relation to Christ. All that is meant here is, that this relation is not *absolutely* terminated by his separation from a distinct and voluntary communion.

A Romanist might be separated from the communion of his brethren for the neglect of Mass, and promulgating Protestant opinions ; an English Churchman, for persisting to teach in unconsecrated places, and repudiating liturgical forms, and the like ; a Congregational Dissenter, for agitating his church with notions contrary to its order or its theory of Christian liberty ; a Wesleyan, for refusing to submit to the established discipline of the body : and it is easy to conceive of any or all of these so conducting themselves as not to lose the spirit, or forfeit the character, of a Christian,—especially in the first instance, where fidelity to the word of God would require the course indicated. But if the primary laws of the church's Sovereign, which enjoin charity, truth, and peace, be contemptuously broken ; if lying, slander, malice, and

evil surmising, be brought to bear on the schism, and the Lord Himself should confirm the act of excision, and make it extend to repulsion from His family ; then this is another matter,—a serious possibility.

§ VIII. It will not be difficult, then, to show that Wesleyan Methodism has grown up in harmony with, and, indeed, under the influence of, these principles.

The first Societies were not composed of persons who voluntarily consorted together in prayer and fellowship, and then appointed John and Charles Wesley to be their pastors. They were the subjects of a spiritual awakening, which had been brought about by the preaching of these eminent Ministers ; their resorting together in prayer and fellowship was the result of the pastoral or fatherly direction and appointment of these same Wesleys ; and by them, as instruments, they were subsequently made Christians, in the full sense of that oft-abused title.

The spiritual children had a claim upon their fathers in the Gospel for nurture and edification : this claim was acknowledged. The people were divided into Classes, and watched over in the Lord. As they increased, one of their number in each Class, more experienced than the rest, was appointed weekly to advise and exhort them, he and they being alike instructed and advised at the quarterly visitation of the Minister. Some of the flock became the subjects of a powerful inward constraint to engage in the same evangelizing work ; and, presenting themselves to the brothers, who were now Pastors in chief, their ministerial call was acknowledged, and they were separated as sons in the Gospel. These sons became spiritual

fathers in their turn, and they were admitted to joint ministerial counsels accordingly, as they took part in sustaining ministerial responsibilities. No purpose at first existed of separating from the Church of England; but this event, in the far-gone secularity of the Establishment at that period, was inevitable. By the exclusive acts of the Clergy of that day it was, indeed, compelled; and the distinct and exterior organization of the Wesleyans took place.

It is not the purpose of this present work to discuss this question, or defend the act of separation: this has been done abundantly in other writings,—even leaving out the history of the period, which shows that the Societies, and especially the Preachers, were more *fugati* than *fugitivi*; for the administration of the Lord's Supper by their own hands was forced upon them. Our business is to show that a community, full of new Christian life, gradually made progress under the principles recognised and illustrated in the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles, in addition to those which were taught by Christ Himself. The Society of a principal town then became a church; and, as it increased, it included several minor assemblies or societies in its aggregate whole, which whole often met together in one place, as at the love-feast, or the renewal of the covenant, or the Lord's Supper; or rather, this whole was constituted by the several societies being knit or implicated together under one united pastorate, or presbytery, of several Preachers; and these societies being combined into Circuits, and these Circuits again united under the Conference, the entire ecclesiastical body was constituted.

§ IX. The Minister amongst ourselves admitting, according to Christ's ordinance, to Christian membership a youth from some Sunday-school,—if it be not rather, from some gay circle in the world,—or a man from some ignorant and degraded sinful course in low associations,—does not deem that he is receiving a person who claims an inalienable right to take a share in the government of the communion which he is entering. The applicant owes it to the ministry of God's word that he is disposed and longs to enter, and accounts admission to be a privilege; and if he find salvation, he will owe this, too, under God, to the ordinances, and those who administer them. So likewise in admitting, with common concurrence, office-bearers who are following their secular callings, to assist him, notwithstanding their position among worldly things, in the service of the church, accordingly as they may be able, or have opportunity; and never does he deem that he is transferring his peculiar liabilities to them, however their concurrence is invited and sought for. Before the candidates of either class can say anything as to a right, they have to look to the responsibility of their debt. If they have received nothing from the church which they wish to enter or labour in, they are intruders, or, at least, out of their right place: if they owe to its instrumentality their regeneration,—their religious joys and hope of heaven,—it has a right, through its scriptural constitution, in the first place, rather to command them, than a call to be commanded by them; and whatever share they may have in administration, this is a position to be won, as our Saviour shows, by fidelity, wisdom, and love, and not demanded on some baseless theory of abstract right.

The anxious seeker for membership comes to be instructed, encouraged, fortified against temptation and sin; and thus he needs the pastor's expository feeding and counsel, the watchman's jealous care, the steward's direction as to his work in the household. The candidate for office comes to make some return for past benefits, to lighten ministerial toil, and, perhaps, if faithful, to be the subject of ministerial call himself, and thus made to contribute publicly to the increase of the kingdom of God.

Once more we are cast upon our fundamental axiom,—that, in order to understand the true notion of a church, we must look at it historically; that is, in its origination and method of increase; and, proceeding from it to the scriptural expansion of the argument, we find, that our true type is a HOUSEHOLD under a Supreme Lord, and subordinate stewards, whose sole work it is to labour, occupy themselves with the general charge, and watch for their Lord's coming. The Wesleyan system is constructed on this very principle; and, although no other condition is required of those who join the Societies, than that “they have a desire to flee from the wrath to come,”—thus making provision for the lame, halt, and blind, according to the parable,—yet the result of a dependent scheme of ordinances, founded on the principle of a Divine call to the ministry, and, *pro tanto*, involving a constant succession of persons in the pastoral care, and bringing evangelical energy to the kingdom of God, is such, that no other Christian communion has a larger proportion of true believers, who, “walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, *are* edified.”

We deny not that other forms of church-order, Congregational or Episcopal, may be so administered as to secure the same end ; but our discourse is not now of administration, which greatly takes its tone from the quality and character of administrators : it is rather of a polity,—a polity originally unschemed and unsought ; and that, too, as to whether it reflects or refracts the light of the New Testament. Let the preceding considerations, as far as they extend, furnish the answer : and as to that loudest of modern clamours,—that all this is out of harmony with the spirit of the age,—it may be said truly, there is much in the Wesleyan regimen which is out of harmony with the spirit of any or every age that the world has yet seen ; but this is no more than may be said of Christianity itself, and therefore it is no argument. If a Christian church in the world be not a nuisance and intrusion, its proper relation to the world, or society at large, is not that of harmony or acquiescence, but adaptation, such as that of the hospital to the sick,—of the fold to the sheep,—or of the nursery to the plant.

And if there be no adaptation here to the most needy portion of society, where the Gospel is constantly preached to the ungodly ; where the very expressed desire to escape hell and gain heaven brings the applicant within the sphere of Christian sympathy and aid ; where the earliest gifts and energies of the converted soul may find a sphere, under superior direction, for being exercised in behalf of others ; where the most humble and lowly may have provision for actual and edifying Christian communion through the medium of their own home-thoughts and home-

illustrations, until they are raised by this very exercise to a higher state ; where the exigencies of Christ's kingdom are provided for, whoever stands or falls ; where the purity and peace of the household are secured by discipline, without saying or believing that such discipline is always and necessarily the act of suspension or exclusion from the privileges of the kingdom of heaven, putting man in the place of God ;—then it is difficult, if not impossible, to know in what adaptation consists. If a general clamour be raised against the Wesleyan polity, and the prevalent cry be, *Delenda est*, “Let it be blotted out,” a calmer and more serious review will show, that if a living Christianity be maintained in the world, something exceedingly like it must necessarily take its place.

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 93.

DR. DAVIDSON quotes the following sentiment from Grotius, in support of the notion, that all communities have a natural and inherent right to manage their own affairs, and choose their own officers : “*Ab ecclesiâ electionem rectè fieri probatur ex jure naturali. Nam naturaliter cœtui unicuique permittitur ea procurare quæ ad conservationem sunt necessaria ; in quo numero est functionum applicatio. Ita rectores multi jus habent eligendi gubernatorem navis suæ, viatores itineris ducem, populus liber regem.*”—*De Imp. sum. Potest.*, p. 258.

If no more is meant than that a Christian people have a right to give their testimony and opinion as to whom *God chooses* by His special call, then the above is allowable and harmonious with the Gospel scheme : but if this meaning be put upon it,—that Pastors (for these are the persons in question, and not Diaconal officers) are absolutely chosen and appointed by the people, and to the people are amenable for their conduct, as a pilot is to the passengers who

appoint him, or as a leader and guide to the travellers who put him in that position,—then these illustrations, and the doctrine they illustrate, are at fault. They are contradicted by the Scripture illustrations; that of the steward whom his *Lord* makes ruler over the household, and that of the shepherd whom “the *Holy Ghost* hath made overseer of the flock.” A Christian church is not an ordinary, not a self-made, community: it owes its existence, as such, to others; and they, by Divine appointment and institution, have some claim upon its deference.

CHAPTER IV

DIVINE VOCATION AND SEPARATION NECESSARY TO THE PASTORATE.

“THE same office comes from Christ to the end of the world. Though the persons that first received the commission were to continue but their own short time, yet the commission is continued to such as should in several ages succeed them, and still from Christ ; but by other appointed means, which He hath settled, and which remain stated in His church ; those that are in that office of Preachers or Ministers themselves, conveying it to others, who shall, according to fixed Gospel rules, be found qualified for it.”—JOHN HOWE, “Funeral Sermon on the Rev. Mr. Peter Vink.”

§ I. FROM the considerations already mentioned it will follow, that the theory which makes the origination of Ministers a mere conventional or church arrangement is seriously unsound and faulty. If candidly regarded, it recognises no standing provision “for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ,”—that is, no class of men united in special fellowship and counsel for this great purpose. Whatever may be the gifts and graces of any ordained person, or whatever the richness of his spiritual unction, it reduces him to the condition of a private Christian, the moment he steps beyond the sphere of the congregation which appoints him : or, if failing health should render him unable to bear the *full* charge of public duty, and another must needs take his place, then again, though he may serve his Master with the rem-

nant of his strength, he is a Minister no longer. Besides, in such a case the obligation to sustain and extend Christ's kingdom in the world lies on any one, or every one, in the Christian community,—justly so, no doubt, in the sense of requiring every one to serve Christ according to his relation and ability: yet if that community be devoid of official, primary, and motive power in the person of its spiritual stewards, then, as universal experience has taught, it will be nearly the same thing practically as lying upon no one.

It is, indeed, sometimes admitted in words, that the ministry is of Divine appointment; but such words often mean no more than this,—that God intended that His people should choose Ministers; and that, if they chose them according to His will, He would verify His promise of granting them His blessing: no more, in fact, than might be said of any good thing, favourable to our spiritual interests, which we might choose and use; for all these, in this sense, are of Divine appointment. Such a notion is far too low. The Scripture view, which I hope to make evident, is, that Christian Ministers are the subjects of a Divine vocation.*

§ II. Nothing can be argued from the import of the mere term “called.” It is a word of such general and varied application, as being equivalent to “bidden,” “summoned,” “named,” “designated,” that its precise meaning in given instances must be gathered from circumstances, such as these:—the person uttering and the person receiving the call; the end or

* See Appendix, Note (A).

purpose for which it is given, and the amount of obligation which obedience to that call involves ; and the position in which it places him who obeys, as contrasted with an indifferent person. Thus it is said of our Lord by St. Mark, that "He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would : and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." (Mark iii. 13, 14.) In harmony with this, St. Paul speaks of himself as *κλητός*, "called to be an Apostle ;" (Rom. i. 1 ;) which calling he further explains as being "separated unto the Gospel of God : " like the Twelve, he was to be away from other concerns, and with Christ. And Timothy, the representative of the "man of God," is exhorted not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen, or called, him to be a soldier. (2 Tim. ii. 4.) The verb is *στρατολογέω*, which implies rather compulsion, or authoritative appointment, than mere invitation. All men—that is, those that are afar off, and those that are nigh—are called to the Gospel feast, to the obtaining of salvation by Jesus Christ, as contrasted with the case of those who came to their church privileges through their descent from Abraham : but when elect Christians themselves are separated and appointed by a super-vocation to a function which involves something beyond mere membership in the church and the adoption of sons, then a new relation is created,—a new responsibility.

In turning to Heb. v. 4, which says, "No man taketh this honour" (*i. e.*, that of priesthood) "to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,"

we should of course deny the identity, as to office, of the Jewish Priest and the Christian Minister. No man, except the Man Christ Jesus, is called to be *Ἱερεύς*, “a Priest,” which means a mediator with God: but still, if the same expression, “called of God,” be used in reference to the designation of a Christian Minister, which is used in the authoritative designation of Aaron and his sons, why should not the conclusion be valid, that the appointing authority—that to which the called person is amenable—is the same, namely, not the congregation, but the Lord? “Calling” implied no particular *manner* of designation: that of the Priest was by family descent from Aaron; that of the Christian Minister, by means more in accordance with the dispensation we are under,—by the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; but still the essence in both cases lay in the summons by a Divine authority, and a requirement to abide entirely at the disposal of that authority.

“The Holy Ghost said,” (Acts xiii. 2,) in reference to a particular evangelizing enterprise, that which we shall have reason to infer He says with respect to the office and charge of the Ministers of the New Testament in general: “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Calling and separation are here again concomitant: and to those who say that to the Apostles and their companions, extraordinarily gifted, this position might be accorded,—that of acting under a Divine call; but that ordinary Ministers may not pretend to anything of the kind,—it might, if we had nothing more to urge, be a sufficient answer to reply, that while each Apostle whom our Lord addresses in Matthew xxiv.

45, and Luke xii. 42, is regarded as a steward over his household, (Luke, "servants,") yet the assumption that the Apostles solely are concerned is refuted by the very structure of the parable. Stewards are urged to fidelity from a consideration of the certain coming of the Lord at an unknown period of time; and therefore such stewards must needs be in existence, through constant succession of persons in their office, until that event takes place. There cannot be successive responsibility without successive individuals to bear it.

Whatever interpretation be put upon the Advent spoken of in this verse,—whether it be referred to the last judgment, or to some period antecedent, and it be less literally understood,—still it is one in which the Apostles and their companions cannot be exclusively concerned, inasmuch as a household was to be constituted, and regularly supplied with nurture, as the Lord was to be regarded as delaying His coming during a long absence, and on the occasion of that coming the faithful servant was to be elevated to higher rule and rewarded. All this was not realised at the destruction of Jerusalem,—an event which is rather called "the sign of the coming of the Son of Man," than that coming itself. The parable looks through the roll of ages, regards the successive Christian ministry as the steward,—faithful or unfaithful, as the case may be,—and the coming of the Lord, the one great occasion of solemn reckoning with those who sustain it. Remarkably enough, St. Luke informs us that Peter asked of Christ the very question which is by implication treated in this chapter: "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us," (Apostles,) "or even unto all?" (Luke xii. 41.) And our Lord, without giving a direct

answer to the question, in order that others might not be led to slight the lesson in its universal application, continued the discourse in such terms that the Apostles could not doubt they were intended, referring as He did to their having been, in comparison with others, specially taught His will, and thus having had much committed to them : besides which, when He altered the direction of His discourse, the Evangelist marks that alteration by noting, “And He said also *to the people*.” (Verse 54.) Thus the Apostles, the *first* stewards, receive a charge which is coincident with their calling ; and yet *all* stewards, to the end of time, are held to the fulfilling of that charge, showing that they are likewise partakers in the calling. It was in this way of continually furnishing gifts for the discharge of the obligations of that calling, that the Saviour’s promise was, and still is, fulfilled, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 20.) To the end of the world the apostolic ministry is to be reproduced and represented.

§ III. Passing to the teaching of the Apostles themselves, we have seen how St. Paul, in Rom. i. 1, blends the conception of the preaching office,—that is, concretely, his calling,—and that of being set apart from the world, into one idea : and if we turn to the place where he enjoins Timothy to commit the charge of the Gospel only “to FAITHFUL MEN, who should be able to teach others also,” (2 Tim. ii. 2,) we are bound in all candour to attach such a meaning to the words *πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις* as must necessarily have been conceived in the very heart and soul of such a jealous executor of his Lord’s last

will and testament. Christ had counted him faithful, putting him in the ministry, (1 Tim. i. 12,) in calling him : and now this ministry is to be committed to others who are faithful, that is, trustworthy, to fulfil the ends for which the Gospel commission is given, and for which the Apostle demanded the offering up of life and of all things. Paul must surely be regarded as a fair interpreter of his own *usus loquendi*; which, indeed, is no less Christ's than his.

The force of those expressions used by the same Apostle in 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv. 11,—places already quoted,—is to the same point. In the first of these, not only Apostles and Prophets, (compare Matt. xx. 23,) but the standing Teachers, are set in the church by GOD ; in the other, not only Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, but Pastors and Teachers, are given by CHRIST. This language is peculiar : not only are the latter class placed in the same position, as to Divine appointment, with the first extraordinarily gifted of the Ministers of Christ, but no such expressions are applied to any other office-bearers. Here a strong and clear line is drawn. Deacons, for instance, are never said to be set in the church by God, or given by Christ : no prayer was ever uttered in respect of them to the effect,—“ Show, O Lord, which of these men Thou hast chosen.” Then, again, in Acts xx. 28, the same Apostle declares of the Ephesian Elders, that over the flock of Christ, the church of God, the HOLY GHOST had made them overseers : and Archippus is warned to fulfil the ministry which he has received IN THE LORD. (Col. iv. 17.) Nor are all the harmonious links of this truth connected yet ; for, if the evangelical Prophet Isaiah may be regarded as

casting any light upon the evangelical system which it was his especial work to announce and foretell, we must take the testimony of what he heard and saw in the temple, when he had a vision of the Lord of hosts. (Isai. vi. 1-12.) The voice that cried said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The Prophet asserts this of the Father; (verse 3;) St. John understands it equally of the Son; (John xii. 41;) and St. Paul as truly refers it to the Holy Ghost. (Acts xxviii. 25.) Here in its threefold unity we understand the fulness of that authority, calling to evangelical labour, without which no man may lawfully go. So that the adorable Trinity in council are pledged to bestow the gifts which Christ died and rose to heaven to obtain; and when Isaiah, newly pardoned and purged by fire, said, "Here am I; send me," we must take it as the answer which is always made in the depths of the soul of him who listens with reverence and fear to the momentous question proposed by the indwelling Spirit.

But, although "the gifts and calling of God" are to be regarded as involving each other and inseparable, yet that calling is not to be restrained so as to connect itself only with those peculiar gifts which were enjoyed in the apostolical age. The expanse of view opened out by the Prophet's vision, is too vast to be concentrated upon half a century,—it is a vision of ages; and, to interpret it in accordance with the Gospel commission, we must understand the voice as speaking from the throne continually, and faithful men as continually replying, "Here am I, send me." If you ask, with the Prophet, "Lord, how long?" the answer is, "Until the cities be wasted without

inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate ;” (Isai. vi. 11 ;) in one word, as long as there is a remnant of human nature left to be affected by Divine grace. It is not sufficient to say, “ True, there is something in this temple-scene which resembles ministerial calling, but that is all ;” for the resemblance in the case is of Divine and positive arrangement. The manifestation is one of Christ’s glory, and involves the glory of His administration : it shadows forth in its august imagery the subject contained in Isaiah’s book of prophecy ; namely, first, the Mediator’s high and inscrutable rule, in the vision of the throne ; next, the allegiance and service of unfallen creatures, who are expecting His final triumph and victory, in the vision of the seraphim ; then the pardon and sanctification of fallen human nature, in the application of hallowed fire to the Prophet ; and, last, the declared purpose of mercy with regard to the whole world, in the question, “ Who will go for us ?” Now the Gospel brings out all these subjects from under that veil where prophecy necessarily at first places them, into that clear light in which they are now found. Why, then, is the ministerial call to be an exempt circumstance ? Why are all the other parts of the vision to have their fulfilment in advancing Gospel ages, and this single circumstance of calling an evangelical messenger, to be restrained to the solitary appointment of the Prophet, or, at most, of the Apostolate ? Surely the most enlarged and consistent interpretation of the most enlarged vision of the Holy One in ancient days, justified as it is by subsequent history, is the nearest approach to the truth.

When Neander, in his "Church History," reasons from the appointment of one High Priest in heaven, and the abolition of the Jewish typical system, to the conclusion, that a priestly caste in the ministry ceased, and that all Christian believers have, in a mystic sense, become priests unto God, having direct access to Him to offer up the sacrifices of prayer and praise; nothing can be more in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament. But if, under the ambiguous veil of these words, "a priestly caste," he throws discredit upon the notion of a class of men separated to teach and guide the flock of Christ, he impinges directly upon the truths we have just considered,—truths which no criticism can honestly soften or enervate. It is true, his discourse is directed chiefly against the idea of monarchy in the church; and, so far as this is concerned, we should yield our acquiescence; but when he seems to draw a general inference against the notion of a *pastoral* order, simply from the existence of varied *χαρίσματα* in the primitive church, the candid reader either mistakes his meaning, or must deny the inference. If men will be in love with a word, they ought to remember that true Christians are "a caste," as distinguished from the unregenerate. To abolish distinctions of this order altogether, is to abolish the Bible.

The variety of gifts mentioned by St. Paul in Rom. xii. 6–8, were developed by that grace of the Holy Spirit which wrought, more or less, at the time that Epistle was written, in all the community. This church seems to have grown up so far with very little of the personal teaching of the Apostles; and, in its early and unformed state, the want of more orderly

and stated ministerial instruction—as was likewise the case at Corinth—was supplied, to a great extent, by these special bequests to individuals. While, however, this was one feature in an age of miracles, and in harmony with their design,—specially so in a city which was the centre of cultivated and palmy Heathenism,—there are not wanting indications, even in this Epistle, that there were some persons in the church of Rome who chiefly sustained the charge and calling of administering the doctrine and discipline of Christ; as the salutation sent by Paul to some who were once, and somewhere, his fellow-prisoners, of note among the Apostles, and were in Christ before him, whose influence among those early believers was great; and the fact that the obedience of that people was “come abroad unto all men,”—all look in this direction. Peace they might have had, doubtless, for a while, and mutual confidence and love, without any subordination to shepherds or stewards; but hardly could they have shown obedience, and that so widely known, unless some had been there to whom it was rendered as a duty.

If, however, there were no weight in these considerations, what would seem worthier of the wisdom and goodness of God, than that, in an infant church, in the very heart of the world’s influence, the gifts of the Holy Ghost should at first be so variously given, and so variously called into exercise; that a kind of normal institute should be exhibited, in which men might watch the methods of Divine training; and that Apostles and Elders, seeing individuals grow up under the special nurture of the Spirit, might here-

after be able practically to try the spirits, and recognise those who were called of God to the work of the ministry, as also to choose with wisdom those who were fitted for the subordinate offices of the Christian household? Surrounded as they were by Heathenism and Judaism, everything in Christianity was new, and required the prompting and aid of the Spirit. No man, indeed, could say that Jesus was the Lord, considering the responsibilities and perils of such a confession, but by the Holy Ghost; (1 Cor. xii. 3;) any more than he could believingly adopt the confession itself: and therefore here it seems plainly to be intimated, that church-polity should allow free scope for the development of all sacred gifts, in a true liberty of prophesying or exhortation, and that, in this sphere of Christian liberty, with its manifest fruits, we can alone find those upon whom the Lord has evidently laid His hand, with reference to their entire consecration of time and talents to His service and that of His people.

§ IV This grace of ministerial vocation, like most other spiritual graces, has its inward and its outward aspect. The call, so far as it is inward, must, from the very nature of things, be at first a secret with him who is its subject,—a part, indeed, of that “secret of the Lord” which is “with them that fear Him, and to whom He will show His covenant.” (Psalm xxv. 14.) While the Scripture declares the fact, it satisfies no external curiosity as to the manner: the manner, indeed, of spiritual operations is altogether unknown, as are all the ways in which the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. And certainly Wesleyans, and all other Christians who acknowledge, with Bishop

Pearson, that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to create within our hearts a sense of the paternal love of God, cannot decry this special motion of the Spirit on the ground that it is fanatical. It is no more fanatical than the idea of testimony to our adoption : it is, to all such, a *possibility*.

If men are conscious of an inward moving which bears them onward against difficulties in fulfilling the purposes, and gaining the objects, of a literary, political, commercial, or professional career,—a moving, under the influence of which the strong will, or powerful soul, throws off everything which impedes its progress and action in pursuits which are congenial to human nature,—the mysterious origin of the impulse is never allowed to weigh against its reality. Much more, then, may a person deem himself called of God, when, in addition to the usual desires and aspirations which flow from spiritual life, he is the subject of a continuous and sacred constraint to direct all his thought and energy to the great object of saving souls from death, and building up the church of God ; for all this is in direct harmony with the mind of God. The other kind of moving, indeed, proceeds from the God of creation and providence, and is a part of His arrangement for the ordering and compacting of human society : and so men have come to say, in ordinary language, that the main and absorbing work of any one, as that of physician, soldier, or artificer, is his “calling.” Much more must an impulse which leads the soul away from all earthly delight, and moves toward objects which Christ’s own mind alone, as being, in a singular sense, concerned for human salvation, perfectly appreciates, be

regarded, not as a taste, a bias, a tendency; but as an inward moving of the God of grace,—a “CALL;” and the work to which it leads, a “CALLING.” It is an impulse to enter alike into the sorrows and joys of the adorable Master, in order to accomplish His work. Here, certainly, none can come to that Master with such a purpose in view, except the Father draw him; (John vi. 44;) the very point of light in which St. Paul seems to view the matter in Col. i. 23, 24: “I Paul am made a Minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the church;” in which words of the Apostle, George Herbert thinks, and tersely says, “is contained the complete definition of a Minister.”*

Nothing in all this can be fairly taken to throw discredit upon the notion of training men in literary and theological culture for the sacred office. Let it be granted that there is good evidence of the vocation before the training commences; and then that exercise, if rightly conducted, will only make the evidence more plain. The work of God by the Holy Ghost, upon the mind of a yet rude and unfurnished youth, whom He intends for the ministry, is an operation infinitely more delicate, and recondite, and distinctive, and decided, than any which science or society can bring to bear; and therefore, the work of the theological school is not to produce the original impress of ministerial designation, but to develop, beautify, and make it clearer. We are told that our fairest cultivated plants and flowers have, in their wild and

* “Country Parson,” chap. i. Edition of 1838.

natural state, all those delicate pencillings which mark their distinctive *genera* and *species*, in as great perfection as ever afterwards; the scientific care and the richer soil only bring out the Almighty's lines and letters into more impressive aspect and relationship. And this analogy is most surely found to exist among those products of the new creation which we are now considering.

Outwardly, the existence of "this grace given" is soon revealed: the arrangements of Divine Providence as to the secular position of an individual, his ever-recurring abstraction of mind from secular affairs, the rapid growth of his piety, following upon a decided and clear conversion, the unction and authority of his hortatory and intercessory exercises, his meditative delight in the Divine word, and his pitying interest in perishing men; still more, a noble and evangelizing enthusiasm,—an ardent desire to spread the triumphs of the Cross throughout the whole world;—all these form a body of evidence which cannot be contravened. Bishop Pearson expresses it thus: "*Quatenus est à Deo est interna, quatenus est per homines est externa.*"*

Let us not be supposed to plead for a species of prophetic impulse, like that professed and contended for by the ancient Montanists, which repelled intelligent investigation, and all attestation from without. The Spirit's work in the present instance is a calmer and, to the individual subject himself, more edifying operation; acting upon the understanding, and gently drawing the affections and will to their appropriate

* Minor Theological Works, vol. i., p. 291.

object. As Samuel did not at first understand who it was that spoke to him when he was orally called, and as St. Paul was at first disposed to argue against his own vocation, so the chosen servant of the Lord has often a trembling apprehension that he is not right in his interpretation of what passes within; and a mere doubt on this subject produces a feeling little short of terror. But the hallowed constraint cleaves to him, in spite of his fears and temptations; and though a part of his moral trial lies in the manner in which he will deal with this sacred motion, yet the Lord, sooner or later, seals His gracious commission by granting him assurance and fruit.

And if we are asked, "Are none to be deemed Ministers of Christ and true Pastors but those who are called according to this notion of vocation?" the answer is, To suppose that a succession of such should fail, is to suppose that the kingdom of God should come to nought, and that God's own word should fail: that they should be raised up perpetually, is a condition and concomitant of the kingdom itself. If they should fail in a certain place, then the Gospel candlestick is removed out of that place: but then they appear elsewhere, kindling another and more abiding light. History corroborates Scripture. Other kinds of ordained men may be *of* the church, and of the church *accepted*; but they are ciphers in relation to the kingdom; though these are matters which only God Himself may strictly scan. Rome escapes all theoretical difficulty by resting upon her bold and presumptuously assumed foundation,—namely, that her incorporation *is* the kingdom; and therefore, through her sacrament of Order, professes to give the Holy

Ghost. The candidate in the Pontifical is never asked if he be inwardly moved by the Spirit: the whole office of the Spirit is usurped and materialised; and call, sanction, seal, unction, are all (alas! can men who read God's word ever be brought to think so?) imparted! In the cool frenzy of the infatuation by which man sits in the temple of God, and in its necessary mistake, these influences are arrested when they flow, and invented where they are not found. Bad spirits even demur to this kind of mockery and conjuration, saying to every uncalled man, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know: but who art thou?"

§ V Ministers, thus directed to the sacred office by peculiar Divine interference, are, by the same arrangement, separated from secular cares and pursuits. Theirs is not a profession which is taken up, followed, and laid down, simply according to the will of the professor, and which appeals for deference to nothing higher than the knowledge that he may have gained in his peculiar department: this is evident from the scriptures we are examining. It is a peculiar and extra-secular work; not so much a single pulse or movement in the functions of civil society, as a selected ordinance for affecting from above the very life and character of society. Thus He who gave Apostles, so gave them that they "forsook their nets," (Mark i. 18,) "forsook all, and followed Him." (Luke v. 11.) That this was to be a standing condition of the ministry of the New Testament, is manifest from the description, before quoted, which the Apostle Paul gives of himself, long after Christ had been received up into heaven: "Paul, a SERVANT of Jesus Christ, CALLED to be an Apostle, SEPARATED unto the Gospel

of God." (Rom. i. 1.) Here the three conditions we have previously considered are specifically mentioned : separation is not an accident, but a proper concomitant of the idea of calling in its present acceptation. An Apostle, or any other servant of His who engages in evangelical work, is liable to be sent to any spot on earth, in order that all nations may be brought to the knowledge of the truth. He is not chosen by a certain people merely to minister to their spiritual wants, and in a way to suit their spiritual tastes ; he is chosen by the Lord to carry on a militant struggle, taking care, at the same time, to guard and garrison the portions that are won from the enemy. This is the almost uniform figurative representation of Holy Scripture ; and, therefore, he is required to go, not so much to where he is sent for, as to where he is needed.

Accordingly, he must be freed from the care of procuring the means of temporal subsistence. Like Paul, he must be ready, as far as possible, to travel or to sail. This separation, as the normal condition of the ruling and teaching office, is further seen by the manner in which the occasional labouring of the Apostles in a secular function or trade is spoken of. We read, in the Acts of the Apostles, (xviii. 3,) that St. Paul, while he was in Corinth, abode in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, and wrought at their occupation, which was that of tent-makers ; and, from expressions in the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8,) it would appear that he did the same, or something similar, in Macedonia.

These are the facts : and how does he treat them in his epistolary communications ? The whole of the ninth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which is

too long to quote here, is occupied in asserting and enforcing the obligation which lies on the churches to keep their Pastors free from the cares of providing a temporal support. He declares it to be of the Lord's ordination. (Verse 14.) He claims the same right for the Christian Minister, as was both claimed for and conceded to the Jewish Minister: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (Verses 13, 14.) How can this reasoning be understood, except on the ground that the servants of the temple and the servants of the church were equally called of God; the one by a strict hereditary selection, the other by the free motion of the Holy Ghost; the one to the priesthood, the other to the spiritual shepherd's function; and that, as the call was in both cases equally authoritative, so the separation was as necessarily required? It is true, the Apostle makes it a matter of honest glorying, (verse 15,) that, at Corinth, he had waved his right, and had supported himself, rather than become chargeable to the church; and for this he had sufficient reason; for the Corinthians, who were of a schismatic spirit, were wont, in several parties, to attach themselves to individual teachers, each man saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," &c.; (1 Cor. i. 12;) and they would appear to do this with the more reason, if they directed any contributions to the preferred and selected teacher. St. Paul, who was concerned that the supreme honour which was due to his Divine Master should not be obscured by deference to any

other name, declined to receive church-offerings at this risk. He rejoiced that he had strengthened no party by receiving anything at their hands, for the very same reason that he thanked God he had baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius. (1 Cor. i. 14, 15.) But, if separation to the work of Christ and "living of the Gospel" were not his right and proper position, on what ground could he glory at all? What had he sacrificed or given up? The same Apostle did not refrain from pleading hard with these Corinthians on behalf of the Christian poor at Jerusalem; for the Achaïans were not themselves generally poor, but possessed of abundance. The temporary labouring of the Apostle with his own hands rather affected the integrity of the Corinthian church than that of the separated apostolate or pastorate; for when, after all his exertions, he still, during his stay at Corinth, had been in necessity, and had received gifts from the noble-minded Macedonians for the supply of his need, (2 Cor. xi. 9,) he asks, "What is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong." (xii. 13.) Other churches were superior, in that they sustained their spiritual fathers in their proper position; and St. Paul sorrowfully acquiesced in the degradation of the Corinthians, and asked their forgiveness for so doing. In the case of the Thessalonians, too, when the Apostle wrought with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to them, he is equally careful to guard what "the Lord hath ordained;" saying, "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded

you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii. 9, 10.) It would appear, too, that some time at Ephesus, (Acts xx. 34,) the Apostle's hands ministered unto his necessities; but this would doubtless be during the first struggle of persecution, and while occupying the school of one Tyrannus: (chap. xix. 9 :) and here the same reason is assigned to the Ephesians for his conduct at this period, as was assigned to the Thessalonians; for he had to instruct those who had been enervated and slothful Pagan Asiatics in the Christian duty of diligence in fulfilling their common tasks of life. "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Verse 35.) Thus every way, and in view of the subject in all its particulars, the exception furnished by these incidents abundantly confirms and strengthens the law of the case. When occasion calls for it, and especially on foreign stations, even now our own Ministers and Missionaries do not hesitate to dig and plant, or to handle the implements of the artificer and build: still it is not to introduce a digging, planting, building ministry, but to show to their reclaimed and converted people what labours ought by them to be performed, and by them *only*.

§ VI. The permanence of the law is also confirmed by the precepts which the Apostles give to those who now accompany, and will hereafter succeed, them. To Timothy he saith, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;" (1 Tim. iv. 15;) and to the same Evangelist, after directing him to provide for the wants of the churches, by committing his ministry to

faithful men, and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, he further, in a text which we must needs repeat, lays down this as a general principle, affecting all such successors : “ No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please Him who hath CHOSEN him to be a soldier ; ” (2 Tim. ii. 4 ;) in which place, as we have seen, there is hardly a conceivable distinction between “ chosen ” and “ called. ” Again : the idea of a military conflict is still kept up, as where the Apostle himself says, “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course ; ” (chap. iv. 7 ;) and the exhortation, in other words, runs thus : “ Occupy not yourselves with buying, selling, and getting gain : you are in a disputed field ; your Sovereign and Leader requires your undivided time, absorbed attention, and unremitting vigilance : the enemy is nigh, his darkening hosts are gathering round, and your one business is to get the victory ; you have neither time nor care for anything else : fight till the field is won ; for to die in the battle is so far an earnest of the triumph. ” As David, the anointed of the Lord, was a warrior-shepherd, assailing the lion and the bear when they invaded his fold, or prowled around it, so the spiritual guides of the New-Testament flock are no less aggressive than pastoral. An enemy has to be conquered, an enslaved world has to be won.

So, also, we find in the New Testament no mention made of Elders who followed a worldly calling. Aquila, the tent-maker, who was successively at Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus,—though he, with his wife, Priscilla, taught the way of God more perfectly to the eloquent Apollos,—does not appear to have been an Elder, but

a Christian Jew, who attached himself to the Hellenist synagogues, and, as opportunity served, with Christian freedom bore witness for Christ. As far as the position of Elders, in relation to the rest of believers, is referred to at all in Scripture, they are clearly seen as separated, receiving from the church the supply of their personal necessities; yea, in some instances, a portion which is described as "double honour." (1 Tim. v. 17.)

It is not denied that there *might be* Elders in the primitive age whose circumstances were such as to enable them to decline any contributions from their flocks, or such as to qualify them for ministering to a people who had not power to contribute. Such there have been in every age: but here it is our concern to see what is the rule or law of the case; and, that law being ascertained, there is, on the other hand, no plain case of exception on the face of the sacred history. The warning of Peter that Elders should not take the oversight of the flock for the sake of gain, is in full evidence that those Elders ordinarily were separated and maintained to do one work.

§ VII. It is clear, then, that the phrase "called of God," as applied to those who are summoned to act under the Gospel commission, and who yield to the summons, cannot with propriety be applied to private and intelligent Christians, who occasionally, or as they may have opportunity, without neglecting their worldly calling, exercise the gifts of teaching and exhortation. It can only be used, in reference to them, in a looser and lower sense. All men are required from a sense of obligation to serve Christ with all the endowments that they possess; and so

far this requirement may be deemed metaphorically a call; and it will apply not only to Local Preachers and Class-Leaders, but to various other influential and active Christians, in respect of the use of their talents. But the question throughout this chapter is of a summons received from God and manifest to men, of such a nature, and to such a work, that the answer to it shall be the occupation of the whole man, and of the whole life: and that the affirmative view of such a vocation can alone blend the several lights of Scripture into one consistent and lucid ray, has, I hope, been made sufficiently apparent above. This alone is St. Paul's view of *κλητὸς*.

In times of schismatic agitation in a church, secular men often storm against the idea of a ministerial class intrenching themselves under an authority which they, the laity, do not appeal to, and on the ground of a peculiar call which they do not profess; and jealous office-bearers and lay teachers, in such circumstances, refuse to acknowledge that their Minister's vocation is anything higher than their own common sense of duty. But all this only lasts while the period of blinding passion lasts: vital Christianity cannot be carried on in harmony with such views: those who lay low the ministerial calling, do not thereby elevate their own. They would keep the river, but take away the rain-cloud and the fountain which feed it. Clouds there may be without water, as described by St. Jude, and carried with the wind; but they are the church's punishment, and not its necessary adjunct. The Lord, sooner or later, vindicates His own doctrine. Churches may exist as mere communities for a number of years; but they cannot fulfil church-purposes for any length

of time, or to any available extent, unless they have a head in the ministry so fraught with treasures of wisdom, zeal, and love beyond other men, that life through the medium of this head is diffused through the body; a secondary process to that by which all are united to Christ, the only Supreme Head.

§ VIII. Acting upon the views expounded here, the Wesleyan Conference, while it has encouraged the exercise, under proper guards, of spiritual gifts amongst the laity, in a manner analogous to that referred to in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, particularly in making the most useful and spiritually-minded to be Leaders of Classes and Local Preachers,—thereby opening out a sphere of active and subordinate duty in which it may be shown who are indeed the Lord's chosen servants, candidates for the ministry invariably being taken from the latter class; it has nevertheless made a manifest call of God, in the case of the candidate, a point of paramount and indispensable necessity. The whole pastoral system is based on this: it is a condition *sine quâ non*. The highest human judgment, of course, may fail to test a human being as to this matter; but nothing less than the highest, that is, the most severe, jealous, and accurate, judgment that can be obtained is deemed sufficient; and therefore the examinations * prelimi-

* "Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation? Have they gifts as well as grace for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them an acceptable way of speaking? Do they speak justly, readily, and clearly? Have they had any fruit of their labour? Have any been

nary to ordination are adapted to this estimate of the momentous character of the point to be ascertained. If the questions be truly answered, they cannot fail to repel the mere conventional or literary aspirant, or to bring out the anointed servant of the Lord Jesus. If they be falsely answered,—a contingency to which we are less liable in proportion to the absence of motives for deception, and accordingly as the matter in test is beyond all things else awful,—we are only in the common condition of mortality,—that of occasionally being deceived by unprincipled hypocrites, who, the more surely they are unprincipled, are the sooner unmasked.

§ IX. Although it is not a law of interpretation, yet it is consistent with the spirit of interpretation, to regard many of our Lord's miracles and personal works as having a mystic aspect, reflecting the acts and methods of His spiritual administration. To this correspondence between the seen and the unseen, He seems Himself to refer, when, in reference to washing Peter's feet, He said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;" (John xiii. 7;) thereby alluding to some more hidden act of His condescending love to His disciple, shadowed forth in that ceremony, which the Spirit was afterwards to make plain

truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching? As long as the above marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."—"Large Minutes," 1797.

Again: "Have you a lively faith in Christ? Do you enjoy a clear manifestation of the love of God to your soul? Have you constant power over all sin? Do you expect to be perfected in love in this life? Do you really desire and earnestly seek it? Are you resolved to devote yourself to God and His work?" &c., &c.—*Ibid.*

unto him. Christ's rescue of this same Apostle Peter, when he was sinking in the Sea of Galilee, is an instance of this class. The previous miracle of feeding the five thousand in the desert of Bethsaida would prepare the Apostles, the instruments of the distribution, together with after-teaching, for dispensing the bread of life to famishing multitudes. The absolute constraint by which our Lord sent them away in a ship to the other side, though night was drawing on, (Matt. xiv. 22,) would impress them with a sense of His paramount authority to send them even into conditions of danger,—that is, to utter HIS CALL. The dark and stormy sea, with the contrary wind, was as fitting a scene as nature could furnish of the sphere of evangelical and pastoral toil carried on against the opposing wills and passions of mankind : and there was Peter, of all the Apostles more particularly the ministerial representative, cheered and reassured by the presence of his Master, whom he saw walking on the waves. Longing to join his Master, yet appalled at the scene before him, and knowing his inadequacy to contend with the warring elements, and trust himself to the yielding surface, he obtained from that Master an authorising permission to do so. He heard, obeyed, trusted ; and casting himself into the sea, he, too, walked upon the waters, sufficiently to show what by faith, and acting under a Divine permission, he might do, in a given enterprise ; and yet at the same time so as to learn the difference between such an enterprise, undertaken by individual will, and the course of a sacred calling. They were all safe while they abode in the vessel in which Christ placed them ; and the impetuous Apostle was

only in danger when he departed from it, though with a laudable design. Then he could only be saved from the consequences of transient fear and unbelief by the Saviour's real presence, and the ready rescue of His hand.

If it be said that these are pious imaginings, let the objector remember that the facts and doctrines which suggest them are so many, and harmonious, and implicated, that it would be almost as rational to deny the existence of design in nature on which to found an argument for the being of God the Creator, as it would be to deny a similar design in revelation, and especially in this department of it, pointing to the being, character, and office of GOD OUR REDEEMER, and the great Head of His church.

Under the influence of carnal and jealous tempers, men judge of each other by a human standard, comparing themselves among themselves; saying of their fellows, "These men are very little better or wiser than we; and therefore their position and influence ought to be no ways different." St. Paul rebukes this mode of estimation, which might be acted on till all sight of a divinely-authenticated standard was lost, and dull level prevailed all over the household. (2 Cor. x. 14.) He shows that to stretch beyond the sphere of a given congregation is not to stretch beyond the measure of the apostolical ministry; that there is a largeness of heart in it which God alone can give; and a secret respecting it which man may acknowledge, but God alone can judge.

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 117.

BELGIC CONFESSION.

“FOR every one must wait until he be called of God Himself, that he may have a certain testimony of his vocation, and may know that it is from the Lord.”—Art. 1.

CONFESSION OF SUEVELAND.

“HENCE it is manifest that the true and lawful Ministers of the church, such as be Bishops, Elders, (anointed and consecrated,) can do nothing but in respect of this,—that they are sent of God.”—“Harmony of Confessions,” P. HALL, 1842, p. 280.

In harmony with the above is the question introduced into King Edward's first Prayer-Book of the Church of England, proposed by the Bishop to the candidate for Deacon's orders; that Church making the diaconate to be an order in the pastoral ministry: “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministry?”

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN MINISTERS : THEIR NAMES AND IDENTITY OF ORDER.

“AND round about the throne.....four and twenty Elders.”
(Rev. iv. 4.)

§ I. THE first designation given in the New Testament to the abiding order is, as we have seen, that of “Pastors and Teachers;” the first term being the full title of the office, the second a description of its principal function. The term “Pastor,” or “Shepherd,” would naturally awaken the remembrance of the relation in which all who had the charge of souls stood to Christ, the Chief or Good Shepherd; (John x. ;) a relation, too, indicated by the words of Christ to Peter, “Feed My sheep,” and, “Feed My lambs.”*

The use of it, likewise, by the Apostles, in all its fulness of meaning, is strengthened by the import given to it in the Old Testament; where a Shepherd of men was regarded as one whose charge it was to lead, guide, and rule them; making the main moral instrument of his rule to be a far-seeing wisdom. Thus the Prophet exclaims against the wicked ecclesiastico-

* The twofold title, “Pastors and Teachers,” as applied to one class of Ministers, (Eph. iv. 11,) stands in analogy to the twofold manner in which our Lord charged the Apostle in John xxi. 16, 17; first saying, Ποίμαινε, “Shepherd My sheep;” then, Βόσκε, “Feed,” or, “Teach them.”

political rulers of his day, "Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard;" (Jer. xii. 10;) "Woe to the Pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep:" (Jer. xxiii. 1 :) and respecting himself, on being appointed to a position of influence in evil times, he says, "I have not hastened from being a Pastor to follow Thee," O Lord, "Thou knowest." (Jer. xvii. 16.) But, looking forward to Gospel times, he declares in these words the promise of the Lord to the spiritual Israel: "I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. iii. 15.) The idea of ruling was inseparable from that of feeding; so true was the image to its antitype. So the matter was understood by the learned Jew Philo, who, although he might invest his subject with some degree of Platonic dreaminess, gave abundant evidence that he drew his conceptions from the fountains of Scripture thought: for he regarded the Shepherd's office as appertaining not only to Kings and sages, and clarified minds, but to God, the Governor of all; and quoted the words of the Psalmist David in support of this view: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want:" (Psalm xxiii. 1 :) and then, describing the vast sweep and extent of this pastoral administration, he refers its executive embodiment to the Divine Logos, the First-begotten Son.*

The same writer refers to a similar twofold meaning of the title or simile, as used by the Gentile writers, which no one who is acquainted with history can have failed to observe; for we have the Shepherd-Kings,

* *De Agriculturâ, ad verba, Οὕτω μὲν τοι τὸ ποιμαίνειν, κ. τ. λ.*

in ancient annals, of every place where a patriarchal rule was once known.* This usage, too, in the New Testament is unquestioned; as in Matt. ii. 6.

Besides this, it has been shown at great length by Lightfoot, Vitringa, and Grotius, that the Chaldee title of *Parnasim*, or "Pastors," was given to an order of persons among the ancient Jews; and although the former assigns to them a sort of custody over eleemosynary affairs, yet the places quoted from Jewish writers by Vitringa which clearly refer to a governing function are so many, that no reasonable doubt can remain whether they were not analogous to those eminent persons who had been raised up by Divine Providence in days previous to the captivity, to feed and rule His elect nation. The difference between Lightfoot and Vitringa, as we stated in a note on Chapter II., is well reconciled, by concluding that the eleemosynary office was often involved in the higher,—a conclusion which is strengthened by the fact, that when the Apostles first found themselves in the pastoral position, even they had the charge of alms for the poor, until they were relieved of this burden by the appointment of Deacons. The Jewish commentators, too, used the title *Parnas*, both nominally and verbally, in paraphrasing those places of Old-Testament Scripture, where the Shepherds of God's people were spoken of in the usual pure Hebrew terms: and the title has been thought to

* "*De Cyro sigillatim apud Maximum Tyrium: 'Cyrus regebat Persas ut Pastor pecora, servans gregem et nutriens.' Ipsum Cyrum officium Regis muneri Pastoris contulisse, author est Xenophon, Cyrop., lib. viii., cap. 12,' &c.—Vide LAMPE, Com. in Joan. cap. x. ii.* So the well-known epithet in Homer, Ἀγαμέμνονα ποιμένα λαῶν.

enter into the etymology of those Syriac names which were given to the great eastern rulers and commanders ; such as *Pharnobarus*, *Pharnaspes*, *Pharnarathres*, *Holophernes*, and the like.*

That the ancient Parnasim had civil or judicial functions to perform, as well as religious, need not be doubted ; as the theocracy, which always blended the two, left its impress upon the Jewish institutions, even until the nation was subverted by the Romans ; and, indeed, as Vitringa elsewhere shows, the *modern* synagogues had a council of lay Parnasim, whose functions were almost entirely secular, having respect

* “ *Imò certum illud et extra dubium positum est, quòd vocabulum Parnas, præter primam et ordinariam, quam habet, significationem pascendi, communissimè apud Judæos notet Ducem, Præfectum, Gubernatorem, et Rectorem quemcunque. Philippus Aquinas: ‘PARNAS ejusmodi homo est, qui ducit et pascit homines, et cui quoddam est in illos imperium, cujusque voci obediunt,’ &c.....[In Taanith, fol. ix.] Duos Pastores (Parnasim) bonos Israël surrexisse, Mosen et Davidem, qui sciverunt orare pro ipsis, &c.....Antiquus hujus vocis apud Syros veteres usus est, ut, observante Bocharto, (in Hieroz., cap. xliv., p. 443,) plurima nomina magnatum in oriente inde composita sint. ‘In Chaldæd,’ inquit ille alibi, ‘paraphrasi est Parnas, seu Pharnas, quod et Rectorem seu Gubernatorem sonat.’ Itaque magnatum in oriente nomina, ut Pharnobarus, Pharnaspes, Pharnarathres, Orophernes, et in libro Judith Olophernes, ex Suidæ sententiâ, Cambysis ἀρχιστράτηγος, manifesta habent hujus vocis vestigia.*”—VITRINGA, *De Vet. Synag.*, pp. 631, 632, 636.

“ *Concludam hanc dissertationem notatu dignissimis verbis meæ pariter opinioni faventibus, quæ legere est in Synopsi libri Sohar in Latinam linguam conversâ, in Tomo Secundo Kabbalæ Denudatæ: ‘Rectores Israëlitarum cùm justi sunt, merentur accipere vitam æternam, et comparantur variis rebus, e. g., PASTORIBUS OVIVM, et similibus.’ Doctissimus author (Lightfoot) versionis vult ut comparemus verba Christi ad Petrum, et Pauli ad Ephesinos Presbyteros: quod et ipsum nostræ consonum est sententiæ.*”—Idem, p. 640.

chiefly to the care of the utensils of the synagogue, and the collection of rates, and the like, beyond its walls, while all the spiritual rule of the people devolved on the Ruler or Chief Rabbi. But as, in the Christian Church, the civil power—namely, that of compulsory rule—was now to disappear, therefore magisterial lordship must not be exercised: so that, while the name of Pastor is taken from the general usage of the Old Testament and all ancient usage, as describing those who feed and govern, the special practice of the ancient theocracy and synagogue is a standing testimony to the full import of the title; under which fulness of import, except so far as civil rule is concerned, it historically transfers the office to the evangelical institutions. And, upon the whole, we may confidently conclude, that the Apostles would not have applied an official title of Christ to the abiding order of Ministers in His church, unless they meant to teach that His function should be imitated by them; just as, in their ordinary walk as Christians, His own perfect human righteousness is held as the example of their own redeemed humanity,—the analogy being in both cases the same.

§ II. The next name given to Christian Ministers is that of *πρεσβύτερος*, or "Elder,"—a term which the Hebrews in all ages have applied to their ecclesiastical, teaching, and religious functionaries, including the ancient Parnasim as well as all others; and which was so manifestly the name of the persons composing the council of the synagogue, that any attempt at the proof of this point is needless. We can scarcely pass over a page of the historical portions of the New Testament, but we come upon this

fact; and we find the name used with like latitude in the Christian church, and as including Apostles, with their coadjutors and successors. (1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Pet. v. 1-7.) The Jewish Elders are spoken of by St. Luke, not as separate and isolated individuals, but as τὸ πρεσβυτέριον τοῦ λαοῦ, "the presbytery of the people,"—a rectoral and teaching body; (Luke xxii. 66;) and πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, "the whole estate of the Elders:" (Acts xxii. 5;) and they were made members of this body by a special ceremony and ritual. The Talmudists ever regarded the office as of Divine designation, not only from the history of the appointment of the seventy Elders under Moses; but they expounded with that view, to the youth of the nation, the precept of the law of Moses in Lev. xix. 32: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God:" so that the appellation indicated the gravity and wisdom through mature age of those who were first appointed to the office. This is the idea which Cyprian and others occasionally kept up by the use of the phrase "*majores natu.*"

§ III. The other principal title is ἐπίσκοπος, "Bishop," which Neander, whom Dr. Davidson follows, thinks is derived from Greek usage, and was the chief title of a chief Magistrate in the Achaian communities. But although it may be allowed that this title was actually borne by certain superior civil officers in the Greek cities, and might be imposed upon them very naturally from the plain and easy etymological import of the word; it is not likely that the Apostles would borrow it from them, when there was another suggestive authority so much nearer at hand,

and immensely more in accordance with their mental and spiritual sympathies. The Septuagint Greek version of the Old-Testament Scriptures, which they usually quoted in their public and expository addresses, makes use of the word *ἐπίσκοπος*, and its cognate forms, in several places where a person having a sacred charge is intended. Thus Psalm cix. 8, quoted by Peter in reference to Judas, whose vacant place in the apostleship had to be filled up: "Let another take" *τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν*, "his Bishop's office." In Numbers iv. 16: "And Eleazar the son of Aaron was" *ἐπίσκοπος*, "Bishop in charge of the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof." In 2 Kings xi. 18: "And the Priest appointed officers," *ἐπισκόπους*, "over the house of the Lord." These instances are sufficient; besides which, so far as *ἐπίσκοπος* is equivalent to *προεστῶς*, another New Testament term, and signifying "one set over another," "a ruler," Grotius shows (as well as Vitringa) that these were terms of office applied by the Jews to the heads of their synagogues, which were exactly of the same import and value.

The Apostles needed go no farther than to their own sacred writings, and the religious practice of their nation, in order to derive this official name, although the Greeks used it in its civil meaning, even as we do its exact version,—"overseer," or "superintendent;" yet as all the ancient religious applications of it implied an authority to *investigate* as well as deal with affairs as they arose, its use as a designa-

tion of Christian Ministers was especially to set forth that spirit of LOVING AND VIGILANT INQUIRY which the new and holier dispensation needed,—that watching over souls as men that must give account.*

§ IV. Pastor or Teacher, Elder, and Bishop, being the three (not the four) appropriated distinctions in common of Christian Ministers, we see everywhere that they are used interchangeably, and involve each other ; that they refer to one order of men, possessing the same general rights, and charged with the same general responsibilities. The restriction of the term “Bishop” to the chief or ruling Presbyter, the *Pastor gregis et Pastorum*, was not an apostolical, but a post-apostolical, arrangement, however that kind of rule might be apostolically sanctioned under another name—that of “angel,” for instance. A careful meditation on these well-known places,—1 Peter v. 1, 2 ; 1 Peter ii. 25 ; Acts xx. 28 ; Phil. i. 1 ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13 ; 1 Tim. iii. 2 ; Titus i. 7–9 ; Heb. xiii. 7 ; vii. 17, 24,—will abundantly evince their identity. As Pastors, they have to do with a flock ; as Elders, they are denoted to have sufficiency of wisdom and of age ; as Bishops, they are obligated to examine and inspect ; as Stewards, to take care of the Lord’s household, and preserve the interests of His truth unimpaired ; as guides and rulers who are over others in the Lord, they are to direct and govern them, not by blank personal authority, but by applying and

* “*Neutiquam in universum verum sit, quod Erasmus alibi notavit : ἐπισκοπεῖν non est inspicere cognoscendi causâ, quod ea vox significat Latinis, sed advigilare ut de necessariis provideas. Inò verò ἐπισκοπεῖν in loco, quem ex Josepho [Cont. Apion., lib. ii.] adscripsimus, est inspicere, cognoscendi causâ.*”—VITRINGA, *De Synag. Vet.*, p. 643.

enforcing the precepts of the Divine word : yet it is still to one class of office-bearers that these functions are assigned. 'In all the places of Scripture which have thus been brought into review, no superiority, in point of order, of one kind of Bishops or Elders over another, is indicated, however varying grades may be virtually created by varying degrees of individual goodness or by common consent. All the titles are used of that office which comprehends the care of souls, but of that office as viewed in its various aspects : so that, whatever may be said, as we have hinted, respecting any "first amongst equals," raised, in apostolic times and with the Apostles' sanction, as superintendent over his brethren, there is no root in Scripture from which prelacy, implying superiority of order, may grow. This subject, however, it is not our task to pursue.

§ V And, in proceeding from the same stage in our inquiry to another position, we say at once, that there is a similar absence of any fact or testimony tending to show a distinction between Elders, comprehended as such : that is, the New Testament knows nothing of Elders who only rule, often called "lay Elders," as distinguished from Elders who both rule and teach. For, let the texts just cited be recalled once more, and, indeed, all texts where ministerial qualification is spoken of, and nothing can be more plain than that the guidance or rule is altogether in the hands of the same persons who teach ; nay, in fact, that the one is ordinarily the instrument of the other. The Elder has no guiding or authoritative will of his own, but is rather Steward of the mysteries of God, and versed in the law of Christ ; and, apply-

ing that law, on occasions when economy and discipline have to be exercised, he fulfils the rectoral responsibility. There is no Elder or Bishop treated of but he must be "apt to teach;" must "feed the flock," and "hold fast the faithful word;" must admonish God's people, must take care of the church of God, as a father does of his house, in ruling and providing for it. (1 Tim. iii. 4.) No official person is anywhere addressed as having to attend to government or discipline merely; and no rules are laid down to the Evangelists for their guidance in choosing such persons: and how could this omission be accounted for, if ruling Elders were designed by the head of the church to be called forth to exercise such functions as some would assign to them?

§ VI. It has been thought, however, by Presbyterian writers, that there are several texts which look favourably towards, and even recognise, this class of office-bearers; and, for the clearer apprehension of our subject, it may be well to give them a passing examination.

The first is Rom. xii. 6-8: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that *ruleth*, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." The stress of the testimony is laid on the clause, "he that ruleth," as distinguished from, "he that teacheth." Now, if the existence of ruling Elders had been elsewhere plainly taught, this passage might in that case

have been regarded as containing a harmonising allusion to it; but this is the utmost that can be said for it. Brought forth as primary evidence, it brings no testimony at all. The Apostle is here discoursing of those *χαρίσματα*, “gifts,” which were freely diffused in his time among the members of the Christian community, indicating, accordingly as they were faithfully used, what persons were called and fitted for the present exigencies, and future and permanent official positions in the church; these gifts and the sphere of their exercise thereby constituting in this period the Spirit’s normal seminary: and the whole passage is well explained by regarding it as an exhortation to each gifted individual to cultivate with simplicity, diligence, order, and proper subjection to others, that particular bias which the Holy Ghost had produced in his own soul; so that, on the one hand, the church might be edified, and, on the other, that it might be manifest to all, who were the proper persons to be subsequently chosen to fill places in the church such as those of Evangelist, Pastor, or Deacon.

The ruling-Elder theory requires that the phrase “he that ruleth” should involve the recognition of a separate office; and if so, every other clause in the passage, to preserve consistency of interpretation, must express a separate office likewise. What office, then, is that of giving? and that of showing mercy? Who are the givers and mercy-dispensers, as standing side by side with presbyterial lay-rulers? Alas! this will never do; for, if even established offices were recognised, the peculiar bias and gift of ruling—taking other places where the word occurs as evidence—would no more exclude teaching as being merged in

it, than would the peculiar impulse and qualification to teach exclude the governing faculty which must naturally to some extent flow from such a power. But in the free use of individual acquisitions one believer would develop a warm and teaching fervour; and thus here would be an incipient Exhorter or Preacher:—another, a wise and discriminating use of church-funds as applied to the poor: here would be a candidate, impartial and simple-minded, for the office of Deacon:—while a third would give evidence of a superior wisdom and enlarged comprehension, with other tokens of a governing mind; and to him it would necessarily appertain to use this faculty, and so far to rule, that is, by intelligent and loving mental sway. These young eagles were to try their wings, before they were fully committed to the stormy elements.

An illusory effect is sometimes produced upon the minds of mere English readers, by the word “office,” as found in the preceding description, in Rom. xii. 4, of the church-constitution, where that church is compared to a body, and Christian individuals to the limbs or members of that body. The word “office” by these, and very properly, is generally understood in the sense of an assigned or responsible charge, or round of established duty: whereas, as it occurs here in our version, it must rather be interpreted in harmony with the simile, and taken to mean the functions of private members, whoever they may be;* and

* Thus Charles Wesley:—

“Never from our office move,
Needful to each other prove;
Use the grace on each bestow’d,
Temper’d by the art of God.”—Hymn 518.

all the more, as the word *πρᾶξις* everywhere means “deed,” “act,” or “task fulfilled,” and never a Steward’s or responsible person’s stated care. So that, if ruling the church be intended by the words “he that ruleth,” they no more imply that this was a distinct function which a given individual alone was to fulfil, than that giving, exhorting, and showing mercy, were tasks not to be executed by those who prophesied, ministered, and taught. The whole passage is written to show in what spirit and order individuals were to employ and improve the Spirit’s gifts within them ; and there is nothing to contradict the notion that the same body of gifted individuals might interchangeably and successively fulfil their various tasks, accordingly as they were able, for the benefit and edification of the whole ; until the church acquired its established form and order, and the best-endowed, or those who best used their endowments and verified their call, were appointed to their stated positions of duty.

§ VII. Another place quoted is similar : 1 Cor. xii. 28 : “And God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” Here the stress is laid on the words “*helps*” and “*governments*,” as containing the idea of Deacon first, and ruling Elders in the other. The very general term “helps” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament ; and therefore those commentators who have been desirous to find for it a distinct official import, have had no rule to follow but that of imagination or previously-formed theory ; and so we need not wonder at the multitude of their con-

jectures. The same may be said respecting the word "governments," which is nearly as general in its meaning, and as fruitful in suggestions. Vast and cumbrous learning, by English, Dutch, and German divines, has been expended in this way to little purpose : but on the part of systematisers there has been this mistake committed all the way through,—the attempt to draw a stereotyped form of church-order out of those abstract terms which, at the time to which they refer,—a time when the Spirit's power was so predominant in Christianity,—were used to express the varied kinds of influence, terminatively considered, which affected at different times the same persons, rather than as indicating separate individuals appointed to the charge of distinctly assigned duties.

The theory we are opposing requires a cumbrous and elaborate system of church-polity at the very outset, quite contrary to the nature of things, and as contrary to the facts of the apostolic history. Where there are conflicting schemes of interpretation, then, beyond all question, that which is most obvious and open is to be preferred to that which is recondite or elaborate : and it will be found that the true key to the exposition of this verse is sufficiently simple, without inventing here what no one will be hardy enough to say it expresses, namely, ruling Elders ; for any one may see by the Apostle's phraseology, that his main intention is to assert and enforce the **LAW OF ORDER**. He saw difficulties arising, against which the law of order could alone be brought to bear : indeed, in the Corinthian church, then in a divided state, these difficulties had already risen. To

silence ambitious schismatics, he speaks decisively of some persons who are FIRST, of some who are SECOND, of some who are THIRD; and then, when he has done with persons, and refers to things, he enumerates those good gifts of God, given for the edification of His church, which follow in their proportionate and relative value;—gifts inhering in part, very likely,—at least, as likely as otherwise,—in the very official persons previously mentioned, as well as in other and less eminent members of the communion: and all this with a view of putting down subordinate matters—that is, matters subordinate to a child-like reception of the Gospel through the medium of their spiritual fathers—into a proper position; thus opposing the aim of the schismatic spirit which always endeavours to elevate these last into the highest place.

But survey the descending scale, and mark its heavenly wisdom. First, Apostles, fathers of the church, and commissioned immediately by Christ to reveal His whole counsel:—second, Prophets, as being full of the Holy Ghost, and sharers in the work of laying the foundations of the faith:—thirdly, Teachers, fraught with Christian doctrine; that is, Evangelists, together with Pastors, as in Eph. iv. 11, —the permanent class, so frequently mentioned in the preceding pages, who have the charge of the flock of Christ until the chief Shepherd appear, or who, if the church be a building, edify it, and make it a temple for God. This concludes the enumeration of persons; and “AFTER THAT,” says St. Paul, “miracles,” not Christ’s miracles, but the miracles of that day. These, impressive as they might be, were of less value than a holy and heaven-appointed ministry: they came

after in point of importance. Next follow “gifts of healing,” as being of a miraculous character, but lower in the graduation ; then “helps,” and “governments,”—the words by our opponents supposed to be so full of meaning. But if these last terms were employed to designate any kind of economical or disciplinary rulers of the flock of Christ, this rule must necessarily be understood such as would not in the least degree interfere with, or set aside, that pastoral oversight which is laid upon the Teachers who are mentioned under the third particular ; elsewhere called “Bishops,” “Pastors,” and “guides.” The whole paragraph is descriptive of the gradations of order. Whatever it were, it must in such a case be something much lower than theirs, however in some instances it might be associated with or merged in it, and as well exercised by themselves in person as by others.

But the fact is, the words do not appear to refer to persons at all : they stand amid a class of terms in one category, all implying things ; they are gifts, miracles, healings, and the like : and as the disputatious and wrangling Corinthians needed some provision for controlling and arranging their private disputes, without involving the whole church in the almost secular anxieties which would arise from making common cause of them, we may well suppose God gave to some men especial influence to control and quiet litigious minds, and adjust the differences which had fallen out between those who ought to be brethren. These and other appliances of help might be of great importance, then, in the arbitration of disputes ; but, viewing the church of God as a whole,

and as provided for by gifts in perpetuity, were such appliances, in relation to those gifts, and as being part of them, nearly at the bottom of the scale; while diversities of tongues, so often abused, were lowest of all. So little countenance does the doctrine of ruling Elders find from this passage.*

§ VIII. The other place is 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." Here it is inferred that, as amongst Elders who rule well there are those who labour in the word and doctrine, so there must be ruling Elders likewise, who do not labour in the word and doctrine at all. But this is a one-sided and lame inference: several others, equally plausible, might, at the very first view of the matter, be drawn from the passage; and the reader is here specially requested to observe the state of the argument. Two texts have been already adduced, which are barely capable of being harmonised with the doctrine of ruling Elders, supposing it to be elsewhere briefly taught; and now the amount of evidence is sought to be eked out by an inference which is only one out of several that are possible. That this is not the correct inference, and consequently not the true meaning, will, I hope, be made clear by the following considerations:—

1. In *all other passages*, where the qualifications or functions of Bishops or Elders are mentioned, they both rule and teach. Wearisome as it may be to recall this fact, it is necessary; and as it is an undeniably good and sound rule of interpretation to

* *Vide* LIMBORCH, *Theol.*, lib. vii., cap. iv., § 9, 10. BLOOMFIELD *in loc.* M. STUART, *Comm. in Rom.* xii. 6–8.

explain one obscure text by others that are clear, the conclusion must be, that St. Paul means one class of Elders, and not two,—the one class in all places recognised as exercising both functions, as the necessities of the Church may require ; and out of this class he singles out some who are worthy of double remuneration. In confirmation of this it is to be observed, that the word *προεστῶτες*, here rendered “those that rule,”—collated with Rom. xii. 8 ; 1 Thess. v. 12 ; 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 12,—has a more general signification than that of simply ruling : it denotes the holding of oversight in the Church, like that of a father in a household, and comprises both the departments just referred to. It is not denied that it might be grammatically applied to only one ; but a fair interpreter would ask, “If this term, in other places where it describes church-officers, comprehends both functions, why should it be taken arbitrarily to mean in a particular passage but one of those functions, and the act it involves be predicated of another and distinct class of Elders ?” According to the general style of the Apostles, would not the full meaning of the first clause be, “Those that execute the duties of their twofold office well ?” *

* So Dr. Smith argued in the Westminster Assembly, and quoted the Alexandrine Clement, as speaking of *αἱ προστασίαι τῶν ἀγγέλων*, —“the cares of angels.”—LIGHTFOOT’S Works, 8vo. Journals, &c. So Abraham Scultetus, a learned assessor at the Synod of Dort, *apud* VITRINGAM: “*Sunt qui vel unum hunc locum sat roboris habere putant ad firmandum presbyterium laicorum. Præstrinxit enim oculos et judicium illorum distinctio Presbyterorum, non obscure per D. Paulum hîc indicata. Qui si hunc ipsum locum paulò diligentius fuerint ruminati, eundemque cum aliis Scripturæ dictis contulerint, deprehendent illicò, PRESBYTERORUM LAICORUM ex hoc dicto defensionem contrariam esse significationi vocabuli προεστῶτες, contrariam esse significationi nominis πρεσβύτερος, adversari perpe-*

2. The word rendered "honour" here means, according to the almost unanimous consent of all interpreters, pecuniary acknowledgment or remuneration. Indeed, the eighteenth verse fixes this meaning by proceeding thus: "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." Now we have express authority in Scripture that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel: (1 Cor. ix. 14 :) but we have no precept and no example for the support of any other order; and the fair and reasonable conclusion is, that the Elders who were to be counted worthy of this honour were Elders in whose office teaching or preaching of the word was included.

3. And therefore the distinction implied in the text is not a distinction between different offices, but between officers of the same description, distributing unequally their total amount of duties, or fulfilling those duties with different degrees of devotedness and fidelity. Those who fill the joint preaching and ruling office *well*, are to be rewarded with an acknowledgment twice the amount of that which is

tuae doctrinae Pauli, adversari menti OMNIUM PATRUM a quibus quidem hoc Pauli effatum fuit expositum." "There are some who think that this one passage has sufficient strength for the confirmation of lay presbytery. For the distinction of Presbyters, which is plainly set forth here by St. Paul, has blinded their eyes and their judgment: who, if they will a little more carefully consider the same passage, and compare it with other portions of the sacred writings, will discover, that a defence of lay presbyters from this passage is contrary to the meaning of the word *προεστῶτες*, is contrary to the signification of the name *πρεσβύτερος*, is opposed to the constant teaching of Paul, and is opposed to the opinion of ALL THE FATHERS by whom this saying of Paul's has been expounded."—*De Vet. Synag.*, p. 491.

given to those who simply hold the office, and do not distinguish themselves by any special toil or wisdom : and particularly are those amongst them to be so rewarded who, in addition, are most zealous to diffuse the Gospel word by earnest preaching, which is the evangelistic obligation imposed upon all Pastors.

It must be carefully noted that, in the interpretation of Scripture, the greatest attention must ever be paid to emphatic words ; for very often the whole burden and stress of a sentence is laid upon them. In the words of Christ, “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” the whole force of the admonition lies in the word “ first,” implying that a care for our personal salvation, and the maintenance of Christ’s cause in the world, must take precedence of all other thoughts and cares, in order to our realising a true present good. And in the words, “ Will ye also go away ? ” the word “ ye,” emphatically used, brings out what would otherwise be a tame question into the form of an overwhelming appeal to a band of startled and grateful disciples. So here the Elders who “ LABOUR,”* that is, employ and exhaust their strength in extending the Gospel, are selected as especially deserving a double reward. Here, as elsewhere, we find a plurality of Elders ; (a point which will have to be touched again ;) and the facts, as well as the whole analogy of history, point to the conclusion that in every early Church, even in the Apostles’ days, several Elders, separated to the work

* “ *Κοπιῶ, laboro, molestos labores tracto, quibus corpus defatigatur ac vires exhauriuntur ; a κόπος, labor gravis, molestia.* ” — SCHLEUSNER. So LIMBORCH, *Theol.*, lib. vii., cap. iv., § 10, *cum multis aliis.*

of the pastorate, laboured in one common council of agreement and oversight in the community of believers; and while some, by special endowments, or by personal bias, were addicted more to disciplinary and economical duties, keeping the community in order, others of them, fired by love to Christ, and zeal for the salvation of souls, preached the word in the surrounding parts, won fresh triumphs for the Gospel, and augmented the number in their churches by the converts thus obtained.*

* “*Quin omninò crediderim, non rarò factum ut in eundem Presbyterorum ordinem ex aliorum inopiâ cooptati sint homines; severitate morum, experientiâ, et pietate vitæ valdè venerabiles, ac proinde cœtui regendo summo quidem jure præfecti, sed ad docendum minùs idonei; atque adeò facilè concipio, quòd quidam Presbyteri ecclesiæ docuerint, alii rariùs docuerint, vel etiam docendo penitùs abstinuerint, sive quòd ad docendum minùs fuerint idonei, sive quòd in eodem cœtu alios habuerint, se exercitatiores, et ad docendum dicendumque copiosiùs instructos, cùm ipsi interea temporis aliam aliquam partem muneris Presbyteri diligentius curarent. Non abnegat itaque Paulus in hoc loco ullis Presbyteris docendi jus; solummodò supponit, quosdam NON DOCERE; vellet tamen, ut omnes docerent: immò verò, incitat et exhortatur omnes ut DOCEANT, quoniam eos qui docent, maximè prædicat dignos duplici honore. Hic simplex, hic clarus et minimè ambiguus sensus est verborum Pauli.*”—VITRINGA, p. 493.

“But yet I could altogether believe, it was frequently arranged that into the same order of Presbyters, because of the lack of others, there should be men chosen, venerable for gravity of manners, experience, and purity of life; and for that cause rightly invested with authority in directing the council; but they were less fitted for teaching: and therefore I can easily conceive that certain Presbyters of the church taught, while others taught but seldom, or abstained altogether from teaching; either because they were less apt, or because in the same council they had others more exercised and more fully instructed in the work of teaching and speaking, while they in the mean time the more diligently occupied themselves in another department of the same office. Paul does not deny to any of the Presbyters in this place *the right of*

§ IX. The whole of this is confirmed by the fact, that the word *μάλιστα*, “especially,” could never be made to bear the sense which the theory of ruling Elders requires. Dr. Wardlaw and Dr. Davidson both have urged this with great clearness and force. According to invariable usage, and the strict philosophy of the Greek language, the former shows, “it must be understood as representing those who are described in the latter part of the verse as comprehended under the more general description in the former,—not as a distinct class of persons, but a select portion of the same class, distinguished by a specified particularity. Thus, 1 Tim. iv. 10 : ‘We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.’ ‘Those that believe’ are included among the ‘all men,’ but distinguished from the rest by their faith. Tit. i. 10 : ‘There are many unruly and vain talkers, *specially* they of the circumcision.’ The ‘vain talkers’ who were of the circumcision, were thus specially distinguished from a larger class of vain talkers that called for determined opposition. To conceive of the two parts of the verse as referring to distinct offices, is to assign to the adverb a sense which it never bears. If the former part of the verse be explained as referring to lay Elders,—to Elders that rule but do not teach,—then those in the latter part of the verse, who both rule and teach, are not comprehended in the previous description.”

teaching : he only supposes there were some who did not teach : yet he would rather that all taught ; nay, he verily prompts and exhorts all that they *should teach*, inasmuch as he declares those who teach worthy in the highest degree of double honour. This is the simple, clear, and least ambiguous sense of Paul’s words.”

Dr. King of Glasgow, who seems, in his third edition of "The Ruling Eldership,"* to acquiesce in this view of the adverb, would, therefore, expound the text thus:—That under the general description of rulers, that is, mere rulers, the Apostle specifies a few of those only as being concerned in administering the word and doctrine. But can that estimable writer really believe that under a Gospel dispensation, whose first mandate to Ministers was to teach all nations, whose first and abiding difficulty was to fill the void of ignorance in the thoughtless, and remove error from the heathenised, whose most potent instrumentality under the Holy Ghost was a scriptural intelligence, (and in order that Pastors might use this instrumentality unimpeded, Deacons were to be chosen to take other and less sacred cares,)—can he believe that the genuine account of the Ministers of Christ is, that they are rulers,—in other words, that this presiding is the main work of Christianity, and that gifted preachers are only a species under this generality? Surely never; for the whole frame-work of Christianity would be altered by the supposition.†

The illustration given by Dr. M'Kerrow of his view of *μάλιστα*, and quoted with approbation by the opponents of Wesleyan Methodism, is to the following effect:—"Should any one giving an account of a battle say, 'All the soldiers fought well, *especially* the

* P. 21. London, 1851.

† So also Lawson in his *Politica Sacra et Civilis*, on 1 Tim. v. 17. "From hence they infer that there are ruling Elders which labour in the word and doctrine, and others which do not. This presupposeth that *μάλιστα*, turned 'especially,' is taken here partitively. Yet that cannot be proved."—P. 243.

infantry ;’ would we not understand him as intimating that there were soldiers engaged in the battle who were not infantry ?” True ; but this is no fair illustration of the point in hand. Soldiers of whatever class, infantry, cavalry, or artillery, are all alike as to fulfilling their comprehensive duties, offensive, defensive, and vigilant ; whereas the first clause of the text under review is assumed to refer but to one class of acts, while the next is supposed to bring in acts additional and perfectly diverse. Nothing can be more blinding, or *ad captandum*. The illustration, in order to be adapted to the position assumed on this point, would rather have to run thus :—“ Let the soldiers who keep guard, (which is one function of a soldier,) if they do their part well, be duly honoured, especially those who fight :” or, “ Let the soldiers who watch, but do not fight, when they do their duty well, be rewarded doubly, especially those of them who both watch and fight !” This is fairer, but it is absurd in proportion to its fairness.

If the word *προεστῶτες* be taken in the full sense of “ those exercising pastoral care,” then the point in dispute is given up ; for the pastoral care involves both government and instruction. If it be asserted to mean ruling only, then the sequel excepts a special particular from a previous predication which does not contain it, and the strange direction might be put thus :—“ Let the ruling Elders who fulfil their duty well be counted worthy of double honour, especially the teaching Elders !” or, “ Let the Elders who rule, but do not teach, when they do their duty well, be duly honoured, especially those of them who both teach and rule !” Thus hopeless is the cause in question, as it is like-

wise sought to be established from this passage, which has always been regarded as the strongest of the three ; and besides these three, I am not aware that any other has been brought into the controversy.

§ X. We may, then, say boldly that the doctrine, in these three places, of Calvin, who speaks of seniors, or grave and approved men appointed for the correction of manners and administration of discipline, was a novelty and an invention ; judging of that doctrine not only from his own exposition of it, but from its embodiment in the Genevan regimen, which was subsequently copied by some of the Reformed Churches ; particularly the Presbyterian bodies of Scotland ; and from its reiteration by evangelical French commentators, with whom he was as great an authority as was Augustine with the ancients. It is not denied, that, in the apostolical and earliest churches, some Elders were more particularly gifted for, and were therefore more occupied in, ruling and its associated cares ; and that such, in a very few passages of antiquity, are hinted at,—though it may be questioned whether they are not censured in Scripture,—while others are more particularly distinguished as Doctors or Teachers,—those, for instance, Clement, Origen, and the like, in the learned church of Alexandria : (and, strange enough, most defenders of the ruling eldership seem to regard the proof of this point as being the proof of the whole question :) nor is it denied that, on occasions of great interest or moment, Bishops or Elders took counsel with wise or good senior members of their churches, who were sometimes Magistrates or civil rulers, before they acted. Such a practice, we believe, may be traced ;

and we acknowledge, in certain conditions of society, its propriety and harmony with the entire spirit of the New Testament. But that a distinct class of Elders was created solely to rule and administer discipline, and for that purpose set apart in common with Pastors properly so called, and with them likewise sustained by the church;—this we entirely deny, as being a scheme having no evidence in its favour, either from Scripture or antiquity. We say “antiquity,” inasmuch as here the argument has a real historical value; for if Elders solely for discipline were appointed in the churches under the eye of the Apostles, and the appointment thus became a normal institute, it is incredible that the first testimonies of uninspired history should not contain the trace of it.*

At the same time, to investigate antiquity does not belong to our present purpose: our appeal is to the Word of God, seeking out its meaning, where that may seem doubtful, by the plainest and most usually received canons of interpretation. When the ocean of antiquity so abounds with evil as well as good, error as well as truth, the closer we keep to our simple aim, the more satisfactory will our conclusion be. Besides, when our opponents appeal to antiquity in support of lay eldership, and reject its evidence in favour of episcopacy, such reasoning commands no respect, and carries no conviction. It will hardly be denied by the candid among them, that in the age in which they think they find their distinctive office, government by Bishops, as distinct from common Presbyters, was universal; and that, whether scripturally or not, the chief ruler exercised at that time what

* See Note (A), Appendix.

Jerome called soon after *exors potestas*, “an unshared power.” Why, then, accept the testimony, if such were to be found, in favour of one office, and reject it when speaking plainly in behalf of the other? The evidence is completely invalidated and put out of court. If ruling eldership were really there, the episcopacy, with its alleged peculiar rights, might go far to balance the arrangement, and make it otherwise than an evil one: but nothing is so far from the intention of modern theorists in this line, as to acknowledge a privileged Bishop, counteracting, by his peculiar authority, the imagined ultra-popular tendencies of lay rulers.

§ XI. Some have supposed that they have discovered an analogy to the mixed Presbyterian regimen in the order of the synagogue, where not only Priests who were separated from the rest of the people, and supported by tithes, bore rule, but also heads or Elders of the people, who yet were engaged in secular affairs. It must be replied, that if this alleged analogy were valid and true, it must assuredly be one which we are forbidden to adopt, by the very spirit of the Christian dispensation. In this particular would lie one of the distinctions between Judaism and Christianity. The Prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah both foretold that there should be a change in the character of the pastorship in the times of the Gospel. (Jer. iii. 15; Ezek. xxxiv. 10.) In Judaism there was not only a theocratical connexion between church and state, but such a connexion as enabled the rulers of a synagogue to inflict pains and penalties, even to the extent of severe scourging, as the Apostles of our Lord were made to experience; to levy contributions,

and the like. The members of the council are styled by Josephus, the Magistracy and the Judges.*

The synagogue, in some of its aspects, was a civil tribunal which men were liable to regard with fear ; for civil and religious offences were merged into each other and equally treated ; and in our Lord's time and a while after, when acknowledged and sustained by the imperial authorities, it was often both formidable and oppressive, and evinced that Gentilism of administration against which our Lord warned his Apostles, and the Apostles warned their fellow-Elders. In the empire of Morocco even now the heads of synagogues have authority to imprison. Many of the Rulers, then, in those ancient times, with so many civil cares upon them, would be almost given up to ruling, not having time or disposition for teaching ; but in Christianity, —Christ's kingdom, which was not of this world, —everything was to be of an opposite character. Here men were to rule BECAUSE THEY TAUGHT, and taught effectually to salvation and sanctification. The supposed analogy referred to, however, is, after all, lame and imperfect : it proceeds on the notion that Priests and Elders represented the distinct classes of Clergy and laity : whereas the Priests, though hereditarily appointed and supported by tithes, were not, *as such*, of the synagogue Clergy at all. *As such*, they did not minister or teach there : their functions belonged to the temple or typical service, all of which was fulfilled in Christ. They ministered and taught as Elders ; and the other non-sacerdotal members of

* "Antiquities," book iv., chap. 8. So CYPRIAN *Adv. Judæos*, § 14. Fol., 1682.

the council were likewise ordinarily separated from trading society, and sustained, as well as they, though in a different way, by the contributions of the people: they did not ordinarily engage in secular affairs. Any Elder was liable to be called upon to preach or teach, though at the head of each distinguished school and synagogue there was an eminent Rabbi or ruling Doctor; but the devotional or religious teaching in the synagogues evidently, as far as we can learn, was conducted on the principle of voluntary and mutual distribution of labour, much as in the early Christian churches. Thus all distinctions which really affect the argument on the present question, are obliterated.*

On the theory, too, that misrule on the part of Pastors would be counteracted by a mingling with them, in acts of primary administration, of non-preaching or non-clerical persons; such an arrangement will really be found impracticable and beside the point: for, on this scheme, men are as effectually taken from the people, and made a separate class, as if they were ordained to all the functions. They are set to administer pastoral acts without having through experience the *pastoral heart*; and in cases where a failing piety or a rising of schism breaks the unity of the body, they, from their position, would as likely prove to be anti-popular as anti-ministerial. A check upon pastoral mal-administration must be provided for by means far more natural and effectual, as we shall see. Sin can blight and ruin any institution; but history shows that nothing has been so tre-

* See note (B), Appendix.

mendously evil in its consequences, as sin acting upon the blending together of a spiritual authority with a powerful lay oligarchy. Here is the point of contact where the best part of the world and the most declining part of the church join hands, and make ultimate secularisation unavoidable. The very essence of persecuting power lies in this union. Either discipline must be utterly lost from the worldliness of the standard adopted, as is the case in the Lutheran Churches ; or else a tyrannical constraint is exercised, which, grasping at such contrary objects as men's civil and spiritual obligations, must destroy itself by its difficulties and its enormities.

It would be an easy, though ungrateful, task, to illustrate this from the acts both of prelacy and presbytery, when either was in power. Even our persecuted forefathers, who fled from this country to New-England in order to escape from the oppression of the Star-Chamber and the High-Church authorities,—having adopted Calvin's "platform," which by its ruling Elders blended civil magistracy with the spiritual Teacher's function,—soon went into nearly all the excesses which they themselves had appealed against and suffered from. Numbers of poor half-crazy Quakers, and people accused of witchcraft, were mutilated, whipped, and some put to death, through this all-usurping power. Even on that construction of the case which would be most favourable to the persecutors, namely, that all these were children of the devil, still it was in direct violation of our Lord's precept in His parable of the Wheat and Tares.* There

* See at length NEAL'S "History of New-England," London, 1720.

is no arrangement on earth so favourable for the spiritual liberties of a Christian people, as that which gives them Ministers of their own recognising, tested by a common standard, void of any the least magisterial power, and dependent upon themselves for support.

§ XII. Taking all the preceding considerations together, it has, I hope, been proved that the Ministers of the New Testament are of one class and order ; that is, so far as to exclude a prelatical authority or transmitted apostleship on the one hand, and the intervention of non-teaching rulers on the other.

In harmony with this conclusion, the founder of Methodism ever acted in all his disciplinary arrangements ; and the Conference in like manner, since his day. It has never recognised two classes of Elders. The Assistants and Helpers of Mr. Wesley, who after his death became the Pastors of the people, were almost always made responsible for the teaching and discipline of the people ; not but that they, too, in both functions, were assisted by persons who were strictly of the people. Whatever guards were subsequently instituted against the arbitrary, unjust, or indiscreet use of this authority, the principle of holding it in the appropriate hands was never given up. So early as 1771, there were Leaders in some of the Societies who, fixed in secular life as they were, would fain have managed by votes of their own order the most important disciplinary acts which can be conceived of, and for the character of which the Pastor is amenable to the Head of the church. Mr. Wesley met this claim, in his usual prompt and laconic manner, in a paper which he

drew up for the occasion, and in the strongest terms of decision assigned the responsible duties of the Christian eldership to those who had been called of God, accepted by himself, and welcomed by the Societies, as Ministers of the New Covenant.*

And although, since then, the powers of Leaders' Meetings have been enlarged, especially in giving them to act as a jury in the case of an accused member, and to have a vote on any proposition to receive a new Leader, or remove an existing one, no step has been taken to confer on them the obligations of the eldership. They were not placed under these at first, nor have they been so placed since. Mr. Wesley's document assigns them the task "to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort" their members,—not, in the highest or pastoral sense, to feed them; for this last always involves the notion of a competent exposition of the Holy Scriptures under the light and guidance of the Spirit, with ordination and separation to that work on the part of the teacher.

In those contentions, likewise, after the death of Mr. Wesley, which led eventually to the secession of Mr. Kilham and his party, and in those subsequent disputes as well, in which the interfusion of laymen into the pastoral body has been the chief thing sought for, or at least in which a share for them in the chief responsibility has been demanded; as also when Local or lay Preachers, because of their occasional teaching, have claimed a part in the same kind of rule; the Conference has rested firmly on this foundation, without any misgiving as to

* See note (C), Appendix.

its validity. The Leader or Local Preacher it could not by any possibility make into a New-Testament Elder : the main conditions were wanting, and endless confusion and anarchy would have followed any such attempt. It could not found an order of pseudo-Presbyters : it could not—I do not say merely, depart from—oppose the order of Christ’s church in all ages. It has secured the rights of these superior brethren, just mentioned, as these Chapters will show ; but, in doing this, it has not placed them in a false position, or violated the spirit and disturbed the analogies of the primitive and apostolical institutes.

The late Rev. Daniel Isaac, in some controversial pamphlets published about the time of the Leeds schism, was led by a mistaken view to describe the Leaders in Methodism as answering to the Elders of the New Testament : and modern opponents of our order have somewhat too eagerly seized upon him as an authority ; for they have failed to see that his theory is more opposed to modern claims than our own. For if the Leaders are to be regarded as representing New-Testament Elders, then of course the Ministers must be regarded as New-Testament Evangelists, who acted always on their own proper authority, and governed the Elders.

§ XIII. I am quite willing to believe that although the Presbyterian bodies of Scotland and America, and some “Reformed” churches on the Continent, acknowledge ruling Elders as assessors with the Pastors in matters of disciplinary adjudication ; yet it is probably little more than matter of theory : for as, in most of these communions, the office of Deacon has hardly, until recently, existed, (Dr. King, and Dr. M’Kerrow,

of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, have both confessed this,) the Elders have naturally fallen into the discharge of diaconal duties, and have represented those usual assistants of the clergy which under other names are found in other churches. When Deacons, however, are introduced in these communities, they have no vote in the presbytery, showing that, when they are viewed as apart from Elders, they have hardly an official existence at all in matters where office involves the exercise of judgment and influence. Whether, however, the constant implication for life of certain persons involved in trade and commerce and all its cares and sinuosities, with Preachers and Teachers of the Gospel, on the theory that they are all Elders, does not tend to lower the strict spiritual standard on which disciplinary judgment should proceed, and to tie the real Minister down to acknowledge a conventional or commercial, rather than a scriptural, rule of Christian conversation, and therefore to evade, rather than practise, a godly discipline,—this is a serious question which, I am all but confident, history answers on the discouraging side. Calvin had premonition of this at Geneva, almost as soon as his platform was complete. An historian of the Reformation speaks thus of him: “Calvin, with the zeal of a Prophet, and the resignation of a martyr who submits himself to the severe word of God, exacted of the church under his care absolute obedience. He struggled hard with the party of the Libertines, and by the grace of God he overcame.”* All Ministers, however, if fully endowed

* D'AUBIGNE, “Discourses and Essays,” 1846. Collins.

for such a work, cannot afford a life-long struggle with Libertinism: discipline must have its root and origin in a cheerfully acknowledged pastoral standing, not one to be fought for.

§ XIV Ministers, then, viewed as one body, are all alike, as it respects order, and yet distinct from other ecclesiastical persons. Not so equal but that a hoary and wise veteran may, by common consent, command junior, or less gifted, or less experienced soldiers of Christ for specific services, on which Christ may not have specifically spoken; or that, in Council or Conference, the deciding majority may require the minority to submit themselves, and refrain from schismatic strife. Not so distinct or separate but that they are one with the Lord's people, even the humblest, in all the anxieties, cares, necessities of working out personal salvation, and infirmities of human nature ever liable to temptation: not so distinct as to repel the co-operation of others; for that may be brought to bear in every department: nor so as to be otherwise than open to all the influence that may proceed from the wisdom, zeal, and intelligence of others in aid of their own functions. They are so far from being Priests, having the monopoly of access to God, and control over the spiritual relations to Christ of private Christians, that they themselves can only realise daily pardon and peace, and the comforts of a holy walk, by a believing and continually repeated application through faith to the great High Priest who is passed into the heavens.

But they are distinct or separate, as being taken from buying, selling, and getting gain, in order that they may devote themselves to the work of serving

the Chief Shepherd, and sustaining a responsibility which grows out of their relations to Him; and they are equal to each other, as being mainly and mutually charged with the same duties, and as being directly amenable to His authority. One sentence, before quoted, expresses the whole matter: "One is your Master, Christ,"—to the exclusion of Pope or Prelate,—“and all ye are brethren:”—brethren, it may be, of higher and lower degree, Bishops and Elders, seniors and juniors, but still brethren, breathing alike the common spirit of adoption, having charge in one household, mutually concerned to ensure its peace, and bound in the confidence of one common policy to promote the glory of its Head.

With regard to qualifications, these, as laid down in the inspired volume, indicate the infinite wisdom which devised the administrative economy of Christianity. The Elder is always assumed to be “in Christ,” and a new creature, through personal conversion and regeneration: but, besides this, he “*must be blameless*,” (1 Tim. iii. 2–7,) that the gibes of the worldly may not cast odium on his name; “*the husband of one wife*,” that he may have a household, and, by guiding it aright and fostering the relative affections, may be disciplined both in tenderness and firmness for his higher charge; “*vigilant*,” that he may not only resist evil when it appears openly, but search it out and remove it; “*sober*,” that he may be a slave to no physical appetency, nor any mental fanaticism; “*of good behaviour*,” or modest, that no repelling rebuke of passion or pride, given in return for discourtesy, may diminish his

spiritual influence; “*given to hospitality*,” that the weary wanderer may be conciliated towards Him who helps the stranger in distress, and is Himself our dwelling-place in all generations; “*apt to teach*,” that he may be a fountain of light and knowledge to the whole church; “*not given to wine*,” in order that, like Elijah and John the Baptist in the wilderness, he may draw his refreshment from Divine consolations; “*no striker*,” that he may show the superiority of the “spirit of power” over carnal violence; “*not greedy of filthy lucre*,” that his appreciation of the “gold tried in the fire” may the more readily appear; “*patient*,” that he may be an image of the long-suffering of God; “*not a brawler*,” but that his grace of meekness may enable him and his fellow-labourers eventually to inherit or possess the earth; “*not covetous*,” but showing his contentment with his all-sufficient God; “*not a novice*, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil: *moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil* ;” for when men within the sphere of Christianity suffer reproach, and this reproach is not endured for the name of Christ, they are caught in the meshes of an entanglement which, unless they can burst it at a bound, may imprison them for ever.

The idea of such a brotherhood suggests the existence amongst them of a secret, peculiar to their own consciousness and fellowship,—a secret which the noblest and most intelligent of the flock cannot practically know, however all may understand it as a mere sentiment; not a *disciplina arcani*, but an *arcanum disciplinæ*; a common and to themselves peculiar

sense of surrounding evil and peril, of impending danger to the truth; a perception of the harmonies uniting fidelity, obedience, and love; a delicate appreciation of the value of Christian authority, that is, authority derived from likeness to Christ; a dread of the malice of the great adversary; a vital perception of the more delicate motions of God's Spirit; and a keen sense of wrong being inflicted, when a passing expediency is made to overbear a tested law, or when an accidental error in administration is used as a plea for the abrogation of the wise and good statute on which it rests, or when the discharge on their part of unpleasant and unpopular duties is put to the account of selfish and carnal motives. In this respect all may say, as St. Paul said, "He that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 4.)

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 170.

IN attempting to support the doctrine of an apostolical constitution of ruling Eldership in the church of Christ, by citing over again from the American Professor Miller several passages of ecclesiastical history, the varied opponents of our order have evidently felt the weakness of their cause, by their effort to give a breadth to the testimony, whatever it may be worth, which it does not possess in reality. Some of the quotations, we have seen, go to prove that there was a plurality of Elders in the early churches, which is not denied; others, that these associated Elders ruled,—which is likewise beside the point, for this is not denied either; and as to those which are adduced to prove that a certain class of Elders (not being teachers) were associated with preaching and teaching Elders, in ecclesiastical acts and pastoral discipline,—for this is the point in question, a point not to be buried in vague generalities,—it will be seen by the candid student that the proof utterly fails. I will select the strongest instances.

Cyprian is quoted, in his twenty-ninth Epistle, to this effect: "You are to take notice that I have ordained Saturus a Reader, and the confessor Optatus a Sub-deacon, whom we had all before agreed to place in the rank and degree next to that of the Clergy. Upon Easter-day we made one or two trials of Saturus in reading, when we were approving our Readers before the *teaching Presbyters*, and then appointed Optatus, from among the Readers, to be a Teacher of the hearers." Stress is here laid, of course, upon the expression "*teaching Presbyters*," as leaving it to be inferred,—for inference is all we have offered us,—that there were Presbyters in the associated council who were not ordained to teach, but rather to exercise discipline. The inference, however, is much more clear and direct, that, according to the spirit of those times, and after the example of the Alexandrian church, several Presbyters were selected, who, in addition to their public sacred duties of prayer, exhortation, and the like, convened together under episcopal superintendence, in halls or houses and separate schools, the pupils who were trained in the more advanced departments of Christian study, in connexion with such branches of science as then could harmonise with it. Thus Origen conjoined with himself Heraclas the Presbyter (afterwards Bishop) at Alexandria, as a Doctor or Christian Teacher: and as to the hearers or catechumens, their Teacher was selected from the higher or lower Clergy according to the amount of culture or influence required. The great Clement of Alexandria did not deem this office beneath him; while in Carthage the Bishop selects one of the Readers to be a *Doctor audientium*. With this view, too, Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, opposing Nepos, a Bishop in Egypt, as quoted by Eusebius, evidently blends the character of Elder and Teacher into one, when he says, "When I was at Arsinoë, where, as you know long since, this doctrine" [that of Christ's earthly reign] "was afloat, so that schisms and apostasies of whole churches followed, after I had called the Presbyters and Teachers of the brethren in the villages, when those brethren had come who wished to be present, I exhorted them to examine the doctrine publicly." (See EUSEB., lib. vi., cap. 15, 26; VITRINGA, *De Vet. Syn.*, lib. ii., cap. 3, 7, 24.)

As to public teaching, or preaching, in the North African Church, none taught in this sense but the Bishop, or those Presbyters who were delegated by him. Ordinary presbyterial teaching in a minor and more retired manner, was inseparable from pastoral care. It is, therefore, another possible inference, that the teaching Presbyters, mentioned above by Cyprian, were those who at that time were

selected for this duty; not at all to the prejudice of other Elders, who might be equally eligible, though otherwise engaged, or, being more fitted for liturgical and economical duties, were chiefly engrossed therein, and left to teach as opportunity might serve. So Vitranga argues, connecting his own with the opinion of the learned Le Moyne, his tutor, showing that Presbyters, though they had an equal right and calling, did not all preach, but occupied themselves in administering sacraments, inquiring into scandals, consoling the sick, strengthening the weak, entering into the cares and advancing the interests of the church, and the like; while Bishops and *chief Presbyters* attended to the work of public instruction. (P. 497.) So Baxter likewise, on 1 Tim. v. 17, to the same effect.

The idea, however, that persons not of the Clergy, not ordained to sacred functions, should be associated with the Clergy in guiding and governing the flock of Christ, is one which hardly in any age would have found greater opposition than in the age of Cyprian. In his stormy times, the rights and claims of all orders of persons in the church were brought into controversy, and sifted with the keenest scrutiny, on such occasions especially as those of baptisms, ordinations, admissions to membership, and excommunications. The rights of Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons,—that is to say, of the Clergy,—and then those of Sub-deacons, Readers, Confessors, and the like, not of the Clergy,—were earnestly discussed; but where are ruling Elders ever mentioned? Bishop Sage, who was well versed in the history of this period, might well say “that there was as profound a silence of them in Cyprian’s works and time, as there is of the Solemn League and Covenant, or the Sanquhar Declaration;” (“Principles of the Cyprianic Age,” London, 1695;) and whoever looks over the superscriptions of Cyprian’s letters will find perpetually this address: “*Cyprianus Presbyteris et Diaconis*;” and sometimes “*plebi universæ*;” but never “*Senioribus*.” Still more to the purpose do we find him joining other Presbyters with himself in addressing his epistles, as in the fourth: “*Cyprianus, Cæcilius Victor, Sedatus, Tertullus, cum Presbyteris qui præsentibus aderant, Pomponio fratri, salutem* :” but not a word about these Elders. If any class at Carthage were ever found answering to this last term, it would be after his day, which was the middle of the third century.

Origen’s work, *Contra Celsum*, (lib. iii.,) is quoted as saying, “There are some rulers appointed whose duty it is to inquire concerning the manners and conversation of those who are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness.” This is adduced as a plain instance on the point; but it no more

proves that the rulers in question were lay Elders than that they were Bishops. That they were actually the latter, or ordained Presbyters, specially set, according to a wise distribution of labour, to attend to this work, is, however, much more in harmony, as we have seen above, with the spirit of the North-African churches; and, indeed, it accords well with the testimony borne by the earnest and energetic Tertullian, himself a Carthaginian, some time before, where he says, in his "Apology," cap. 39, p. 51: "*Præsident PROBATI quique Seniores, honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti*:" "The most approved Seniors preside in acts of censuring offenders and exercising discipline, not simply on the ground of their common separation with all Elders, and their being sustained by the church, but by reason of their having obtained this position through testimony as to their special fitness." Addressing the Roman magistracy, this writer would rather use the more general Latin term, *Seniores*, than the church word derived from the Greek, *Presbyteri*.

Ambrose, on 1 Tim. v. 1, is next quoted; and not only this Father, but likewise several moderns who quote him; just as though, severally, they were separate and independent testimonies. "For, indeed, among all nations old age is honourable. Hence it is that the synagogue, and afterwards the church, had Elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church: which, by what negligence it grew into disuse, I know not; unless, perhaps, by the sloth, or rather by the pride, of the Teachers, while they alone wished to appear something."

These are, however, the words of Hilary the Deacon, called the Pseudo-Ambrose, or Ambrosiaster, whose work, according to Cave, was not written until the year 384: and the full force of the sentence, as it is supposed to favour the point in hand, is made to turn upon the word "Teachers," as implying a supposed contrast between them and some other kind of Elders who did not teach. Now if we take this term as signifying the Bishops, who in the Western churches likewise were regarded as responsible for public instruction, and were besides the chief medium, *in propria personâ*, of its conveyance; and understand the writer to affirm that these chief Rulers and Teachers of the church had neglected by degrees to consult their council of Presbyters in their ecclesiastical acts; then the whole is in harmony with the accounts which are given us by church writers of the proceedings of Bishops in the fourth century, who were wont to act, even on grave emergencies, without the advice of their Presbyters. Against this principle of acting on sole episcopal responsibility, Cyprian, a century before, had made a stand by his personal example; but the particularity with which he asserts this in his letters shows that even

then this was to be spoken of as an excellency, rather than as a thing uniformly admitted.

Besides, it is clear that the Elders in question are not represented by Hilary as the responsible parties in the church, but the parties "*quorum sine consilio nihil agebatur*,"—almost the very words of Cyprian, on another occasion,—“without *whose counsel* nothing was done :” for, in consistency with his argument and allusion, he must be understood as speaking of the whole, and not a part, of the presbytery. The synagogue, of which he speaks, had a council of Elders, whom the Ruler or Rulers always consulted without discriminating between them, as though they were of different sorts : and so it was, our author affirms, in the church. This is only a fair description, indeed, of the state of things at Jerusalem in the time of the Apostles. And here again the *argumentum è silentio* is not without its force and value ; for if these sentiments are attributed to Ambrose, and are supposed to favour the lay-Elder theory, when do we find them practically acted upon in the life of that enterprising and eminent Bishop ? Does Theodoret, his principal witness and memorialist, breathe a syllable respecting lay or ruling Elders ? When Ambrose inflicted upon the Emperor Theodosius, the magnificent and popular monarch, the penalty of minor excommunication for the slaughter of the Thessalonians, and withstood for the greatest part of a year the solicitations of those influential men who would fain have had it taken off ; in the excitement and testing of this anxious time, was there nothing which would have revealed the office of ruling Elder, had it ever existed ?

Some have noted the allusion of Estius to this place, as favourable to the ultra-presbyterial platform : “ *Quidam tunc erant qui bene præerant, et duplici honore digni erant, nec tamen laborabant in verbo et doctrinâ.*” (*In loc. 1 Tim. v. 17, apud POL. Synop. Critic.*) And, indeed, that Romish writer and critic would not be unwilling to avail himself of any clause in Scripture which would seem to leave an opening for the sanction of non-teaching Abbots and other ecclesiastical rulers in the Papal system, who have no concern in edifying the people by spiritual labours ; but, that he acknowledges here a number of persons, not of the *clerus*, as being co-assessors with the pastorate, is not at all manifest. Dr. Smith, in the debates of the Westminster Assembly, indeed, showed that his aim was rather to justify the position of merely ruling Pontiffs and Cardinals. (LIGHTFOOT’S Works, vol. xiii., p. 63. 8vo. London, 1824.) Independently, however, of any gloss by Estius or any other commentator, the meaning of this church-writer is best explained by

the history and spirit of the Theodosian age, and by keeping up the consistency of his allusion; for had he meant what our Presbyterian friends and others mean by quoting him, his words must needs have been not to this effect, that the Elders as a whole were slighted, (his actual statement,) but that a certain portion or class of them declined to consult the other class. (See also DR. FIELD, Dean of Gloucester, "Of the Church," vol. iii., chap. 26, p. 203. 1850.)

Augustine is also quoted in such places as these:—*Contra Cresconium Grammaticum*, lib. iii., cap. 56: "*Peregrinus, Presbyter, et SENIORES Ecclesiæ Musticanæ regionis.*" *Epist.* 137: "*Dilectissimis fratribus, Clero, SENIORIBUS, et universæ plebi Ecclesiæ Hipponensis.*" In the Benedictine edition, however, of Augustine's Works, the letter quoted by Professor Miller as 137, stands as 78; and the superscription runs thus: "*Dilectissimis fratribus, Clero, SENIORIBUS, et universæ plebi, Augustinus in Domino salutem.*" Others also, beside the persons already mentioned, have quoted from Augustine, *Contra Cresconium Donatistam*, lib. iii., cap. 29: "*Silvanus a Cirtâ traditor est, et fur rerum pauperum, quod omnes vos Episcopi, et Presbyteri, et Diaconi, et SENIORES scitis; et de quadringentis follibus Lucillæ clarissimæ feminæ; pro quo vobis conjurâstis, ut fieret Majorinus Episcopus, et inde factum est schisma.*" "Silvanus from Cirta is a traditor, and robber of the things of the poor, which all ye Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and Seniors know; and also respecting the four hundred *folles* [or purses of silver] of the illustrious lady Lucilla; wherefore ye have conspired together that Majorinus should be made Bishop, and hence has arisen this schism."

We do not dwell, in this last instance, upon the disgrace to Christianity involved in the incipient simony in which all these persons in Carthage seem to have been more or less involved; but, surveying all the instances, it must be conceded that Elders of some kind are here recognised. It is obvious, however, first, that they are not of the Clergy,—the pastoral ministry; they are not Presbyters: secondly, that they are lower in grade than the Deacons, being always mentioned after them; and the Deacons in those days had little or nothing to do with ecclesiastical discipline. The learned Bingham gives the true solution of the matter; and we here give his words at full length: "As to the *Seniores ecclesiæ*, they were a sort of Elders who were not of the Clergy, yet had some concern in the care of the church. The name often occurs in Optatus and St. Austin, from whom we may easily learn the nature of their office. Optatus says that when Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, was obliged to leave his church in the Diocletian perse-

cution, he removed the ornaments and utensils of the church to such of the Elders as he could trust,—‘*fidelibus Senioribus commendavit*,’ upon which Albaspinæus [Archbishop of Orleans] notes, that, beside the Clergy, there were then some lay Elders, who were intrusted to take care of the goods of the church. At the end of Optatus there is a tract called ‘The Purgation of Felix and Cæcilian,’ wherein there are several epistles that make mention of the same name, as that of Fortis and Purpurius, and another nameless author. So St. Austin inscribes one of his Epistles to his own church of Hippo in this manner: ‘To the Clergy, the Elders, and all the people;’ and in several other places has occasion to mention these Seniors in other churches. From whence some have concluded that these were ruling lay Elders, according to the new model and modern acceptance. Whereas, as the ingenious author of the ‘Humble Remonstrance’ (H. L’ESTRANGE, ‘Defence of the Remonstrance’) rightly observes in his reply, those *Seniores* of the primitive church were quite another thing. Some of them were the *Optimates*, or chief Magistrates, of the place, such as we still call ‘Aldermen,’ [eldermen,] from the ancient appellation of *Seniores*. These are those whom the Carbarsussitan Council of Donatists in St. Austin called ‘*Seniores nobilissimi*,’ and one of the Councils of Carthage more expressly, (*Con. Carthag. an. 403, in Con. Afric., cap. 58, et in Cod. Can. Eccl. Afr., cap. 91.*) ‘*Magistratus vel Seniores locorum*,’ ‘the Magistrates or Elders of every city,’ whom the Bishops were to take with them to give the Donatists a meeting. In this sense Dr. Hammond observes, from Sir Henry Spelman and some of our Saxon writings, that anciently our Saxon Kings had the same title of Elders, *Aldermanni*, *Presbyteri*, and *Seniores*; as, in the Saxon translation of the Bible, the word ‘Princes’ is commonly rendered ‘Aldermen.’ And of this sort were some of those *Seniores ecclesiæ* that have been mentioned, whose advice and assistance also, no doubt, the Bishops took in many weighty affairs of the church. The other sort, which were more properly called *Seniores ecclesiastici*, were such as were sometimes trusted with the utensils, treasures, and outward affairs of the church, and may be compared to Churchwardens, Vestrymen, Stewards, who have some care in the affairs of the church, but are not concerned as ruling Elders in the government or discipline thereof. Now lay Elders are above the Deacons; but the *Seniores ecclesiæ* were below them; which is a further evidence that they were not lay Elders in the modern acceptance.” (Works, book ii., chap. 19.)

To these likewise Neander refers. (“General Church History,” vol. iii., p. 251, ed. Edin.) The *dictum* of the Council to which

Bingham alludes is mentioned by Augustine in *Enarr. Psal. xxxvi. Sermo ii.*, in connexion with a censure on one Primianus, who is said to have acted contrary to "*legem decretaque omnium sacerdotum*," "the law and decrees of the whole Priesthood or Clergy." The entire scope of the communication must be taken in order to understand it. So clearly, in this instance and in a thousand others at this time, do ecclesiastical writers refer to the difference, whether it were a right or wrong one, between the pastoral ministry and other orders of people in the church, always making the standard of discipline to lie in the synodal decisions of the former.

Besides, it must be remembered that, from the time of Constantine, the relations of the civil magistracy and the rulers of the church were becoming more implicated with each other. No Magistrate could afford then to slight the influence of the Bishop. Synesius of Ptolemais had himself excommunicated Andronicus the Governor there. And the Bishops themselves, placed in a peculiar position by the imperial laws, could not, in the unsettled state of society which was induced by the incipient breaking up of the Roman empire, govern their communities with anything like decision or effect, unless they carried with them the most influential of the laity, especially those in civil offices. Before Augustine's death, the Vandals had begun to desolate the fertile provinces of North Africa skirting on the Mediterranean; and during this time the Donatists, who were labouring under civil disabilities because of their peculiarities as a sect, were but ill-affected towards the imperial cause; so that, in every matter which affected the church, or the city in general, it was of the utmost consequence that the Clergy and the influential laity should act in harmony; and thus the historical notices which we have above. (See GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. iii., chap. 20 and 33, pp. 179, 211, ed. Milman, 1846; NEANDER'S "*General History of the Church*," vol. iii., p. 251, Edinb., 1848.)

Some writers, in reference to Bingham's comment on the passages above, have said that, so long^{as} it be granted the *Seniores* in question held *some office* in the church apart from public preaching or teaching, they contend for nothing more. If so, the controversy is at an end; for our opponents all the way through are understood to contend for a class of officers who, although they are engaged in the cares of secular life, and do not preach or teach, yet claim a share in primary administration of discipline and rule. Does it follow that, because a man is a Churchwarden, he has therefore a right to assessorship with the Dean and Rectors? Are men so to be deluded by the sound of the word *Seniores*, as to take them to be all one with pastoral Presbyters,

except in the matter of preaching? The concession just named gives up the whole point. Wesleyan Methodism has thousands of Elders similar in the main to those which the North African churches recognised, and consults them too. Any President of Conference might address a letter to the Ministers, Stewards, Local Preachers, Leaders, and people, without affording the least room to infer that the second or third mentioned were primary assessors with him or with the pastorate in ruling the church. If Augustine had written his superscription thus: "Augustine, with the Clergy and Seniors, to the church at Hippo,"—it would have been more to the point; but no such address can be found, and his Seniors seem to be pretty similar to those of Baxter, at Kidderminster, mentioned in his "Treatise on Episcopacy," where he says, "I had four ancient godly men that performed the office of Deacons. I had above twenty Seniors of the laity, who, *without pretence of any office*, met with us, to be witnesses that we did the church and sinners no wrong, and to awe the offenders by their presence."—P. 185.

In the Westminster Assembly several of the Presbyterian divines urged, that in the Jewish synagogue there were lay Elders, as well as Priests, who had a share in its government. But Dr. Lightfoot showed that these were their highest civil Magistrates; that the Priests had, in the matters of the temple, a special responsibility in which none could share; and that when the lay Judges had jurisdiction, it was in those causes where the offence was made a civil crime. But, apart from this, and supposing the matter were as just stated, even the Presbyterians felt that to argue that, because there were such officers in the synagogue, there should be similar in the Christian church, was a foundation much too frail on which to build a permanent institution. (LIGHTFOOT'S Works, vol. xiii., p. 63.) When church and state are united, then, of course, the Queen's supremacy and the authority of Parliament come in; and how far these interfere with, or are distinct from, spiritual rule, we do not here profess to say; but in any view they are the embodiment of an authority aiming at several objects, religious and civil,—an authority altogether different from that which is claimed for a ruling Elder, whose object is supposed to be only one.

As to the churches of the Alpine valleys and of Bohemia, which have been sometimes referred to as recognising ruling Elders, no authentic date of history can be fixed on, as a period in which this regimen was known, prior to the middle of the fourteenth century,—the time when there was a general heaving in the more enlightened parts of Europe against the Papal yoke. In the primitive habits of these people, and where their secular and domestic, as well as religious,

concerns had to be guided and directed,—no civil rule being established, except that which persecuted,—this order we may well conceive to have been adopted in part, about this time, from necessity. That the continued observance of this order tends to serve the interests of Christianity, we more than doubt; for, from recent reports as to the state of discipline in the Waldensian churches, it is to be feared that the ruling-Elder standard of a correct Christian life is lamentably below the New-Testament standard. As to its alleged antiquity, there is on this point no satisfactory proof whatever. In the document of “The Ancient Discipline of the Evangelical Churches of Piedmont, extracted from divers Authors and Manuscripts several hundred Years before Calvin and Luther,” there is reference to the subject in these words: “Amongst other privileges which God hath given to His servants, [the Pastors,] He hath given them this,—to choose their leaders, and those who are to govern the people, and constitute Elders in their charge, according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ, which is clear by that saying of the Apostle in the Epistle to Titus, chap. i.,” &c. This general language asserts, then, that the Ministers of this community appointed other Ministers and office-bearers suited to their peculiar position; but where are lay Elders put as their co-officials? (“History of the Evangelical Churches of Piedmont. By SAMUEL MORLAND, Esq.” 1658.) Their ancient government, from the time of the Paulicians, from whom they are supposed to be descended, was episcopal; and Reinerus, (*De Hæret.*, cap. vi., in *Bib. Patr.*, vol. xiii., p. 304,) who lived several years among them, gives the following orders: “*Ille qui est in primo et maximo ordine vocatur Episcopus: ille qui in secundo vocatur filius major: qui in tertio, filius minor: qui in quarto et ultimo vocatur Diaconus.*” “He who is in the first and greatest order is called Bishop: he who is in the second is called an elder son: he who is in the third is called a younger son: he who is in the fourth and last is called Deacon.” So that, according to this witness, the only distinction between Presbyters had been that of senior and junior; and this chief Barbe or Pastor and his fellow-Pastors met together every year to determine their affairs in a General Council. (See POWELL “On Apostolical Succession,” pp. 90–92. London, 1838. FABER’S “Waldenses and Albigenses.”)

We next adduce the testimony of Vitringa, who, after he has admitted that it was an early practice in some places for the Clergy to consult on grave occasions wise and eminent members of their communion, and that, in certain early churches, there were persons who, “*quodammodo*,” “after a certain fashion,” resembled modern lay Elders,—

asserts that the hinge upon which the whole matter turns is the fact, that of Elders of this sort no mention whatever is made in Holy Scripture. He sums up the argument from antiquity thus: "1. Those Elders, specially so called, did not among the ancients make a part of the Clergy,—that is, of an ecclesiastical order,—but a part of the people. They were not with the Clergy,—that is, with Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, in presbyteries, in choirs, or in councils,—but with the people: they adhered to them, and constituted a part of them, though an eminent and specially honoured part. 2. These Elders, for that cause, are placed after the Deacons, as is also certain from the testimonies which we have noted. 3. Wherefore the ancients also took care that they were not called Presbyters, lest by ignorance any one should confound them with the Elders of the church, of which mention is made in Scripture, but *Seniores* and *γέροντες*. 4. The care of the church was not devolved on them; forasmuch as not more upon them than upon all other members of the church rested the obligation of admonishing, exhorting, and instructing, in a private if not public manner, the people: *in excommunicating transgressors, and admitting penitents, they had no part*. I will say in a word, they were not a portion of the ecclesiastical senate to which the ministry and the care of the church was intrusted. (*Vide Hieron.: 'Et nos habemus in ecclesiâ senatum nostrum, cœtum Presbyterorum.'*—*Com. in Is.*, lib. ii., cap. 3.) They were regarded as a part of the people, separate and distinct from the Clergy and its senate, and undertaking no ministerial or clerical offices. Nevertheless, I affirm this was done,—a thing which reason teaches to be equitable and right,—that Bishops and Presbyters did not neglect to make use of the counsels, aids, and testimonies of these Seniors or eminent men, looked up to, in certain cases, by the people. Also in this primeval state of the church, when there was greater integrity of soul, a more ardent love, and less ambition, the intercourse between Clergy and people existed in much greater strength than afterwards. Lest any one should, moreover, confound these Seniors with the Presbyters of the Apostles' age, I will say in one word,—they were not prefects or rulers of the church, but Seniors of the people. Beware, therefore, lest you believe there is any farther mention of such Elders as these in the writings of the Apostles under the name of Presbyters of the church. Take care lest you believe, when Paul speaks in his Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 17) of 'Elders who rule well,' he is intent on describing such Seniors of the people. This name cannot be made to fit them, and does not agree with them. The church, after the demise of the Apostles, was under

the care of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. If the Presbyters of our church be compared with any part of the senate of the early church, no doubt they must be compared with the Presbyters of the church formerly so called, who themselves, as we have shown in the preceding pages, were a long way different from lay Elders. The fact that the scene is now changed, and that these same lay Elders are afterwards compared by learned men with the Seniors of the people mentioned in the ancient church, rather betrays than helps the cause of lay Elders.”—VITRINGA *De Vet. Synag.*, lib. ii., p. 510, *ad verba*, “*Agnoscamus in quibusdam ecclesiis*,” &c.

The sum of the whole matter, therefore, is, that in the later times of the North African churches,—say, about the middle of the fourth century,—and perhaps in a few of the Eastern or Syrian, the kind of organization alluded to above was to be traced; but it was not founded on Scripture, except so far as it might be regarded as a branch of the diaconate, *scripturally* considered: it was an arbitrary, though perhaps not unwise, arrangement. It was not different in spirit, and hardly in detail, from the lay stewardships of the Wesleyan economy. It had no connexion with the pastoral care; and therefore the system of ruling Elders, as expounded by recusant parties, is an institute and invention of Calvin,—one utterly unknown in the church of Christ until his day. His “*graves et probati homines qui unà cum Pastoribus communi consilio et autoritate ecclesiæ disciplinam administrarent, ac essent quasi censores moribus corrigendis*,” (in *Com.* 1 Tim. v. 17;) his “*Seniores*,” (in Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28,) are no more really to be found in early antiquity than they are in Scripture. See likewise LAWSON’S *Politica Sacra et Civilis*, cap. xii., p. 239. London, 1689.

The testimony of the Wurtemberg Confession is to this effect: “Therefore it is evident, that except an Elder be ordained in the church to the ministry of teaching, he cannot rightly take unto him either the name of an Elder or the name of a Bishop.”—“Harmony of Protestant Confessions,” p. 279. P. Hall, 1842.

Note (B), page 173.

THE Presbyters were supported partly by voluntary oblations, partly by a stipend paid them from the public treasury. In modern synagogues, the Parnasim impose a tribute upon the different members of the congregation, from which they pay the salaries of the presiding Rabbi and of the Chazzan. (BERNARD’S VITRINGA, cap. ix., p. 85.) So also Jerome: “This custom has obtained in the land of Judea to

this very day, not only amongst ourselves, but amongst the Hebrews ; viz., that they who meditate upon the law of the Lord day and night, and have no portion on earth but the Lord alone, should be sustained by the ministering of the congregations, and of the whole earth.”—*JEROME ad Vigil. Epis.*, lib. ii. “*Hæc in Judeâ,*” &c.

Note (C), page 176.

“1. WHAT authority has a single Leader? He has authority to meet his class, to receive their contributions, and to visit the sick in his class. 2. What authority have all the Leaders of a Society met together? They have authority to show their class-papers to the Assistant, to deliver the money they have received to the Stewards, and to bring in the names of the sick. 3. But have they not authority to restrain the Assistant, if they think he acts improperly? No more than any member of the Society has. After mildly speaking to him, they are to refer the thing to Mr. W. 4. Have they not authority to hinder a person from preaching? None but the Assistant has this authority. 5. Have they not authority to displace a particular Leader? No more than the door-keeper has. To place and to displace Leaders belongs to the Assistant alone. 6. Have they not authority to expel a particular member of the Society? No; the Assistant only can do this. 7. But have they not authority to regulate the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Society? Neither the one nor the other. Temporal affairs belong to the Stewards, spiritual to the Assistant,” &c.—*WESLEY’S Works*, vol. iii., pp. 426–428.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIACONATE.

“IT is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”—THE TWELVE.

§ I. BESIDES the Ministers last enumerated, said to be “set forth” by God, and “given” by Christ, other office-bearers were appointed under the direction of the Apostles, and amid such circumstances as to show that theirs too were intended to be standing functions in Christianity,—the supply of a need which would always be felt. These are Deacons. As the term *διακονία* implies most generally “a service rendered for another,” and *διάκονος* in its generic sense means “a servant or agent for another,” whatever may be the dignity or humiliation of that service; so *διάκονος*, as applied to a church office-bearer, who is distinct from a Pastor, (Pastors themselves being Deacons in one aspect,—Deacons of Christ,) signifies a servant of the church, or one who is ready to afford it such aids as the spiritual overseer, through the absorbing claims of his peculiar charge, cannot render. And here the synagogue type again appears:

for the office-bearer named Chazzan, among the Jews, discharged duties for his fellow-worshippers analogous to those which were fulfilled by the early Christian Deacon, for the congregation in which he was appointed.*

It was to the Chazzan, no doubt, in the synagogue of Nazareth, that our Lord gave the book of the Prophet Isaiah, after He had read a remarkable passage concerning Himself. This office-bearer, in St. Luke iv. 20, is called *ὑπηρέτης*, “the minister;” (the early Protestants explained it as *under-rower*;) whose duty ordinarily it was, among a class of duties chiefly of a secular or ritual kind, to read the sacred books, but who, on being sanctioned by the Ruler, was allowed to give place to any devout stranger who might be present. From the nature of things, such an arrangement as that of committing spiritual functions to one class, and secular to another, could hardly be avoided: for when we remember that every Christian society has a two-fold relation,—one towards the kingdom of heaven, for which it is spiritually training its members; and one towards the world, the gifts of which it is engaged to sanctify, and the social and commercial arrangements of which it has to meet; it will have temporal, as well as strictly religious, concerns to be managed. Funds have to be raised and applied, details of order and arrangement in respect of general and particular acts of worship have to be devised and acted on, certain compacts with civil society and civil

* “*Ipsam porrò synagogæ ædem ejusque utensilia sacra diligenter curare, singulis prospicere, sacra ordinare, lucernas accendere, arcam denudare, eique velum appendere, et quæ hujus generis alia sunt ministeria.*”—VITRINGA, lib. iii., cap. 21, p. 1127.

rulers have to be maintained, and instances of lack of service have to be supplied; and the design of the whole is, that even the financial and merely economical concerns of the Christian household shall be ordered in the spirit of devotion, and with all the advantages afforded by Christian wisdom and love.

§ II. The appointment of the seven persons mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, may be taken as the initiation of this office. Several writers, ancient and modern, have demurred to this, on the ground that the seven are no where termed specifically *διάκονοι*, “Deacons;” that although the daily ministration is called *διακονία*, yet this is so far from settling their specific office, that the Apostles themselves are represented as saying that they will give themselves to the *διακονία*, the “deaconship of the word;” and that in the enumeration of qualifications by St. Paul, in 1 Tim. iii. 8, there is not one which seems to have any reference to the function which the men at Jerusalem were particularly chosen to discharge, namely, the apportioning of relief to the widows, and so to take away an unnecessary burden from the Apostles. To this it may be replied, that the withholding of the name at the time of institution has in it no peculiar import, especially as the work assigned to them was called, in its most general sense, a diaconate. Some official Christians are alluded to in various places of the New Testament, in such a connexion as to leave no doubt that they are Elders; yet they are not there specifically called Elders. And as to almsgiving and the care of widows not being distinctly implied by St. Paul in those places where he treats of the qualifications of

Deacons, it is easy to suppose, on the one hand, that "the daily ministration" and "serving tables" involved something more than the mere distribution of alms; and, on the other, that when the First Epistle to Timothy was written, the exigencies of the churches had so far increased, that the functions of the Deacons were multiplied in equal proportion; while contributions to "poor saints," in a good degree, had fallen into the hands of the Apostles and Evangelists themselves to distribute. There is no need, therefore, to depart from the general sense of the Church of Christ, which, in all ages, has regarded the seven at Jerusalem as Deacons, for the purpose of making them into unique and extraordinary office-bearers, who were to serve a special and temporary purpose: for they were appointed to fulfil the outwardly economical duties which were then required by the Christian community, while the Apostles and Elders attended solely to the spiritual. It is not to be inferred that there was absolutely no spiritual duty confided to them, or that their temporalities were not to be attended to in a Christian and devotional temper; but that while those who gave themselves to the word of God and prayer were entirely responsible for the spiritual functions, however they might occasionally touch the details of finance and arrangement, the Deacons were wholly to take the charge of the church's temporalities upon themselves, however they might, at certain times, discharge a spiritual task, by praying or even teaching, supposing they were properly qualified for it.

Extraordinary in some sort these men, no doubt, were, as being the helpers of the first extraordinary

office-bearers of Christ's church,—the Apostles, and as being “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom :” but this high form of qualification was necessary at this period, inasmuch as the management of the temporalities of the community of believers was closely connected with the defence of doctrinal truth and righteous discipline. Many converted and evangelical Jews, of nobler character than Ananias and Sapphira, had brought their property and cast it into the common fund ; and this fund had to be distributed among claimants whose sincerity and spiritual state required to be wisely investigated. Christian believers, previously in competent circumstances, who were cast off by their Jewish families, were not indisposed still to abide by the social forms of their religion : but many of the Galilæans, and the Hellenists, who came from Gentile cities, some of whom, indeed, were actual Gentiles, and religiously such in almost everything, except as to their belief in Christ and revealed truth, held the Jewish yoke much more loosely. These persons obtaining the salvation of the Gospel at the same time with the pure Jews, they became naturally jealous lest the Messiah's church should be restricted to the Jewish form, and hampered by its impositions. Here was the germ of the great controversy between Jew and Gentile, into which the Apostles Paul and Peter had afterwards to throw themselves with all the authority of their inspiration. Yet not only was there required a doctrinal settlement of the question, as to whether the observance of the ceremonial law was necessary to salvation ; but men, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,—filled with a deep perception of what the kingdom of Christ on earth was to be,—were needful to

move in the midst of this conflicting mass of mind ; and to order even matters of daily detail, such as providing for widows, and for the great sacred and religious feast of commemorating Christ's death,—for the phrase “serving tables,” as that of “breaking of bread,” Acts ii. 42, most probably includes this,—so that, while prejudice was innocently conciliated on either side, there should be no compromise of the word and law of Christ ; and especially that no nice and delicate views of the question between Jew and Gentile should interfere with the greater provisions of the Kingdom of Heaven. The first Deacons were gifted in proportion to the gifts of those whom they were required to aid, and in proportion to the emergency they had to serve. The relation between Pastor and Deacon, then, was proportionably the same as it is now : if the pastorate is now of a lower type, so is the diaconate.

§ III. That pious females in the times of the Apostles were intrusted with this charge, is evident from St. Paul commending Phebe, a deaconess (*διάκονος*) of the church at Cenchrea, to the regards of the Romans, charging them to assist her in whatsoever business or affair she had need of them : “For,” adds the Apostle, “she hath been a succourer,” or “protectress,” “of many, and of myself also.” This succour would seem, from the context, to have been that of affording sustentation and guardianship to the persecuted servants of Christ, at a time when Jew and Gentile were alike banded against them. They are not to be confounded with the elder women, *πρεσβύτιδες*, mentioned by St. Paul in Titus ii. 3 : these being evidently private Christians to whom passing tasks

were confided, though both classes were, no doubt, adapted to a state of Christian society in which young females were peculiarly helpless and dependent, because of the rage of their heathen relatives against them, and from the consequent withdrawment of relative support. Pastoral intercourse with such was then a matter of greater delicacy, from the prevalent tone of usage and feeling; and hence the influence of godly women, to arrange the affairs of economy and finance in respect of all such, and to direct their conduct, was indispensable. It was not necessary that the Deacon's office should always in part be filled by females, for the state of society might alter; but it was necessary that there should always be Deacons in the church. Besides these and the pastoral class, no other office-bearers are mentioned. St. Paul addresses his Epistle to the Philippians, to the Bishops and Deacons; and in his directions to Timothy and Titus no other ecclesiastical persons appear.

§ IV For the first century after the death of the Apostles, there is dearth of information as to the exact position and functions of the diaconate, as, indeed, there is on all subjects connected with the polity of the church; but when we come to the age of Cyprian, we find Deacons reckoned as one of the orders of the Clergy, and that they were ordained to their office by imposition of the Bishop's hands. This, however, was connected with such circumstances as to show that a departure from the simplicity of Scripture, in this particular, had taken place; and was one indication amongst others of that sacerdotal spirit which was then stealing upon the church; such a spirit having been cherished by Christian apologists,

who were desirous of making the best case they could against the Jews, and seeking to win them over by the lure of a nobler, that is, more spiritual, hierarchy. Deacons, however, in the third century, were found equally ordained with other office-bearers, such as Sub-deacons, Readers, Acolyths, Exorcists, respecting whom it is not pretended that there is a word of information or direction in Holy Scripture; and, excepting so far as that their ancestry in office were actually designated by the Apostles, and ordained by imposition of hands, Deacons would be compelled to rest upon the same authority as their humbler office-bearers for their place amongst the *cleri*. Mere imposition of hands and prayer, however, were no proof of their separation to the work of God; for this rite, so general in its import, was used over the sick amongst the members, and, after the example of Christ, over children. Besides this, there could be only one reason for their being taken into the ranks of the pastoral ministry,—their occasional fulfilment (so it may be gathered from the Epistles of Paul to Timothy) of spiritual acts, as that of minor teaching, and in that way ministering to the chief teacher. But if no one can perform a spiritual act in Christ's church, except one who is especially ordained to exercise it, then every such act takes the form of *opus operatum*; the Spirit that worketh in all is grievously insulted, and Christianity, so represented, is altogether another thing from that which glows upon the pages of the New Testament. The freedom on the part of a Deacon to act in some cases of necessity, is only a proper vindication of Christian liberty, all the more appropriate from the ecclesiastical station of

the party ; while, on the other hand, the solemn separation of persons who shall statedly preach, administer the sacraments, and rule, is an equal vindication of the special call of God, and the necessary provision for the order and peace of the church. That Deacons do not scripturally belong to the pastoral ministry, is evident from this simple circumstance:—it was to preserve the integrity and separation of the pastoral ministry that they were appointed : they were to serve tables, while the others gave themselves to the ministry of the word and prayer. This fact is so evident, that even high episcopal systems, in some sort, recognise it, restraining the decidedly spiritual functions of Deacons to conditions and cases of especial permission, and only consigning their auxiliary and economical functions to their own discretion and responsibility. Thus the office in the Church of England for the ordering of Deacons : “It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon in the church, when he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine service, and specially when he ministereth the holy Communion, and help him in the distribution thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the church, and to instruct the youth in the Catechism ; in the absence of the Priest, to baptize infants, and to preach, *if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop*. And furthermore, IT IS HIS OFFICE, when provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or others.” And thus the rubric of the Roman Pontifical : “The

Pontiff alone, stretching forth his right hand, puts it on the head of each one that is to be ordained, and no one else [that is, no Presbyter] puts hands on with him, because they are not consecrated to priesthood, but to ministry—*i. e.* attendance on the priesthood."* In a recent instance in the diocese of Exeter, the Bishop admitted several persons to Deacons' orders, restraining them, at the same time, from the functions of preaching, or, what is the same thing, purposely withholding the license to preach.

In the Scripture view, therefore, the Elder is regarded as separated to the Gospel of God, labouring in the word and doctrine; the Deacon, as taking up so much of the temporal cares of the church, and even of the Elder too, as to leave the latter unhampered scope for his personal influence in all that concerns the guidance, order, and edification of the flock, as well as the conversion of sinners. He is the Pastor's assistant, friend, and stay. If in the pages of ecclesiastical history we find persons in this order, whose wisdom, energy, and piety were found to be exercised beneficially towards the spiritual edification of God's people,—such as Pontius, the panegyrist and Deacon of Cyprian; Athanasius, in his earlier day contending for the truth in the Council of Nice; Ephrem, the learned and devout Syrian; Paulinus, of Milan, who opposed Pelagius,—we are bound to believe that, notwithstanding they were so misplaced, through the operation of the sacerdotal spirit just

* "*Pontifex solus, manum dexteram extendens, ponit super cui-libet ordinando, et nullus alius, quia non ad sacerdotium, sed ad ministerium consecrantur; dicens singulis,*" &c.—"*Pontificale Romanum,*" *Part Prima.*

spoken of, yet they were fit to be true shepherds of the flock according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ : and the error of the church lay, not in receiving them to ministerial communion, but in neglecting to put them into their proper position with the Clergy. And so, in modern days, those who are admitted to the pastorate of the Church of England, or similar churches, may not be the less entitled to their place in that ministry, because they happen to be misnamed, or not quite scripturally classed.

§ V Let us hear, however, St. Paul : “ Likewise must the Deacons be *grave* :” if seriousness be especially becoming, it is where a man in ordinary life, and exposed to the full influence and excitement of its cares, is called to connect himself officially with the house of God. Exposed to the disadvantages of secular occupation, that exposure must, at least, be guarded by seriousness. “Not DOUBLE-TONGUED ;” acting the mutual helper both of Pastor, on the one hand, and member, on the other, his intercourse with both must needs be candid, truthful, and luminous in the highest degree ; always one, and always the same ; heart and lips never belying each other. “*Not given to much wine* ;” asserting the believers’ power over the sensual appetencies, and keeping them down. “*Not greedy of filthy lucre* ;” so that no financial transactions in the church shall be distorted or marred by the stamp of that base idolatry, even supposing a commercial integrity be preserved. “*Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience* ;” that all professed spiritual knowledge and experience may stand in connexion with such a dread of actual sin, whether of the flesh or of the spirit,

that it shall be always fought against and avoided, the conscience acquiring a sacred instinct of it, and thus imbuing all practical subordinate teaching; filling it with sacred passion, making the word of truth fraught with the spirit of truth, and leading to the holding of the truth in unimpaired purity. "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless." Human nature in all departments of religious duty is to be assumed as insufficient and unprepared of itself; and the point to be tested is, *who* will cast himself more fully upon the supplies of Divine grace. This arrangement runs through every department of the kingdom of God,—trial and difficulty first, honour and responsibility after.

"For they that have used the office of a Deacon well," *περιποιούνται*,—"acquire or obtain for themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is by practice that Christianity is put to the proof; and he who has passed through the often delicate and often severe tests, presented by the duties of the diaconate, without loss of faith, love, or humility, shall be regarded as a competent witness of these graces, and shall be more fully fraught with them all; shall have a deeper inwrought conviction of the Divine character of his religion, and be prepared for a good and yet higher degree of service,—that is, for the pastorate.

§ VI. And now, in applying these scriptural deductions to the subject before us, the candid Wesleyan is bound to confess that his system of church order does not exactly exhibit the Deacon's office, as it existed in the primitive churches. In this respect,

however, he does not stand alone. In the Church of England, a young man from Oxford or Cambridge, just admitted to this order, never thinks of continuing in it,—it is merely a *gradus* hastily passed over towards the presbyterate. He may read prayers and baptize, for an Incumbent, and bury the dead, and superintend a school, and occasionally preach ; but all these are matters of probationary introduction to something higher ; and the office is rarely held for more than a year, often for not more than a few months ; so that those who hold it have no settled aims or purposes beyond that of getting through its allotted term. Thus the diaconate can hardly be said to have a practical existence ; for hundreds of the largest churches in that Establishment have no Deacons at all. It will hardly be pretended that this is primitive and apostolical. Then, in Presbyterian Churches, so fully do ruling Elders transact all those affairs which the New Testament assigns to the persons we are considering, as we have already seen, that these latter are almost unknown amongst them ; and where, in a few modern instances, they are found, it is chiefly to give a nominally ecclesiastical completeness to the system. Exact primitive usage cannot, then, be pretended here. Nor would the candid Congregational Christian make a claim to this extent either ; though I am free to confess the Deacons of this body seem to me to approach the primitive pattern nearer than any other. All this is in proof that good men in all ages of Christianity have felt themselves at liberty to mould an office which, it is true, the Apostles devised and sanctioned, and which must therefore be regarded as sanctioned by Christ, but which, inasmuch as it was called forth by the tem-

poral necessities of the churches, may, by the varying of these temporal necessities, be itself, in its details of duty, varied. There has never been an attempt to make the pastorate so plastic : serious Christians have always felt they could not touch an institution “given” by Christ, and “set in the church” by God. A very simple principle sets forth the scriptural difference between the two : the one takes charge mainly of the spiritual, the other mainly of the temporal, concerns of the church.

The Wesleyan system can no more dispense with this office than any other ; and however the New Testament term may be omitted, yet virtually the duties of the diaconate are discharged in it upon a scale larger than is known in any communion of Christendom : some of them, indeed, are devolved upon godly persons who, in the high scriptural sense of that word, hold no *office*. It may be matter of regret that the scriptural designation has not been preserved ;—and its omission may be accounted for on the ground of Mr. Wesley’s unwillingness to adopt church terms to distinguish his office-bearers, while the Methodist Societies, according to his apprehension at first, constituted a kind of order in the Church of England, a society which had ordained Deacons of its own. But the necessities of the early Methodists called forth, first, the Society Stewards, (for they arose before any other subordinate functionaries,) who received the contributions of the people, and rendered a proper account of them ; then the Circuit Stewards, who received the funds of the last-mentioned, and disbursed them, watching over their appropriation to the support of the ministry, and everything else needful, with

economical care; then the Stewards of the Poor, who took charge of the collections made in their own appropriate department, administered in visitation relief to the indigent and afflicted, and provided for the love-feasts and the Lord's table. These are essentially diaconal duties; and if the charge were conferred for life, we might grieve, not only at the substitution of another term—that of “Steward”—for the scriptural one of “Deacon,” but at the absence of those solemnities connected with the appointment, such as prayer and imposition of hands, which were observed in the apostolical and ancient days; particularly when the Steward happens to be Leader as well, and so fulfils a spiritual duty. But amongst ourselves the office is usually only held for two years, and the holder is, indeed, to be re-elected at the end of one; and it is not a little remarkable that a system which has been held forth by its enemies to the opprobrium of the world, as being tyrannous and irresponsible in its administration, should so provide that the use of local funds, and the discharge of secular functions, may be put into the hands successively, in a few years, of every devout, respectable, and consistent man in each Society who is found competent for the post. The privilege, if it be any, instead of being confined to one or two for life, is given to all the more suitable persons in the community concerned; and when an office is held for so short a time, and utterly lapses at length as to the individual, a solemn ordination would be most unseemly, and could not fail to offend the spiritual perception of all persons who carefully thought on the matter. That Methodism has saved the New-Testament principle of the diaconate, all candid men

must allow; that it has not preserved the verbal designation, nor altogether upheld the dignity of the office, must be conceded. But the defect is not on the side of pastoral, but popular, influence: it does not aid aristocratical, but democratical, tendencies in the ordering of church-affairs. If our diaconal assistants are not eminent enough, it is because others must share the eminence with them. The lowering of individual importance is the price which men must pay for an honest democracy. If we must bear the stigma of being unscriptural, negatively, at least, in this single point of detail, let it be clearly understood whose case is met by this allowed shortcoming: it is an attempt to bring into office and governing influence all who by any possibility can present claims and qualifications for being invested therewith. The Wesleyan ministry has nothing to hide; and it provides that as many as possible shall look into its temporalities, and exercise a proper influence in the right ordering of them to their proper end. Some would include Wesleyan Leaders and Local Preachers in the diaconal body: and, indeed, in a former publication,* above ten years ago, I have done this; and mainly on the ground that as ancient Deacons, at least those who lived soon after the age of the Apostles, were found statedly fulfilling spiritual amongst their other duties, taking part in public and private worship, and assisting in religious teaching; so these our brethren, whose charge among us was altogether spiritual, though subordinate as to its position, might be reckoned in their rank and number. But further

* "Essay on the Pastoral Office."

reflection has convinced me that this arrangement is incorrect, inasmuch as the *original* ordination of Deacons was not to the care of souls, but to the serving of tables, and, in economical matters, the serving of the church; that whatever spiritual functions they were called upon by the necessities of churches to discharge, those functions were temporary and accidental, not called forth by official responsibility, but by a general engagement to serve the church. Thus, while all the office-bearers are ministers in a general acceptation of the word, Pastors, in scriptural representation, are directly Ministers of Christ, and responsible to Him; while Deacons are directly Ministers of the church, and responsible to it: yet not to slur the truth, that they also are ultimately responsible to Christ in the same sense in which every one of us is obliged to give account of himself for the spirit and motive of all his actions.

§ VII. With humility, however, honour is connected; but the honour of the Deacon's office is so pure and unearthly that none but a spiritual mind can perceive and value it. If a man shall aim at this position in the temper of Felicissimus at Carthage, simply because it will enable him to control ministerial appointments and changes, to lead on and embody the hasty impulses of the popular will, and affect the external relations of the Christian body by virtue of his politico-religious *status*; then an eye, so far from being single, will only have a marred and darkened vision of the object, and will be discontented with it, and will look to something higher. But the true servant of Christ's church, whose object in taking office is to promote peace and the salvation of souls,

and put down sin, will see in his position heaven and earth, things spiritual and things temporal, meeting together ; not as they are supposed to blend the functions of Pastors and of laymen, thereby confounding both ; not as they are held to meet together in the Pope, or Cardinal, or Prince-Bishop, of the Church of Rome,—a Gentilism which Christ solemnly prohibited in His charge to Zebedee's children ; but as all gathering of funds, all regulations in church-meetings, and, in a word, all economical tasks whatever, are made to shine out with radiancy through the simplicity, heavenly-mindedness, and love of the chief mover. The body is earthly,—the soul is from above. The radiancy is that of a cloud which gathers beneath the rising sun ; it is drawn from the ocean of alternate storms and calms ; it is fringed with warm and silvery glory by the heavenly light which falls upon it, though no part of its own nature ; and, when the hour of rain comes, the thirsty earth shall receive the benefit.

CHAPTER VII.

LIBERTY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

“WOULD God that all the Lord’s people were Prophets!”—MOSES.

IN maintaining the universal priesthood of God’s people, we go as far as any writers of any school of theology have gone; but the question of sacerdotalism has nothing to do with that which is before us. There may be in Christianity a holy nation, or *βασιλειον ἱεράτευμα*, a “royal priesthood,” according to the view of St. Peter; (1 Peter ii. 9;) and yet there may be within this community certain differences, between the members, of position and relation. These differences are recognised in Scripture, and shown forth as included in collateral images,—the household, the sheepfold, and the army. Thus, in the second century, while the ardent Tertullian regarded every true Christian as a *sacerdos*, with no less ardour he repelled the faction and disorder of those who would make a man to be a Minister one day, and a layman the next.* The essence of priesthood is mediatorship with God; and however official persons under the Old Testament were in ancient times appointed so to mediate, Scripture itself has concluded that this function is now wholly absorbed by our Lord Jesus Christ, in His own personal work and intercession. He appears as the One Mediator between the

* *De Præscript. Hæreticorum*, cap. 41.

world and the Father; but no one may presume to intrude between Him and the souls He came to save, inasmuch as it would be supplementing, and therefore offering indignity unto, His all-perfect ministry; for no less than the guilt of blasphemy would be incurred, in saying that any applicant brings a more sympathising and spotless humanity before the throne of grace, or, on the other hand, a more glorious dignity, than He. Yea, rather, I would say, none must presume in His name to perform His acts, or dispense His blessings, accounting all these as works wrought, or characters impressed; for all this is to place Him at a great distance, whose most endearing title is, "God with us," and to arrogate for sinful man a position which he has no qualification to fill.

These truths have been declared in the doctrines of Methodism with a clearness and power which can find no parallel in the history of the church: no religious body has ever more flatly opposed ministerial sacerdotalism. It is therefore a lamentable want of candour on the part of opponents who find fault with what they deem the undue amount of pastoral power amongst us, in that they are continually harping upon the words "hierarchy," "priestly influence," "priestcraft," and the like; as though the pastorate, which is a stewardship for Christ, and the sacerdotal office, were the same thing. If this were merely the rhetoric of popular and schismatic adventurers, ignorant of the proper value of the words they used, it would be unworthy of notice; but when it becomes the style of thoughtful and well-read men, it betokens rather a desire to speak *ad captandum*, and flatter the prejudice of the reader, than do justice to

the argument under consideration. Let Romanists and Romanisers bear all the consequences of their own theory: those consequences do not touch us. If the distinction between ministry and laity be asserted to lie in the supposed sacerdotalism of the former, then there was no such distinction in the Apostles' days; for there were then no Priests: but if it be asserted to lie, which is the point we maintain, in their separation to the work of teaching and ruling, then the distinction was as real in the Apostles' days as it is now. Was it not so, indeed, under the older dispensation? Did not Moses, the shepherd of Jethro's flock, become the shepherd of the chosen people, without detriment to the functions of the Aaronical priesthood, and without confusing them? and, in after-years, under the established theocracy, were there not Pastors in God's heritage, as well as Prophets and Priests? and were not their several acts and exercises at once distinct and harmonious? The spiritual shepherd's office involves a power unquestionably, or it becomes a nullity: but this is not a power to come in and mediate between the sinner and the Saviour, but in that Saviour's name to feed and guide the flock, including, under the first particular, the administration of Gospel truth; under the second, the discipline of those who profess to receive it; never, even in the case of impenitent offenders, stretching that power beyond the exclusion of the party from the Christian society, and leaving all absolute judgment in the hands of Christ.

As soon as a man becomes a member of the kingdom of heaven by regeneration, he is not only a new creature, but the subject of a new responsibility. He

is laid under obligation to promote the interests of the spiritual and heavenly constitution into the fellowship of which he is admitted. Freely he received, and now he is required freely to give. God, by making man the instrument of saving man, opens, in the bosom of every faithful winner of souls, a stream of new and purest happiness. Our knowledge of God even is not for our personal delectation; it is in order that others may know and glorify Him: it is the lighting up of another and yet another star, till the whole firmament glows with light. To use scripture imagery, it is the one or two talents given by the rightful Lord and Proprietor to His servant, that he may trade with them, and seek their increase; in which course he will find, for his sphere of action, that "the world" is his. From this it will follow, that the liberty to speak and act for Christ, is concurrent with the power of doing so, provided always that the everyday duties arising out of commercial, civil, domestic, and other relations, are all diligently discharged. It is a liberty not flowing out of a general sacerdotalism, but from the doctrine of a gratefully acknowledged responsibility; which doctrine is impressively laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, and the Parable of the Talents. It is a freedom to serve Christ, not to subvert His order; to supplement and harmonise with His pastoral institution, not to merge and destroy it; to perform Christian and loving tasks, even those of a spiritual nature, for our fellow-men; not to usurp, or, what in such a case is nearly the same thing, make nugatory, a spiritual office: and, being a liberty to serve Christ, it will need, in the case of various individuals, to be guided intelligently

towards that end, just as much as the freedom of a British citizen would need to be guided, in any proposed act of loyal attachment to the throne, by legal information and direction of the bar or the magistracy. The freedom to do a spiritual act, in an emergency when love constrains and opportunity calls, is surely a very different thing from the fixed obligation of official responsibility, in creating which responsibility the call of God and personal dedication are all concerned.

May not a sensible man, in a very plain case, administer medical aid to the sickly and dying, if the physician is overtaken or away? But if he should turn presumptuous, and say, "Away with physicians, and break up their college!" he would no longer be sensible, but a fool. The instincts of mankind would never suffer this flippant dealing where the welfare of the community was so deeply staked; nor would those instincts, which are rather intelligent convictions, allow of anything else than that the voluntary helper should give way in the presence of the tested and qualified professor; or, if, in great emergencies, a large number of unprofessional people should be employed to render help to the sick and injured, that, at least, they should not refuse to be guided by the larger knowledge and experience of the medical board. The highest analogy of this sort is found in the ecclesiastical arrangements of Christianity. There is the divinely appointed office, requiring a tested qualification and vocation in him who holds it, in order that the Gospel may certainly be taught, and its requirements kept, and that successive holders may be continually provided: but still this does not hinder that pious per-

sons on different occasions may teach, or help even to administer, when help is required, or when no official administrator is near. In all these things, both human and heavenly wisdom show us, that the individual freedom is directed by the office, not the office subverted or made of none effect by the freedom ; for in Christ's church liberty is harmony with law, not release from it. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:" and the Holy Ghost cannot be supposed to confound and destroy, by His occasional bequests to individuals, those institutions of the kingdom of heaven which it is His especial work from age to age to maintain.

Turning from these preliminary considerations to the Scriptural confirmation of them, we shall find in the New-Testament history that many believers were found occasionally doing spiritual acts, who had received no official designation or ordination. I refer as well to those who had received the *χαρίσματα*, or special "gifts" of the Holy Ghost, for the edification of the infant communities, as to those who appeared to act and live under the ordinary influence of sanctifying grace. Thus it is said of the church at Jerusalem, scattered by persecution, that "they went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4.) Doubtless the Elders amongst these, or some of the seventy ordained by Christ himself, as being most prominent, would be most likely to bear the chief weight of the persecution ; and, also, it was likely that those who were restrained from going into the villages of the Samaritans by Christ before His death, in order to give every evangelical advantage to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, were every way most fitted to

repair the defect arising from that restraint by now spreading their sacred fire throughout Samaria; and further, that they were all, more or less, gifted for the work, and authorised to fulfil it, by the miraculous influences of the Spirit which fell upon the one hundred and twenty, and again upon the subsequent assembly. (Acts iv. 31.) But still, let the broadest and largest view which the history can suggest be taken,—let it be freely granted that unministerial and unofficial Christians went and boldly preached the word,—there is nothing in all this to mar or interfere with the order which Christ has established in His church. Persecution, when extreme, is an event which loosens the common institutions of society, both civil and religious: and as children must act as fathers, and those who would otherwise be guided as guides, when fathers and guides are taken away, so zealous and loving Christians, when their spiritual heads are few, or removed from them, or when they themselves are cast into a sphere where there has been no previous witnessing for Christ at all, are bound to bear their testimony for Him until the appointment of Ministers shall take place.

The defence of Stephen before the Council can hardly be quoted in this case: it was rather a forensic than a religious or ecclesiastical act. But Philip is said to have preached to the people of Samaria; and if he were not the Apostle who bore that name, he would, doubtless, be Philip, one of the seven who were chosen to serve tables. It is true, this person is described, in Acts xxi. 8, as an Evangelist, and, therefore, a preacher by office; but he might not as yet have received his evangelistic designation. As the

Spirit moved upon the face of the waters in the material creation, when He moulded the earth into form and beauty, before He brought the regular influence of sun and moon to move upon them, to produce the tidal flow and reflux in the ocean, and the exuberant and lasting life of the organisms on land,—so, in the spiritual, He ruled supreme and sovereign in all hearts, and used whom He would, until the church of Christ was settled into order, to gather in the ordinary way souls for eternity. And then, while He established and confirmed Christ's positive institutions in respect of the ministry, He provided for an universal freedom to witness for Christ, by confession or by teaching, in those exigencies in which lower or non-dedicated gifts might avail for a present purpose: for, the persecution just alluded to being over, you hear no more of Philip till you hear of him as an Evangelist.*

Proceeding onwards, we have Priscilla and Aquila,—“tent-makers,” yet, in relation to St. Paul, his “helpers in Christ Jesus.” These, too, were *fugati*,—Christian Jews driven away from Rome by the Emperor Claudius; and they wandered first to Corinth, and then to Ephesus; in which latter place they instructed more fully in the way of the Lord the eloquent Apollos, who already had begun to preach in the synagogue: and, more than this, they gathered in each place of their temporary abode a church in their house. (Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19.) Besides these, the Apostle refers to “Urbane, our helper in Christ,” “Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord,” “the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the

* See Note (A), Appendix.

Lord.” Some of these who are thus mentioned in the Apostle’s salutations here, may have been regularly appointed Ministers over the flock, waiting on their prophecy, ministry, teaching, ruling, and the like, accordingly as they are exhorted in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle, in connexion with those who, like the Apostle, had been subjected to imprisonment, were of note among the Apostles, and were in Christ before him : but as several of the names are those of females, we proceed upon the largest supposition, that in those days of travel, strife, persecution, and exigency, the labours of Apostles, Evangelists, and Elders, were every way supplemented and aided by the efforts of otherwise retired Christians, who spoke, accordingly as they had ability, to believers and unbelievers, and served their infant communities in any way which might be required. At Philippi, according to the Epistle, there were women who laboured with the Apostle in the Gospel ; and at the head of these, no doubt, was Lydia, the seller of purple, and convert of Paul, whose energy is so briefly, yet graphically, marked in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

These instances are sufficient for our purpose ; and whether the founder of Methodism had them in his eye or not, the evangelical necessities of his position, which in such a case are the leadings of Providence, drew him into a close imitation of them. When he and his co-Pastors were overtaken with the labour of privately advising with, and exhorting, those who desired to flee from the wrath to come, he willingly accepted the aid of godly men and women among the people, who were at hand, for this purpose ; and thus

arose the Leaders : and as the separated ministry could not possibly furnish continuous instruction in all the towns and villages of our country which at that time were destitute of Gospel teaching, this deficiency became supplied, as far as was possible, by the labours of pious laymen,—persons who still followed their worldly callings ; who were not at the entire disposal of the Societies or the Ministers, to be sent anywhere in the world,—for their special Christian obligations lay in the sphere of commercial, professional, or industrial life ; who had not professed to hear the voice of Christ, commanding them to leave all, and follow Him ; but who, from love to souls, and zeal for the Gospel cause, were willing to devote as much time and energy, to eke out evangelistic labour, by preaching and exhortation, as convenience and their other avocations would allow. Thus, as it is well known, Origen, in the third century, was permitted to preach, while yet a layman ; and several Bishops in his day defended the permission, as one which was warranted by a frequent usage. In the way mentioned above, the Local or lay Preachers were originated. The word “Local” being in use before the complete and formal severance of the Methodists from the Church of England, and the recognition of the Wesleyan Pastorate, took place, it was chiefly used to distinguish them from the Preachers, emphatically so called, who were wholly devoted to the work, travelled statedly over extensive Circuits, and blended the evangelistic and pastoral functions together. In many instances their natural endowments were equal to those of their Ministers ; in a few instances they were, perhaps, superior. But here was the difference between the two classes :—the lay

Preachers never offered to act under Christ's great commission, to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," never declared themselves as giving up their worldly prospects to do so; nor had they any external call from the Pastors, congregation, or people, with the like view, and so they were not ordained and separated: but simply from a strong desire to contribute toward the salvation of souls, and fill up the lack of other service, they proffered to serve the cause of Christ, as they could, in their own immediate neighbourhood. Grace they had,—and many of them, in the primitive ranks, great grace,—and wisdom to win souls; but it was not THE grace which is needful to sustain the anxieties, trials, joys, and sorrows of the pastoral care,—the grace which is the concomitant of the gift and of the call. In the wide Circuits of early Methodism, and in Mr. Wesley's life-time, they were entirely and singly under the guidance and oversight of the Superintendent Minister, called the Assistant; and not till some years after Mr. Wesley's death had they separate meetings of their own. Thus the impression in that day, on governing and intelligent minds, was, that they were private Christians of more than ordinary love and zeal, seeking to fill up the intervals of their busy life with works of affectionate duty, in behalf of Christ and the souls of men. And nothing has occurred since that day to alter this position, except that usage and recently-written rule have acknowledged their right to sit in the Quarterly Meetings of the Circuit, as well as in their own Quarterly Meetings, and so exercise a subordinate share in the economical ordering of the Society's affairs, in proportion to their share in its subordinate teaching.

In many places, and in different controversies, this popular argument, in reference to such a band of fellow-labourers, has often found a good deal of sway ; namely, that as this or that brother has been owned of God in the conversion of souls, or in the introduction of the Gospel into some town or village where the work has been proceeding ever since, he is therefore as much a Minister of Christ as any other. A minister no doubt he is, in the same sense in which Priscilla, or Aquila, or Lydia, or a door-keeper, is a minister ; but not in the sense of “ Bishop, Teacher, Pastor, or Elder,”—the designations which are involved in our use of the term. The men of Cyprus and Cyrene preach to the Grecians at Antioch, and numbers of them turn to the Lord ; but as soon as this comes to the ears of the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas is sent to take charge of this work, and provide for its conservation, which the Cyrenian believers could not do. And so, in times nearer our own, Wesleyan emigrants have carried the Gospel, by their own free and homely teaching, into the back wilds of America ; but Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor must be sent forth by Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors to organize and administer the regular ordinances of a Christian church. Mr. Baxter, of Her Majesty’s dockyard in Antigua, has compassion upon the black and degraded population of that island, and takes initial steps toward the formation of a religious society ; but Dr. Coke is sent there by a special Providence, to set on foot that great Missionary enterprise which since that day has entirely changed the face of the West India Islands. If all who save souls are Ministers, where shall we draw the line of

distinction between them and other Christians, or how find a distinctive ministry at all ?

Do not pious mothers save more souls than any class of minor office-bearers whatever ? Are not zealous and sensible Sunday-school Teachers—and, still more, are not intelligent and devoted Leaders of classes in Methodism—as fruitful in contributing to conversions, as brethren whose efforts are confined to the pulpit ? And have not single Christians been found, of rare simplicity and love, who have borne no office, and yet have accomplished more visible good than any one person who can be found in the positions just mentioned ? Yet are all these Ministers ? To say they are, would be trifling with a word ; the flippancy all the more revolting, from the momentous nature of the subject. On this scheme, half the New Testament must be a dead letter. A wild Montanist notion of the work of the Holy Ghost, like that which is involved in representing all fluent and ready speakers as speaking through His unction, leads men in the end to doubt, as the Montanists actually did before their sect became extinct, whether there be any Holy Ghost : for when the circle of profanity and vulgarity is run through, and when the effects of such profane vulgarity are sadly apparent in those forms of sin against which the mere spirit of man, even in religious men, has no power,—and when the institutions of Christianity, which guard and maintain the truth, are treated with contempt,—this is the almost natural conclusion to which people, apart from other influences, would come. When men of activity in Christ's church advance their claims, and draw nearer and nearer to the ministerial position, then their grace

must increase, or their peril increases : an attempt, on the part of the aspirant, to draw the deference of the people, which otherwise, and in a healthy state of things, would be freely yielded to them, and to exercise the implied functions of the office, without possessing the vocation and gifts of the Spirit,—among which last humility is one of the best and brightest,—is to endanger their relations with the Saviour : then each one of them is a “novice, lifted up with pride,” who has fallen “into the condemnation of the devil ;” and, as St. Paul teaches us, (1 Tim. iii. 6,) must not be made a Bishop of the flock. Nor is this all ; for the blindness and delusion of heart which belong to this sin, often betray its subject, reft as he is of all delicacy of spiritual feeling and perception, into open wickedness and shame. No Christian communion can furnish a more monitory history on this subject than the Wesleyan ; and many of ourselves are almost chargeable with blood-guiltiness, for placing individuals in places of responsibility, and, consequently, of danger, whose gifts and graces were utterly inadequate to fill them. But for the present we must draw a veil over the scene,—over a blighted, though once hopeful, piety ; and over the awful farce of allowing men to deal in sacred phrases, and become familiar with sacred acts, only that, eventually, they may utter the one, and mimic the other, in the wild strife of political faction, or the scoffing cabals of liberal scepticism.

And if we draw our monitions on this subject from the Old Testament, we shall be sustained in such a course by the authority of inspired writers in the New. The judgment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,

presents one great and leading monition. (Numb. xvi.) I know it is usual for ecclesiastical levellers to skim impatiently over this fact of history, and then lay it by, saying, "O, all this, with its appendent lessons, belongs to the Jewish theocracy and priesthood, and looks no further." But the matter cannot be disposed of thus. How is it that the Apostle Jude, in language which seems to tremble with the weight of emotion it expresses,—the varying emotion of awe, pity, and terror,—describing prophetically the career, the guilt, and the doom of false aspirants after the teaching office, involving their ultimate removal from the scene of sin and strife, says, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core?" How? unless there be a true analogy between the cases. "The way of Cain" is the way of intellectual pride and self-will: "the error of Balaam" is the error of contriving for personal gain and popularity: "the gainsaying of Core" is opposition to God's appointed institution, whether it be that of a sacerdotal rule, as in ancient times, or a teaching and heaven-sent ministry, as in modern: and no one can have been a very close observer who does not admit that the church-disturbers of all ages have been mainly distinguished by these features.

Jude does not allude to the case of Korah and his company to show that true Ministers of Christ are Priests, but rather to show that the same God who vindicated and defended his servants of the tabernacle in the discharge of their own peculiar responsibilities, is still pledged to vindicate against all assailants, and especially assailants in neighbouring positions,

the Stewards of His Gospel-household in the maintenance and discharge of theirs. Can any other conceivable sense be assigned to the allusion? and very awfully has God's providence verified it a thousand times in His dealings with individuals. The whole scene is true to the life in all its details. First Korah, who is a Levite, and therefore an office-bearer, makes common cause with Dathan and Abiram, who are Reubenites, and have no office, and induces them to rise against the pastorship of Moses and Aaron. Here is the temptation which belongs to a place which is not the ministry and yet is only within one step of it, involving the further temptation in the hearts of those who hold that place to seek for help from men of the commonalty by persuading them that they, too, are slighted and oppressed: so in the Christian church, it is the holder of some trust, the depositary of some gift, who, yielding, by little and little, to an etherealised and long veiled ambition, is at last resolved to tolerate no power beyond his own. Like the sensual voluptuary, he cannot take his cup but he must become drunken. Then there is the plea set up by Korah, that "all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them,"—a plea which modern philosophy, however it may repel other parts of the lesson, is not slow to urge, by representing the whole Christian community as the subject of one common religious consciousness, and, by consequence, all its members as claimants of a common and equal right to govern; as though the Holy Ghost could not be in all as the Illuminator and Regenerator, and yet, at the same time, specially in some as the source of ministerial grace and unc-

tion ; as though God could not be with all the household as its Head, and yet specially with its Stewards, as their Prompter, Stay, and Guide, in order that He might be their Judge ; as though the primal authority could not with equal righteousness set bounds to an individual office, and to the providential pathway of a wanderer through the world. And if we think of the judgment which followed in connexion with the Apostle Jude's prophetic comment and woe, we have before us the representation of a constant dispensation of God's government on earth, by which those who labour through pride to subvert His order, are themselves subverted, removed, and, as to usefulness and office, swallowed up, in this present evil world. And lastly there was the murmur that rose on the following morning, that these heads of Israel, Moses and Aaron, had killed the people of the Lord ; illustrating the manner in which a popular ferment and passion can lead to the most blind and reckless conclusions, to the utter misconceiving of a righteous, though serious, act of discipline.

The whole Epistle of Jude is one of the most awful documents of Holy Scripture in reference to those who insinuate themselves into the teaching office and function for ambitious and personal ends ; for this is the one subject of the communication. No Epistle carries stronger internal evidence of a powerful and plenary inspiration. It is not the strain of one who writes from his own natural and elevated consciousness, prompted by which he adventures upon a great breadth of amplification. It is rather a brief and startling message, which closes when the authorising utterance is withdrawn.

It is our only authority for the primæval state of the fallen angels, and for the fact of an unpublished prophecy of Enoch, and for the contention of Michael with Satan; and therefore we are justified in attributing the imagery of the twelfth and thirteenth verses to the Holy Spirit's direct suggestion. Wicked adventurers are here "SPOTS IN YOUR FEASTS OF CHARITY;" that is, spots of darkness in a circle of sacred light: "CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER;" fleecy and gaily-fringed to the sight, but pouring no refreshing rain, mocking the expectation of the husbandman: "CARRIED ABOUT OF WINDS;" that is, ready to move with any current of opinion, no matter from what quarter it may proceed, or whither it may tend: "TREES WHOSE FRUIT WITHERETH;" that is, if there be in their case the utterance of truth, it is powerless, pointless, and leaves no result: "TWICE DEAD;" dead once as all men are in original sin, and now dead by departure from the source of life: "PLUCKED UP BY THE ROOTS;" no longer drawing strength from regeneration and union with Christ: "RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA, FOAMING OUT THEIR OWN SHAME;" that is, ready for the wild whirl of agitation; tumultuous, restless, reckless, and scattering their own shivered influence to injure, where it has lost its power to save: "WANDERING STARS, TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER;" being all the more objects of terror, as they once had an orbit, and moved in beauty around a central sun.

O that the minds of generous youth now rising among us, youth that know not yet, however, their own hearts, and are naturally impatient of learning the lessons of the past, would hearken to and be

warned by this testimony! To fall into perdition from any point is a fearful issue; but to fall from the courts of the Lord's house is a startling and inconceivable ruin.

I would rather linger with loving memory over the names of many Local Preachers, who occupy our early obituaries, and over those of honourable and holy women and their associates, and a company in humbler sphere, beyond my power to enumerate, who, as Leaders of Classes, have strengthened our hands in the Lord, than show how others have been snared and taken in the toils of the great deceiver. Many existing Leaders and Local Preachers are among our dearest friends, and among the noblest and best of human beings. But these pages cannot afford space for the luxury of sustained contemplation. The claim of the aspirant is suicidal. What lay Preacher of sound and sober understanding is there, who, when confronted by the bigotry of exclusive systems,—a bigotry which asks him, “By what authority doest thou these things?” does not feel it an advantage to refer, not only to his own conscience, which, of course, might be subject to a thousand vagaries, but to the sanction of a regular Christian communion, and to the guidance of its pastorate, for his authority? Methodism has not erred, we think, in accepting, even to a greater extent than any other church, the labours of pious laymen and spiritually-minded females; for the Apostles were not slow to do this: but it may have erred in allowing an interpretation of these exercises to grow up, which has tended, in no small degree, to confound the ordinances of Christ with those allowable institutions of man, which are so

clearly distinguished in the New Testament; and its dangers, agitations, and troubles have mainly arisen from this circumstance. Bishops or Elders, and Deacons, as we have seen, are the only ecclesiastical persons mentioned in Scripture,—the only persons who hold office, in the just sense of that term. Any other allotment of stated labour is the creation of an office in another and a lower sense,—an office *so to speak*: one, no doubt, which Christ will own and bless, according to the spirit and temper in which its duties are fulfilled; yet only so long as it harmonises with the entire Christian institution, its catholic claims and obligations. Nothing distresses me more than that the controversies of the age drive me to the seeming course, though it is no more than seeming, of undervaluing a class of fellow-labourers who are always regarded, as long as they are pledged to us in sympathy, and in the pursuance of a common object, with feelings of respect and love. But the wisest and best among them will be the first to subscribe to the sentiments which are here expressed. In the foreign fields of Christian enterprise there are thousands of such fellow-labourers, many of them greatly owned of God; but there are very few among those thousands who deem otherwise than that they are as much bound to defer to the guidance, and acquiesce in the discipline, of the Missionary Pastor, as any other member of the flock. Events sometimes speak more loudly than theories: and such events are noted in a recent communication* from a worthy Missionary in Australia; who states, that in the excite-

* "Missionary Notices," August, 1852, p. 113. Letter dated, "Melbourne, Victoria, January 21st, 1852."

ment consequent on the discovery of gold in the colony, more than half the Local Preachers left the Circuit, in order, if possible, to enrich themselves by digging for the precious metal. Now, no one could positively say that these brethren erred in leaving the Missionary Pastor to stay with the town population, and going themselves into the wilderness to better their commercial and social condition : indeed, it might be a providential opening, which, for the sake of their families, they were right in following ; for ordinary commerce is only another form of digging for gold. But what becomes of their conduct on the theory that they, too, were Ministers and Pastors ? Might not the Superintendent in such case have said, “ Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world ? ” (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

Now, all the above principles are in harmony with the moral laws of the universe and of society, in which the fixed and the free combine with, and work into, each other. Some men must do certain things at all events and all hazards ; others may do them occasionally with great propriety and advantage, but not under the force of obligation. The Judge on the bench must explain the law with directive authority, and must give judicial decisions in the cases brought before him ; and yet the judgments of wise and able, though non-forensic, men, when brought to bear on the same matters, may often be equally in harmony with the statute-book, and be beneficially received and acted on as such. There are trade-winds and tides on the ocean, which are uniformly calculated on as aiding the voyager over its surface ; but the varied stray breezes of the atmosphere, and the apparently abnormal currents of the

deep, all yield their advantage in one sum total, when loss and gain have been balanced; and the provision for good is found on the whole to be one great unity.

So, in the sphere of unofficial and, in some sense, irresponsible action, must gifts and power be developed, to supply a void, and to ascertain a vocation; and this before the burden of responsibility is imposed. The Greek youth must freely use his limbs in nature's own gymnasium, before his father will consider whether it were well to send him to the arena, to contend in the presence of many witnesses for a crown. Origen, of old time, and a host of licentiates in modern communions,—Wesleyan Local Preachers among the rest,—are permitted to preach the word, in order to test their spiritual temper and fidelity; and then, when a vocation manifestly appears, to acknowledge it and obey, by inviting the unobtrusive guest at the wedding-feast to go up higher.

And for the consolation of all who engage in free tasks for Christ's sake, it must be asserted, nor can the doctrine be too often repeated, that it is not office, but the heart's own simple love, which gives to actions their dignity in God's sight. The absence of ordination need not involve the want of sanctification, as far as the deed extends. A soul is none the less saved because the principal instrument of that salvation did not occupy the place of a recognised Pastor; neither is the Pastorate of less value, because of its nurturing efficient fellow-helpers among the laity. "Holiness unto the Lord" is to be written upon the bells of the horses; therefore upon prayer, upon precept, upon hymn, upon exhortation.

“Unto each its hue is given,
 Varied as those stones of heaven :
 Love, which, like an angel’s sight,
 Sees all things divinely bright ;
 And each duty fills with rays
 Fairer than the chrysopræse.”

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 220.

“AND so *within*, and towards each other, *all* Christians are bound, to the extent of their capacity, and the opportunities which God has given them, to be *Teachers* likewise ; and no one is without that appropriate and personal sphere in which, without derogating from other authority, the effectual knowledge of the Gospel, and the salvation of souls committed to his charge, is made dependent upon him. And thus, as God’s natural attributes are reflected, not only in the mighty whole of the creation, but in each individual particle ; so the image of Christ and His offices, so far as they are communicable, is reflected in each ultimate atom of which the organic whole is constructed, and the collective church is multiplied in each individual. Still, eminently, and with special power, by virtue of their office, and unction of the Spirit, are the Ministers of the church of Christ Teachers ; and upon the due discharge of this portion of their trust mainly depends the salvation of the souls of which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. No step or motion God-ward, no mutual or individual celebration of prayer and thanksgiving, no participation of holy ordinances, is even possible without a previous intelligence, and that teaching of the ways of God in the Gospel, which cannot be separated from a rational and understanding faith ; no, not, in its degree, *even as to the child*, in whose behalf, before it has faith and repentance for itself, the faith and repentance of others is required by the church. And then there are those solemn accessories of effectual teaching,—the rebuke, the constant calling to mind, the building up the structure of Christian wisdom upon the first foundation ; and the leading, by spiritual comparison, into those profounder meanings, and the application of those great truths, which are contained in the depths of revelation ; to the comprehension of which, intellect and

holiness, illuminated by the Spirit, and indissolubly combined in their operations into one mighty faculty, without a name in the world's language, are indispensable to the soul. All this involves a vast responsibility: it demands a clear discrimination and statement of great principles, and a constant and accurate comprehension of the laws of man's spiritual and moral nature relatively to the Gospel; laws which ought to be placed beyond the reach of any personal peculiarities to colour them, or the suspicion of limited views to misrepresent them. It requires a commanding truthfulness of statement, which every heart should acknowledge, and a ready reference to an unquestionable authority, to make possible the discharge of so solemn and onerous a duty."—GARBETT'S "Bampton Lectures," vol. ii., *Lect. v.*, pp. 34, 35. 1842.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE CONNEXIONAL PRINCIPLE.

“IF we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”—
ST. JOHN.

§ I. WE now approach the point controverted between Congregationalists and nearly all other professing persons, as to whether the Christian society meeting in one place, however small its number, has a scriptural right of absolute self-control, to the repulsion of any authority from without; or whether it is so placed, that, in order to fulfil all the purposes of the Gospel, it must needs enter into connexion with other churches,—a connexion of such a kind as to enable the several societies to render each other mutual aid, and subject themselves to a common order; providing, at the same time, as such an arrangement must do, for the testing, appointment, and discipline of Ministers by persons of their own order. The *οἰκοδομή*, “building-up,” of the body of Christ is greatly concerned in the resolution of this matter.

Here, however, a previous question occurs,—the question as to how this congregation was originated; by whom, humanly speaking, it was made Christian. It may consist of persons who were lately sunk in misery and sin, but were awakened, and led to conversion, by one or more other persons in regular Christian society, with whom they had no previous

tie. These new converts might be still ignorant, and need nurturing; oppressed with poverty, too, while their spiritual benefactors were both wise and willing to render them pecuniary aid. Does not every principle in Christianity tend to the linking of these new-found disciples to those who found them,—the converter to the convert, and *vice versâ*? And if they must needs continue a distinct Society, must not the little congregation, as such, look to the parent community for both support and guidance? that is, to obtain its Pastor, and the means, in whole or part, of his subsistence, and the rules of Christian order for the guidance of its individual members?

§ II. Again: before we come to positive evidence, it appears to me that there are antecedent presumptions existing under the surface of both Old and New-Testament teaching, far more in favour, than otherwise, of the notion, that the main sections of the Christian church should take the connexional, rather than the several and independent, form. There was no absolute independency of the single congregation under the former dispensations of the covenant of grace; and the glory of the latter is never said, in the least degree, to consist in any alteration which affects this particular; inasmuch as the liberty which prevails where the Spirit of the Lord is, (2 Cor. iii. 17,) is freedom of direct access to God through Christ, without the intervention and obscuration of a sacerdotal ritualism.

The Shemitic families were, more or less, under the control and oversight of their patriarchs: the Israelites had their respective tribes and families, and, in later days, their synagogues, compacted and regu-

lated by their Synedrium: and though Protestant Christians know no Head, no Shepherd, or Bishop of souls over them all, but the Saviour in heaven, yet there is nothing in the free and noble spirit of the Gospel to prevent single assemblies of them from being mutually subject, under a common and accepted authority, when the greater extension of His kingdom is the common object. The most strenuous supporters of a democratic theory in human politics will themselves yield to a council of war, or even to the word of a commander, where unity, *at all events*, must be secured, or a victory won. And as it is better, on the whole, to risk the possible chance of errors and mistakes in that authority, and even the extreme possibility of being obliged to remove from under it, and seek another, rather than lie still in fragments to be ruined, and dispersed by the enemy in detail; so there is no reason why men, whose definition of Christian freedom is willingness and liberty to serve Christ, should lower themselves, mar the dignity, or miss the end, of their being, by not bringing out the highest aggregate wisdom of their distinct Societies, and uniting it into a guiding authority for the whole; thereby aiming to serve Christ more effectually,—making a firmer stand against sin, and a bolder aggression upon the world. There is nothing in the tone of apostolical precept which forbids this: the principle of it—that is, of mutual submission—is rather affirmed, again and again. If conventional submission is to be absolutely repudiated, then universities, schools, families, must all dissolve the bonds by which they are held together, and the world be plunged into a miserable fight of adverse atoms.

Where some churches are weak and others strong, it is to be presumed, surely, on all common principles of the Gospel, that they are intended to help each other; for this is only an expanded application of the principle in Gal. vi. 2, where bearing each other's burdens is expressly said to be a fulfilment of the LAW OF CHRIST: and out of this arrangement will necessarily grow some form of economical control, so far as mere human economy is concerned; for those who afford help have some right to determine the conditions on which it shall be given; and those who are aided cannot call the exercise of this right an infringement of their liberty;—provided always, and indispensably, that they are consenting parties to the compact; for Christianity knows nothing, in its ecclesiastics, of coercion.

§ III. The commission, too, which our Lord gave to His Apostles, to “go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,” with the promise, that He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world, seems to be uttered prospectively of the establishment of a connecting link, by which Ministers, in their several territories, should be united in a tangible and formal, as well as sympathetic, fellowship, from age to age. Indeed, it seems impossible to explain the text on any other supposition: for, supposing a single congregation at Corinth or Ephesus, at the close of the first century, to be in a distracted and sinful condition, and the Apostles, Evangelists, and the first Pastors appointed by them to be all dead,—what person, in such a case, shall claim that special blessing and presence of Christ, promised under the covenant engagement, in order to carry out the design

and purpose of the Christian ministry, as regards this congregation? By whom shall he be tested, designated, appointed? By those who know nothing of the heart of a Pastor, and who need to be themselves directed into the truth? Must the sinful appoint the teacher and exemplar of holiness? Or must there not be found a wisdom somewhere away from the circle of strife and of exigency, inhering in the collective pastorate of the same church, or, if there is none, in the pastorate of some other which may lay claim to Christ's promise and aid,—a wisdom and authority to meet this case of necessity, and bring the congregation to harmony with themselves and the laws of the great Head? or, if this attempt fail, then to draw the faithful from among them? The case, *primâ facie*, is, that the servants of the Saviour are so bound together in responsibility,—so mutually interested in His work, and pervading the world with His Gospel. There is a strong presumption, that economical and formal arrangements of church connexion were intended, which should produce and sustain this very state of things.

§ IV And then, again; to explain a hint already given: there are distinct intimations in Scripture that discipline must be exercised upon Ministers, over those who aspire to the ministry, and on “vain talkers and deceivers:” “Their mouths,” said St. Paul, “must be stopped.” But when these vain talkers have spoken perverse things, and drawn away disciples after them, without retiring from the church, who is able to stop their mouths but the Ministers, into the compact of whose fellowship they came? And if a whole congregation is corrupted by them, how

can their defection and sin be marked, and themselves discovered, except by a conventional authority of aggregate churches, and a standard of doctrine? Without some such arrangement,—seeing there are now no supernaturally endowed Evangelists,—this precept, and several similar, must remain unfulfilled. The Apostles could not formally set up this connexion, or describe its detail and order; for this would have prematurely increased the jealousy and rage of the Gentile powers; just as the formal declaration of a change of day in observing the Sabbath rest would inevitably have drawn on, at first, an exterminating persecution of the Jews. And the Jews would, probably, deem that they had less need to do this, inasmuch as they all had been trained under a religious connexion of their own nation; for their synagogues, excepting in such distant places as Babylon and Persia, were subject to a central Sanhedrim in all those minor matters in which individual loyalty to Jehovah was not interfered with. And therefore, unless there were something in the spirit and precepts of the Gospel incompatible with the union of the churches, (coercive and laic rule was incompatible,) it seems far most natural that their arrangements for government, in various parts of the world, should be intentionally anticipative of such formal union in each distinct nation, or province, or tribe; and that the churches should glide out of the synagogal into the more spiritual form which Christianity requires,—retaining, however, the well-accustomed *nexus*, and exchanging the Sanhedrim for the Synod.

§ V And now, in bringing forth the positive evidence of Scripture on this subject, our purpose is to

show, not that the primitive churches, so early as the Apostles' days, actually existed in established connexions, like those of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and our own communion :—this would be contrary to fact ; for, in the course of forty or fifty years, oft distracted by Judaism and torn by persecution, they could only then make gradual approaches to settled form :—but that, under the sanction of the Apostles, which was the sanction of Christ, the initial principle of church connexion, involving central administration, was affirmed ; leaving it to be applied in after-ages, as exigency might demand, or wisdom dictate. The primitive congregations were first independent of, and separate from, each other, saving their common subjection to apostolic and evangelistic control ; but if we shall see that in any of these there was an internal union of smaller societies in the great congregation, a principle was recognised, which only needed to be expanded, not developed, in order to the consociation of the churches themselves.

§ VI. The first approach to this state of things lay in the appointment of a plurality of Elders to each church ; because nothing is more natural and usual than to find, that where a number of persons are appointed to do an aggregate work, they divide their labours, in order to the more perfect accomplishment of the object of them. So, then, a number of Christian Elders, labouring at Jerusalem, amongst a given people, or what is called one church, would certainly not speak and teach at the same hour in the same place, unless we suppose the greatest confusion to have prevailed : nor would they take their places by

succession, and remain idle in the intervals of duty ; for they had no rich established resources, like the Jews, to sustain so expensive a course : they would rather have allotted to them minor, though varying, divisions of the people, to whom they were to give adequate and specific instruction. Now, however we might dwell upon the import of the term “church” as signifying one assembly or congregation, here is the tendency, in its own bosom, to a natural and healthful subdivision, and that, too, in proportion to its own prosperity ; and this subdivision takes place under the rule of one presbytery. To deny that a plurality of Elders was generally, if not universally, found in the early churches, would be reckless. Thus, at Jerusalem, we read of the Apostles and *Elders* : (Acts xv. 4 :) Paul and Barnabas, in Asia Minor, ordained them *Elders* in every church : (Acts xiv. 23 :) from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the *Elders* of the church : (Acts xx. 17 :) his address to the church at Philippi is specifically directed “to the saints which are in Christ Jesus, with the Bishops” (or *Elders*) “and Deacons :” (Phil. i. 1 :) Titus was left in Crete, that he might “set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain *Elders* in every city :” (Titus i. 5 :) and as the Epistles were written to be read, in the first instance, in given churches, they were framed in accordance with the state of things then existing in those churches : so that Peter, in saying, “The *Elders* which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder,” (1 Peter v. 1,) must be understood to exhort a unity of several Elders, in each distinct community in which his General Epistle had been introduced.

I cannot find a single instance in Scripture in which the care of a congregation of believers is confided to one man : everywhere there is a fellowship of Ministers, in order to an adequate oversight of the people. It is urged by Dr. Wardlaw, that the number of Elders is of no consequence, provided the work be done : but this is, surely, the chief point in question. Have we any right to differ from a universal institute of the Apostles, and conclude, from a standard of our own adoption, that by one man, however wise or gifted, the work, *all* the work which the Gospel requires, really *is* done? May it be absolutely concluded that he can meet all the spiritual wants and tastes of those committed to his charge? If even Paul needed the associated labour of Apollos and Cephas at Corinth,—supplementing his planting with their watering,—may modern Pastors plead an *αὐτάρκεια* in this matter? Are not these three men the types of different kinds of ministration requisite for the edification and salvation of all congregations? How awful a thing is an individual responsibility in such a case! I know Ministers who could not have borne up under the weight of such a charge, had they not been sustained by the co-partnership in toil and counsel with them of men whom they deemed better than themselves.

§ VII. The next indication of apostolic sanction, in respect of the connexional tendency, lies in the willing subordination, which we find, of the body of Elders in a church, to one of their own number, as their head or chief administrator. We find it in the charge given to the seven churches of Asia. The church of Ephesus is first selected for admonition ;

but the charge is not addressed to the *Elders* of that church, but to the Angel,—one who appears invested with the chief responsibility. Now, the last thing which we hear of this church is when Paul left it, or, rather, its adjacent port Miletus, according to the received chronology, in A.D. 60 : at that time it was governed by Elders ; for none but Elders are mentioned, and none but Elders and Deacons are named in the Epistle which Paul addressed to them. But now between thirty and forty years have rolled away, leaving many changes on the scene, and, probably, some increase of the church : and during this time, and in the early portion of it, Timothy was sent by Paul, as the Apostle himself declares in his First Epistle to Timothy, (i. 3,) to administer in chief, though in connexion with these Elders, the discipline of that church ; especially as it bore on the Teachers themselves ; some of whom, it seems, had begun to fulfil the Apostle's prediction, uttered at his parting ; at least, so far as to “give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.” In this way was the church introduced, *pro tempore*, into the regimen of being governed by a presbytery with a chief at its head ; and because of the healthful results of this kind of order, it is evidently maintained to the day of John's vision of the glorified Saviour. And our Lord, by addressing the Angel in his individual position, must be held to sanction the principle of administering by one *primus*, whether he be called Angel, Bishop, President, or what else, collective presbyterial responsibilities ; and all the more, as errors in the presbytery

itself needed to be corrected. For the Angel here is commended for not bearing "them which are evil," for trying them "which say they are Apostles, and are not," for having been exemplary in patience and in toil; even as the Angel of the church at Thyatira is reprov'd for neglecting discipline in the case of the woman Jezebel.

That authority of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in Acts xx., by which the Elders are made overseers of the flock, cannot be deemed to be here annulled; for Elders form a standing institute. (Eph. iv. 11.) And yet John, who was in the Spirit,—that is, under the influence of the *same* Spirit,—received a command to write to the Angel, and communicate a message from the Head of the church,—a message which affected both Ministers and members. Thus it was with the church at Ephesus; and from this instance it is easy to believe that similar processes had been at work in all the congregations of Proconsular Asia, leading to similar results. And, on comparing the whole of the sacred charge with the statements of the Acts of the Apostles, no inference from it appears clearer and more direct than this,—that while Elders are still left, with their office and responsibilities, for the edification of the flock, untouched, yet, according to the will of Christ, one of their number—one of the wisest and best—administers His law, even as it respects and directs them.*

* Bingham quotes Tertullian as referring the origination of the office of Bishop distinctively to the time of St. John: "*Ordo tamen Episcoporum, ad originem recenset, in Joannem stabit auctorem;*" (*Adv. Marcion.*, lib. iv.) and though our antiquary freely renders it, by putting the last word in the plural, "The order of Bishops, when

§ VIII. To this view there have been some objections offered, which it may be well briefly to notice. It has been objected, that as the term *ἄγγελος* signifies a messenger, so this person in the Apocalypse may be no other than a representative of the people, chosen by themselves, to make, and receive, communications on their behalf; especially as Titus, Luke, and another brother, who were sent by the Corinthian church to convey their benefactions to Jerusalem, were called *ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν*, “apostles,” or “delegates, of the churches;” and Epaphroditus, in Phil. ii. 25, the “delegate” of the Philippians. This, however, is utterly inconsistent with the pastoral responsibility ascribed to him. So far from being an *ἀπόστολος*, in the sense of “delegate or popular representative,” he is a trier of those who profess to be *ἀπόστολοι* in any sense, and a hater of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes: and he is, moreover, blamed for having left his first love; which love, ruling originally in his bosom with supreme sway, was, perhaps, the cause of his elevation,—all inconsistent with the notion of a church-delegate. And as to the assertion that, at least, *ἄγγελος* signifies “messenger,” there is no honest way of interpreting the passage, if the idea of a personal angel must stand at all, but that of regarding him as the messenger, or angel, of Christ to the

it is traced up to its original, will be found to have St. John for one of its authors,” so as to bring Professor Campbell’s hypercriticism upon him; yet, obscure as this Father is, that criticism does not shake the main testimony of the passage, however literally it might be rendered. Before St. John, there were no *pastores parvorum* in churches, save the Apostles and Evangelists: after him, *none were ever wanting*.

church ; especially when it is considered that the seven stars, which represent the angels, are held in Christ's right hand, by Him authorised, and at His disposal. Whose messengers can they be, placed as they are in churches, none of which is before us in an active, or expansive, or altogether approved condition ? Some are lethargic and worldly. The angels have no voice to utter as from the communities,—for some of these last are not in a condition, or temper, to say anything,—but are placed rather to testify for Christ, by designation of the Apostles, or Evangelists, who themselves were guided by the Spirit's own Hand : and the whole business of the charge is, that of the Spirit of Christ informing the messengers of Christ ; and in that way, and through them, warning and instructing the different communities ; inasmuch as each distinct charge is concluded with this formula : “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Even the angels of heaven, who, according to our Saviour's declaration, minister to children, (Matt. xviii. 10,) are said to be *their*—the children's or disciples'—angels, though they are, unquestionably, angels sent, or appointed, by God. And, therefore, the presiding Ministers of these Christian societies are, with like idioms, called “angels of the churches,” while Christ Himself is their Author, Sovereign, and Sender.

It has been further urged, that, as the book of Revelation is confessedly figurative in its teaching, so the term “angel” may be figurative of the genius and spirit of the different communions mentioned. But to this it must be replied, that, whatever emblematical character belongs to some of the appearances

appended to our Lord's person in the vision, there are no indications of allegory, or sustained figure, in the charge itself. Nothing here is more fraught with allusion than is quite common to the Hebræo-prophetic style, which is the style adopted through the whole book. Besides, the emblems themselves, where they occur in this portion of it, are explained. The very authority which declares the seven stars to be *μυστήριον*, "a mystery,"—that is, a truth hid under a figurative representation,—likewise declares that the seven stars are, that is, they represent, the angels of the Seven Churches: so that the angels, instead of being symbols, or compound emblems, are THEMSELVES THE OBJECTS SYMBOLISED. If the Author of revelation gives the key to the right understanding of His revelation, all controversy on the subject is at an end. Moreover, the stars represent one thing; the candlesticks, another,—the churches: and the Ephesian angel is warned to do his first works, lest his candlestick should be moved out of his place; which, on the theory above-mentioned, would have the effect of teaching that the church itself should be taken away from the spirit of the church,—a manifest absurdity. If the whole range of prophecy, both in the Old Testament and New, be explored, taking all instances, from Joseph's dream down to the present, stars are found to represent heads or rulers of communities,—civil, ecclesiastical, or both. In the book of Revelation they are the uniform symbol; and, surely, every one who seeks the true meaning of Scripture, would abide by a rule of interpretation which can be applied universally.

We can understand how, if the pastorate became

unfaithful, the decline and ruin of the church should follow; and we have seen this prediction fulfilled. Those writers who have regarded, as the late Dr. R. W. Hamilton, in his Sermon on the Inter-communion of Churches, the use of the term "angel" as a personification of an organized Christian society, must not only have overlooked the insuperable difficulties just referred to, but have failed to observe the entire ἡθος, and tone of allusion, in the whole address. The imagery is all Hebraic,—taken from the Old Testament sanctuary and theocracy. Thus here: the Smyranean Angel knows "the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan:" in the church at Pergamos there are those denounced who "hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication: the spiritual conqueror is promised that he shall "eat of the hidden manna;" that he shall have, as Priest unto God and His Christ, the ψῆφον λευκὴν,* "the bright (Urim) stone," with

* It seems remarkable that so many expositors should in this passage have understood either the white voting stone, the token of acquittal used in Greek courts of justice, or the *tessera hospitalis* used in many of the cities: for λευκός stands as well to represent a bright silvery effulgence, as it does the whiteness of linen or of snow. The whole imagery in this sense seems sacerdotal; and the intensely luminous rays proceeding from the sacred stone, set in the High Priest's breastplate, form the most natural object of allusion. To this view we are recalled by the Syriac version of the passage, where *chushbono cheworo*, as Dr. Etheridge (see his "Apostolic Acts and Epistles, translated," &c., 1849) thinks, may suggest the very notion of a shining breast-plate. The exposition thus suggested may help us to understand an obscure expression of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, preserved in two places of Eusebius, where he

new name engraven, answering to his regeneration ; shall walk in sacerdotal white ; that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life ; that he shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and shall have the name of Jerusalem, the city of God, written upon him. He who promises these things has the key of David, who “openeth, and no man shutteth :” those which “say they are Jews, and are not,” are to be made of the synagogue of Satan ; and the failing Laodicean is counselled to obtain or buy, amongst other precious blessings, the healing unction, by which to recover spiritual sight, and know all things. All these allusions are homogeneous, and bespeak the Great Prophet addressing the spiritual Israel,—the churches, each through its appropriate chief Minister, the subordinate Prophet.

What, then, can be more consistent in interpretation, than to refer the term “angel” to an actual and human servant of Christ in the Christian sanctuary ?

speaks of John the Apostle as one “who was Priest, and bore the sacerdotal plate.” (Book iii., chap. 31, and book v., chap. 24.) That the simplest and humblest of the Apostles should wear any Jewish external badge, either on his forehead or on his breast, is beyond all ereditibility ; and the passages in question can only be a rhetorical and inflated setting forth of the eminent sanctity of that Apostle. To such a style of writing Eusebius himself was addicted, as any one may see by reading his *Panegyrie*, addressed to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre : (book x., chap. 4 :) “Friends and Priests of God, and ye who are clad in the sacred gown, adorned with the celestial crown of glory, the inspired unction, and sacerdotal garment of the Holy Ghost,” &c., &c.

[After the above note was written, I had the satisfaction of seeing both the exposition confirmed, and the very illustration from Eusebius adduced, by the Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in his “*Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*,” Oxford, 1847, p. 285.]

The term itself, and the office it describes, may have been suggested by the fact, that in the Jewish Synagogue there was the Scheliach Tsibbor, "the Apostle or Angel of the church," who offered up the prayers of the congregation. And though this official was not invariably the President or Chief Ruler, but rather acted under the Chief Ruler as his delegate or messenger, the analogy intended to be all the more suggested by the first adoption of the term was, that of Christ the supreme Head, appointing His servants to their several positions of oversight and of devotional service. What was more likely than that the Divine Master, in directing the thoughtful Galilean, St. John, to address the Pastors of Asia Minor, should use a term which to that Apostle would be so familiar, and so apt to convey the idea of an obligation to diligence, fidelity, and love, however the Christian Angel might be called to fill a higher place than the corresponding Jewish one? In maintaining the view that the Christian Church arose out of the Jewish Synagogue, we are not bound to hold that distinct offices in each are exactly similar: we are rather to look for a difference corresponding to the difference of dispensation.* Beza, who had no prelatical leanings, in his

* It has been mentioned in a former chapter that the Chazzan sometimes fulfilled the office of Legate of the church, though the President of the synagogue was, *ex officio*, the Legate. In the Christian church the chief Minister was always the Legate; it was he that invariably addressed Jehovah in prayer on behalf of the people. Hence, the Apostle John, writing to the seven churches of Asia, styles their Bishop, or President, the "Angel;" *i. e.*, the "Legate of the church;" this word designating the Bishop's most solemn and important duty, *viz.*, to offer up prayers in the congregation.—BERNARD'S Abridgment of VITRINGA, *De Vet. Syn.*, p. 193.

comment on the place (Rev. ii. 1) writes thus : “‘To the Angel,’ that is, to the ‘President,’ *προ-εστῶτι*. The term ‘Bishop’ or ‘Pastor’ was not used at first,—doubtless for this reason, that there were several Bishops or Pastors in each of these churches already; and because a new term was needed to express, not only a super-eminent piety, which, in relation to that of the people, was a star as compared with a *λυχνία*, ‘a light-stand,’ but also a super-eminent responsibility,—a messenger from Christ Himself; also the object of the Spirit’s message.”*

Such is the direct evidence in favour of a personal Chief Ruler in the primitive churches, appointed, most probably, by apostolical men, and indubitably sanctioned by the Saviour. It is the last intimation of the Scripture record on the subject, and it is exactly confirmed by the earliest of the uninspired records. The very first of the annals of ecclesiastical history presents us with the same view,—a chief Ruler or Bishop, presiding among other Elders or Bishops, being himself styled “Bishop,” *par excellence*. Dr. Ralph Wardlaw, in treating this subject, repels the ultra-Presbyterian theory of the late Dr. Mason, of New-York; which is to the effect, that the Angel is the symbol of the eldership or ministerial body: and he repels it for the sufficient reason, that the Angel here is no symbol at all, and, therefore, essentially different from the angel of the Apocalypse, having the everlasting Gospel to preach. (Rev. xiv. 6.) He also seems to repel the arbitrary hypothesis, that the

* See Note (A), Appendix.

several elderships of the seven churches were reduced, from their early plural condition, to one Pastor each; and acknowledges that, as compared with this notion, the view of the Angel constituting a *primus inter pares*, “a first Elder among equals,” is one of the conclusions in which he must be brought to acquiesce. I thankfully accept a suffrage from such a quarter; and, as to the admission of the doctrine of a *primus inter pares*, I contend for no more. But it may be said, “Why, this is nothing less than parochial episcopacy!” Be it so, if men will contend for names. There is the subordination of Ministers under one head, for the sake of giving unity and energy to their efforts, and for the more efficient oversight of the congregation; and so far as this kind of episcopacy is involved, so far Christ and His Apostles, I honestly believe, are on its side. If the episcopacy established in the National Church never involved more than this, then it would be difficult to furnish a refutation of the postulates, long since laid down by Bishop Hall, Archbishop Potter, and others, on this subject.* But whatever *hierarchical* episcopacy, or prelacy,—a very different thing,—is held to include, it is sufficient for our purpose to see affirmed in Scripture the principle of a ministerial fellowship or union, held together by the *nexus* of a President or Chief, who, as far as we can see here, is a permanent one.

If it be an episcopacy over a church, rather than over churches, still it involves the oversight and discipline of Elders; and in a large church, such as that

* *Vide* GARBETT’S “Bampton Lecture,” vol. i.

of Ephesus was, both from apostolical and early historical testimony, where the work of the ministry must necessarily have been divided into several portions, classes, or congregations, the whole principle of a religious connexion is thereby likewise affirmed.

§ IX. The next step in our course of observation is, to mark the evidence in favour of the supposition that the city church, in the Apostles' times, *did* consist of a plurality of societies, (a plurality rendered needful in order to the minuter oversight and more special training of the whole flock,) yet merging itself into one assembly on occasions of great and common interest. And first, there is the mother church at Jerusalem. The success of the Gospel here was glorious. To the one hundred and twenty disciples existing before the day of Pentecost, there were added on that day "three thousand;" (Acts ii. 41;) afterwards the Lord added daily to the church τοὺς σωζομένους, "those who were being saved;" (verse 47;) even so many as "five thousand" men, (iv. 4,) exclusive of the women, the number of whom is not stated; yea, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women;" (v. 14;) subsequently still, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;" (vi. 7;) and on the occasion of Paul's visit, years after, and when the excitement of the first Christian Pentecost had long subsided, that Apostle was informed by James that there were "myriads of Jews" who believed. (Acts xxi. 20.) The question is, How could these form but one congregation?

Dr. Wardlaw, with his usual candour, acquiesces

in the full statement of the numbers, and acknowledges the difficulty; but meets it by saying, that as the inspired Apostle declares the whole multitude were together, and assembled in one place, no conjectural impossibility ought to be concluded,—no prejudged difficulty, however formidable, to lie against that declaration.

Most reverently we own, that what the word of God plainly teaches, that we are bound to believe, whatever difficulty may be in the way; but, still, it remains to be seen, whether the multitude of believers were said to be so together, so to assemble, and continue to assemble, in one place, as is necessary to the Congregational argument which he expounds. That argument requires that not merely at the day of Pentecost, but during the lives of the Apostles, and up to the time of the flight of the Christian remnant to Pella, that church, consisting,—on the occasion referred to in Acts xxi., and no time either of festival or concourse from other parts,—even thirty years after it was founded, of many thousands of members, remained all the while, except when broken by the first persecution, an undistributed congregation. We say again, if the inspired word asserted that so it was, then only one course would be open to us,—child-like submission to the statement, believing that we only needed further information to make the matter perfectly clear. But no such assertion do we find. The aspect of impossibility which presents itself, is more than conjectural; and whatever, indeed, may be its value, it must surely be allowed to have a force of evidence, a qualifying force, in the interpretation of the narrative, just as a similar aspect of impossi-

bility is allowed to qualify in the interpretation of another narrative, when it is said that there “went out to him” [John the Baptist] “Jerusalem, and *all* Judea, and *all* the region round about Jordan.” (Matt. iii. 5.) We may, and do gladly, indeed, admit such things as these : First, That the church at Jerusalem was originally, and for a very short time, what every church, in every city, must *originally* be, in the very nature of things,—a single congregation. Second, That, at the choosing of the seven eleemosynary officers, when all had a common and financial interest in the question, the Apostles “called the whole multitude of the disciples unto them ;” and that previously they were, in a certain and very intelligible sense, “*together*,” and “with one accord,” in Solomon’s Porch. (Acts v. 12.) Third, That, on special occasions afterward, a multitude is mentioned as assembling,—as when “all the multitude kept silence,” on the consideration by the Apostles of the appeal from Antioch ; and when James said to Paul, on his visit above mentioned, “The multitude must needs come together : for they will hear that thou art come.”

But let us remember that no scripture is “of private interpretation ;” that is, to be interpreted in an isolated manner, and apart from circumstances in the history which are intended to guide us. Thus, the believers “were together ;” that is, in the midst of a population, rent and distracted by faction, they were united by a holy and tender amity to each other ; and in the exercise of social intercourse, for a brief season, they mainly frequented one particular area in the temple. The expression, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, most fitly is used for a mental or moral agreement, quite as much as for a literal

association :* and verse 46 of the second chapter seems to fix this meaning ; for there it is said, of those who were then together, and had all things common, that they continued “ with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house ;” and, more explicitly, (v. 42,) “ And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ :” so that houses, as well as the temple, were the scene, not only of their unity and joy, but of their preaching and worship. The Apostles and disciples who were Christians, without, as yet, ceasing to be Jews, would not neglect to observe the hour of prayer and teaching in the temple ; and, while the first visitation of glorious power and joy lasted, the unbelieving part of the population was so overawed, as to permit very frequent aggregations of, at least, a large portion of the church in Solomon’s Porch ; fulfilling, in part, the prophecy of Haggai ii. 9, where it is predicted that in this place God should give peace. Here, after the awful death of Ananias and Sapphira, and where the impression of the event had so widely spread, signs and wonders were done by the hands of the Apostles.

Such must have been the character of this large gathering : and as to the multitude which kept silence at the meeting, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter, respecting circumcision ; and the multitude which, as James said, in chap. xxi. 22, must needs come together ;

* Bloomfield objects to the harshness of making ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ refer to their being literally together in teaching, and quotes the LXX. in support of the meaning which makes it a spiritual oneness ; and adduces also Thucyd., i. 79 : Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ αἱ γνώμαι ἕφερον, “ They agreed together in judgment, or were of one mind.”—*In loc.*

(*συνελθεῖν*, a very different expression from *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*·) they were just such assemblies as would be gathered from the different sections of an Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational body, on similar occasions of great and stirring interest in our own days : as, for instance, the reception of an illustrious stranger from foreign parts in one of our great city-halls,—or the discussion of some matter affecting the interests of foreign churches,—a central Missionary Meeting,—or the like. Thus, there is nothing in all these places against the notion of a classified congregation making distinct congregations in ordinary, while there are indications greatly in favour of it :—First, There is the fact already mentioned, (v. 42,) that in private houses, (*κατ' οἶκον* being opposed to *ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ*), as well as the temple, church ordinances—such as teaching, preaching, praising God, and celebrating the Lord's supper—were used. Second, It is evident that the apportionment of the common stock which self-denying charity had yielded, was transacted in a house, or separate dwelling ; for Ananias, falling dead, was “carried out ;” his wife afterwards “came in ;” and the feet of them which had carried her husband were “at the door.” And, Third, From the emphatic way in which the coming together of the disciples is spoken of in the twenty-first chapter, it is clearly to be inferred, that gathering in full was not their ordinary practice, but only an event to be brought about by a special exigency,—such as receiving an Apostle's report of his labours, journeys, and official acts. How, then, stand the facts of the case upon the whole ?

That, in the earliest days of Pentecostal power,

there were seasons when the company of believers, or a great part of them, had times of assembling in one of the great areas of the temple;—this, to such an extent, was possible: that, after the persecution, in the time of Stephen, and that of James's martyrdom, this was no longer permitted; for there is no trace of it; St. Paul himself, and other apostolic men, hardly appearing in the temple at all without producing a tumult: but that in all, and through all, these events, the ordinary and stated transactions of the church were carried on in separate places, under the general direction of the Apostles and Elders. The city-houses of the East, with their inner area, would be well adapted for primitive worship; and the Ministers of Christ, as long as they received no precept to the contrary, would fall into the religious custom of their country, which was, to use houses, or synagogues, (they might be both,) for separate teaching and worship. And it is remarkable, to say the least, that James the Less, who was evidently chief Pastor in Jerusalem, giving counsel to Christians in general respecting their conduct in public worship, makes use of the very word in his Epistle: (ii. 2 :) “If there come a man” (not “into your church,” but *εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν*) “into your synagogue.”

Far from finding fault with the arguments of Dr. Wardlaw, when he contends against the notion of the Ministers alone forming a church representative, I must urge, and on his own side of this present point, and that from Scripture precedent, the notion of a church representative as formed by a portion of the people; for no one would seriously contend that

every man, woman, and child was in Solomon's Porch, even on the aggregate occasions ; but rather only the male portion of believers, with, perhaps, the more leisurely and well-circumstanced of the women. Still the most rigorous scale of deduction would leave many thousands in Jerusalem ; and how can it be maintained that this multitude regularly met and worshipped there, in this Porch, or any other place equally public ; concerted all measures in common ; in common there celebrated the Lord's supper,—the memorial and communion of that death which was charged upon the rulers of the city ; were there taught and nurtured through all the years of the stormy history of that place, in the face of a bigoted and fanatical priesthood, a jealous Roman magistracy, and an excited, and oft infuriated, populace ? The sacred text does not assert this. It intimates, if not the contrary, that which can never be reconciled to this theory, leaving out hypothetical difficulties ; and, therefore, those difficulties stand on their own foundation, with all their weight, unopposed by any inspired declaration : and thus, in coming to the close of this point in the inquiry, we have a strong and just right to conclude that the church (for we hear of no churches) of Jerusalem, though frequently called together as a whole, was composed of a number of distributed smaller societies,—the Jewish model Christianised,—fed and guided by the Apostles and Elders ; and, therefore, so far held in its bosom the principle of “a connexion.” With this view all the facts agree. We may afford to allow, that the congregations of a given district—that of Judea, for instance—are called in the plural, “churches ;” that they, being in the country parts, and small, con-

sisted, probably, of but one congregation each ; while the church in the city, spoken of in the singular, being greater, must needs include several evangelised societies or synagogues in its fellowship. At the same time, we cannot fail to observe, that as the Palestinian churches “ had rest ” after Stephen’s persecution had subsided, so there is reason to infer that they had been previously involved in the troubles of the mother church, and so far had been connected with it by the bond of the Apostles’ and Elders’ common oversight. Whether, however, a *nexus* may, on scriptural principles, be used to unite churches in a district or nation, is a question which shall have attention a little further on ; but, so far, we have endeavoured to deduce our conclusions from this portion of the inspired record.

§ X. Another branch of the evidence on this subject is drawn from the fact, that in each of several city-churches mentioned in Scripture, there is another and smaller church involved, called a “ church which is within the house,” &c. ; that is, the house of a certain believer. This was the case at Ephesus, where we find St. Paul had been engaged in founding a Christian society. (Acts xviii.) The Apostle had first found Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, whither they had fled, in their banishment by Claudius, from Rome ; and now they accompany him hither also, and supplement his labours. Writing from Ephesus, about four years afterwards, his First Epistle to the Corinthians, who knew this godly couple well, he says : “ Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house : ” (xvi. 19 :) the plain inference from which is, that in the society in that place there was included a less society, which itself even is called

a church, and that it was a part of the entire *ecclesia*. Dr. Davidson objects here, that the whole company of believers in the several cities, up to the time of Paul's visit to Miletus, is never described by the term "church;" though this is in ill accordance with his theory in another place, when he states that Christian persons met for edification and worship anywhere are really such, and that the communities in the Cretan cities, before Titus ordained Elders over them, were themselves such: and so, here, in each of the cases where a church in the house is mentioned, he takes it for a rule, that the main body of believers is never called *ἐκκλησία*. He supposes, in this instance, that, after the great outbreak of the work, when "the word of God grew so mightily and prevailed," the smaller assembly in question was absorbed into the larger one; and therefore, when Paul stayed a while at Miletus the following year, A.D. 60, it is said, "He called for the Elders of the church," the minor congregation having served the purpose of a mere temporary arrangement for convenience. Surely, if supposition be allowed a place at all, it is abundantly as likely, (and Neander positively affirms the view in general cases,) that this minor assembly, after such a visitation, would become larger, whether Aquila and Priscilla remained there much longer or not; and that the other portion or portions of the Christian community would have increased in like manner; and that a people who, on their conversion, could burn Heathen and magical books to the valued amount of fifty thousand pieces of silver, who had no places built for purposes of Christian worship, and who would certainly not be allowed to occupy either the

theatre or the temple, would have to be distributed to various converted synagogues, or to houses, or other places of assembly, not unlike "the school of one Tyrannus," though they would be under the oversight of the one body of Elders, who were required to "take heed to ALL the flock." And, passing by the supposition altogether, when we read that, after Paul's unsuccessful attempt, in the first place, upon the Ephesian Jews, he "separated the disciples," and disputed daily in the above-mentioned school, for "the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks;" (xix. 10;) it seems most startling to say that this circle, comprising an Apostle and a body of disciples, diffusing evangelical light for two years, was not an *ἐκκλησία*—a church.

Still further: about the end of the same year in which the charge to the Ephesian Elders was given, the Epistle to the Romans was written; and by this we learn, that the Christian couple above mentioned had then returned to Rome, and gathered a distinct little society there; for the Apostle says: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house." (Rom. xvi. 3-5.) Here, too, according to Dr. Davidson's rule, the Roman Christians are in a nascent state, and are not yet called a "church." Then, if the absence of this word from the Epistle to the Romans be so conclusive as to deprive the Christians of that city of their ecclesiastical character, why should not its absence from the Epistle to the Ephesians, written about four years afterwards, be equally

conclusive on the same point, as it affects them also? And yet, from the showing of Acts xx. 17, they are, unquestionably, an ἐκκλησία. Unformed a church may be, in the sense of not having all its institutions complete; but, unless it be a church from the beginning, it can never have authority for its subsequent acts.

Beyond all this: the third instance mentioned in Scripture, namely, that of the church in the house of Nymphas, at Laodicea, is directly in the face of this attempted explanation; for, in Col. iv. 15, Paul says, "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house:" that is, as we must understand it, the church which is involved in, and connected with, the company of brethren, or church, of the city of Laodicea, afterwards presided over by the Angel. (Rev. iii. 14.)

In the house of Philemon, too, at Colosse, a city in the same district, there was a church existing, according to the received chronology, in the very year when Paul, writing to the Colossians, evidently regards *them* as an aggregate church, just as he did the Romans, from the references which he makes to their Ministers, and the ecclesiastical duties which he prescribes; (i. 7; iii. 15;) and yet the usual name is not specifically given: its omission is no proof of the non-ecclesiastical character of the community. So frail appears to us the ground, as taken by an eminent writer, which he deems not to be shaken, for believing that the members of apostolically-founded churches, even in great cities, were always, when organized, single and undistributed congregations. Nearly all candid interpreters have given up the notion of these

ἐκκλησίαι being merely pious families, with the father at the head, as being totally at variance with the usage of speaking in the New Testament; and no fair or natural mode of exposition is left, but to regard them as partly-organized portions of the larger society, which is called, by way of excellence "the church." How many other houses there might be, besides those mentioned, we have no means of knowing; especially as Paul, even in Ephesus, for the space of three years, taught not only publicly in synagogue or school, like the Apostles at Jerusalem, but also, like them, from house to house; (Acts xx. 20;) or rather (as κατ' οἴκου is opposed to δημοσίᾳ) in private houses.* In the church of Corinth, too, where the members must have been fewer than in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Ephesus, and where they are spoken of as coming together in one place, the words are used in such a connexion, as rather to intimate that this even was not their habitual, but their exceptional, custom: such as, "*When ye come together;*" (1 Cor. xi. 18, 20;) "*If the whole church be come together.*" (xiv. 23.)

These primitive and necessary arrangements, just expounded, would of course involve, up to a certain point, capable of further enlargement as to its application, the principle of connexion. The whole provides for a part, takes a Minister from one section, and gives him for a while to another; raises a drooping band here, and represses the ambition or strife of another there; so gaining unison and support, on the part of the Ministers and people, in reference to general and common principles, that the applica-

* See BLOOMFIELD *in loco*.

tion of them to the smaller society, or the individual, should be imperative and unhindered.

§ XI. We pass now to the third branch of evidence in favour of the conclusion, that the principle of a connexion was affirmed, and initially acted upon, in apostolic times ; that is, the evidence in favour of the exercise, by mutual consent, of a mild and central authority over the churches of a district. The principal instance is that of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem framing regulations respecting the observance of Jewish religious customs by Gentile converts. The facts are these :—The members of the church at Jerusalem who were scattered at the persecution, find their way to the great Syrian metropolis, Antioch, and plant the Gospel there : the first converts, “a great number,” are visited and confirmed by Barnabas, who, in order to extend the work, hastens to Tarsus to fetch Paul, and, bringing him to Antioch, they two continue for a year to assemble themselves with the church, and to teach much people ; (Acts xi. 22 ;) they are reinforced, in the meanwhile, by Prophets who come from Jerusalem ; and, learning by a prophecy that there will be a famine in Jerusalem, the generous Antiochians, grateful for having received the Gospel thence, send pecuniary supplies to the Apostles and Elders, to mitigate that calamity. In this instance, there are obligations created and recognised, which are not to be lost sight of hereafter.

Several years after this, Paul and Barnabas are again in Antioch, and are separated by the Holy Ghost from the rest of the apostolic band, for the purpose of fulfilling a special mission in Asia Minor ;

and, having fulfilled it, they return to Antioch, and abide a long time with the disciples; so that, up to this point, the Gospel has been preached in this city, and, for a great part of the time, by the accomplished Hebraist Paul himself, for, at least, nearly ten years. At this period of the history we are informed, that “certain men, which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts xv. 1.) These (probably uncommissioned teachers; for the Apostles and Elders gave them “no such commandment”) were confronted by Paul and Barnabas, who “had no small dissension and disputation with them.” The schism, however, was so formidable, that it was determined that an appeal should be made to the college of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem about the question; and Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, went accordingly. The appeal was heard, the matter determined, the *δόγματα*, (xvi. 4,) the “things decreed,” were embodied in a pastoral letter, and given to the churches all around “to keep;” the Apostles and Elders thereby, with affectionate dignity, and confiding in the Christian spirit of the people whom they had made Christian, administering among them a justly relative, though limited, authority.

To this it has been objected, chiefly by Congregational writers, that the case is one which cannot be quoted by any party, inasmuch as the decision involved the settlement of a doctrinal point by direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles; and that the circumstances of the believers at Antioch were such as no people subsequently could be placed in. I greatly desire to avoid, as much as possible, the polemical

tone, and to cultivate the expository one, in pursuance of this subject : therefore, while I have nothing to do with the arguments of Dr. Wardlaw or Dr. Davidson, so far as they combat ultra-Presbyterian or ultra-Prelatical theories, I will endeavour to meet, without mentioning, all those positions of theirs which appear to me to be largely at variance with the facts and spirit of the history ; and trust that, if these pages should be considered to contain a refutation of the opinion mentioned above, they will not, by any occasional use of the former method, betray any want of respect towards estimable dissentients.

§ XII. First, then, *It was not a DIRECT decision of inspiration in the Apostles which originated the framing and imposition of "the decrees."*

Granting that the Apostles took the chief part in this meeting, they did not always, and necessarily, when they were superintending and edifying the churches, act by inspiration. This gift had reference rather to their completion of the code of New-Testament truth,—that men might believe in Christ through "their word." In many respects they acted from the promptings of judgment and conscience, like other men.* When Dr. Wardlaw affirms that an Apostle can hardly be conceived of apart from his inspiration, it seems to be in forgetfulness of these facts, among others,—that Peter, on one occasion, "was to be blamed," and Paul spoke unadvisedly to the High Priest. Moreover, no claim of inspiration is here put forth. It is true, that in his Epistle to the Galatians, referring, probably, to this transaction, he says,

* So DR. HIND, in his "History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity." Second Edition. 1846.

(ii. 2,) that he “went up” to Jerusalem “by revelation;” but this expression clearly refers to a Divine monition, urging him away *to* that metropolis, at a time when he would gladly have remained where he was, not to anything that he should say or do there; just as, when afterwards he was at Tyre, several disciples warned him, through the Spirit, that he should *not go* up to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 4.) Such a monition was by no means the peculiar sign of an Apostle, or the token of inspiration. It is true, also, that, in the pastoral letter, we have the expression, “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, *and to us*,” &c.; but this is abundantly explained by the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who said to his brethren on this occasion, “Ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Now this mention of what took place a good while (perhaps ten years) before, directs us to the visit of that Apostle to Joppa, from whence he was directed to Cæsarea, and the house of Cornelius. At Joppa, in an ecstasy, he saw the vision of the sheet let down to earth; and, while he mused upon the import of the vision, the Spirit urged him forward, and explained it to the effect, that the meats and drinks of circumcised men should not separate such men from extending the Gospel to those beyond themselves; that, in fact, God had accepted uncircumcised men; thereby leaving it to be implied, that neither the use of such meats,

nor the observance of the more distinctive rite with which they were associated, was a necessary condition of salvation. This was the utterance and oracle of the Holy Ghost on the question; it had been reiterated by Peter to a select company of Jewish dissentients awhile before; (Acts xi.;) and now, on this solemn and anxious occasion, it is reproduced once more, and in its complete form. The other Apostles and the Elders who were present, received this testimony as to past inspiration, and appended to it their own commentary and judgment, drawn from Scripture precedents, which were to the effect that, however Jewish and Hellenist believers did and should observe circumcision and the law, it should not be binding upon Gentile converts to imitate them in this respect: so that they say in their letter, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us;" that is, "to the Holy Ghost" in one respect, and "to us" in another. The decision of the Holy Ghost and of the Council, however bearing on the same conclusion, were not in reference to the same point.* That of the Spirit had to be dated back; it had been given at Joppa, and was sealed and confirmed under Peter's ministry at Cæsarea: that of the assembly was a human and ministerial judgment, as to the manner in which the principle, thus affirmed, should be brought to bear upon a special case.

That all the Ministers of Christ then present were under such an influence of the Holy Ghost, sanctifying and simplifying human motives and perceptions, as all good men met in the name of Christ may look

* So, again, DR. HIND, on Acts xv.

for, in all ages, is not denied; it is rather asserted: but this is not the kind of influence contended for by those who would set aside the evidence afforded by this transaction.

§ XIII. Again: the notion of the direct inspiration of the deliberating assembly is inconsistent with the manner in which the prohibitory clauses of the decision were subsequently regarded, and applied in practice. An inspired decision is immutable,—part of the word of God, one jot or tittle of which can never pass away. The Holy Ghost, in reference to an article of faith and practice, does not say at one time, and unsay at another; yet the decree, in respect of meats offered to idols, is clearly relaxed by St. Paul, who was present at this council, in favour of intelligent Corinthians, (1 Cor. viii. 9,) also in writing to Timothy, (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5,) and most probably in the case of the Romans. (Rom. xiv. 14.) Indeed, soon after this meeting was held, Paul took Timothy, and circumcised him, although his father was a Greek. There was a reason for the adoption of the subordinate rules, called, in the inspired text, *δόγματα*, at the time of the appeal from Antioch; for then the more decidedly Jewish section of the churches was in a condition to wrestle with and perturb the other: and there was equal reason for their partial repeal, when, at a later period, Judaism was sensibly declining, and the old Hebraising spirit needed less to be conciliated. Yet, when these were first stated, they were reasons deduced and adopted by sanctified judgment,—not direct oracles from God, though approved by Him in the present emergency. If direct inspiration were supposed, what need would there have been

to deliberate on the matter? So far as the "disputation" was concerned, this, no doubt, arose rather from the contentions of the differing parties among themselves, previous to the taking counsel of the Apostles and Elders ; but, as to the comparing and discussing of opinions on the part of the ministerial college, this is not the way to enunciate a Divine burden or commission : the process is too laborious and slow, and savours of human, rather than of Divine, wisdom. Those who are inspired need not meet to verify their inspirations ; and it is an important argument in the hands of the defenders of revelation, that the sacred writers, as such, never did meet, but that their testimony was several and independent.

§ XIV Again : there was no need of inspiration, as there was no declaration of new doctrinal truth.

Paul and Barnabas neither received nor required new light on the subject of the terms of human salvation : inspiration had settled this matter previously. They could hardly have preached at Antioch, for ten years, to Jew and Gentile,—especially when we remember the circumstances of Paul's conversion, and the Lord's charge to him at the time,—without stating the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, without the deeds of the ceremonial or of the moral law. They not only held disputation with the false teachers, but there was "dissension ;" that is, they, Paul and Barnabas, were opposed to them. Yet the heresy had so far succeeded in unsettling the church, that the influence of Paul and his coadjutor could not alone allay the ferment ; and it was determined to appeal to the church at Jerusalem, apparently for two reasons : first, that it might be made to

appear that the doctrine of the Judaisers was not the doctrine of the Apostles; that, therefore, these false teachers might be put to shame and convicted, both as to their being unauthorised, and as to their departing from the doctrinal standard: and, secondly, that the council of Ministers might determine for the church at Antioch, and all other churches concerned, what they could not decide for themselves,—how far an undoubted law of Christ, made known by His Spirit, and interpreted in harmony with all other revelation, affected, at the present period, the several and separating observances of Jew and Gentile. Accordingly, the Apostles and Elders meet, after that Paul and Barnabas had encountered on their arrival at Jerusalem some of the believers who had been Pharisees: they join in deliberation. Peter, Paul, and Barnabas declare themselves fully, in the way of narration; and James quotes an inspired and harmonious enunciation of the Prophet Amos, (ix. 11, 12,) from the spirit of which he draws his conclusion, and asserts it. In this conclusion all the rest agree, and the “decrees” are committed to writing, as loosing Gentile believers, on the one hand, from the ceremonial yoke, and binding them, on the other, to certain precepts of purity, which were partly expedient, and partly of universal obligation. And if we wonder for a moment at the especial mention of fornication, we have only to remember that the abominations of the idol-grove, Daphne, near Antioch, had so polluted society in general, that even Christians, especially up to the last days of the Emperor Julian, needed to have all the warning which “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” could throw around them, in order to

their vigilance against this sin. The Ministers on this occasion were the EXPOSITORS of the law of Christ.

§ XV The quotation of the Prophet Amos by James also shows that they reasoned and judged from a past, rather than acted from a present, inspiration.

The passage is taken from verses 11 and 12 of the ninth chapter of that Prophet: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." The quotation is made from the Seventy, a version almost uniformly adopted by our Lord and His Apostles; and, notwithstanding a discrepancy in the Hebrew, which may have arisen from some Jewish mistake in later days, the words are to be taken as representing the true sense of the Prophet. The usual exposition is to take the phrase, "tabernacle of David," as the figure of David's house or kingdom, and to refer its renewed institution to the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, the spiritual David, or King of Zion: but in this view the prophecy has no point or bearing on the present question; for there was nothing in David's regal administration, as such, which could be construed into an analogy or type of the extension of religious privileges unto extra-Israelitish nations. Where a more literal rendering of the phrase will stand, it is no unsound rule of interpretation to prefer it to the figurative; and it must be remembered, therefore, that there was a literal tabernacle of David, that is, a sacred tent or sanctuary,

on Mount Zion, to which he conveyed the ark of God, after he had removed it from the house of Obed-Edom. (1 Chron. xv. 1.) This symbol of the Divine Presence had never, since the struggles with the Philistines, been restored to the tabernacle of Moses, which tabernacle was now at Gibeon. The new sanctuary of David was appointed for a simple and spiritual worship: Asaph, Obed-Edom, and other spiritually-minded men, were left therein to conduct that worship,—a service of song, mingled with teaching, ministration, and prayer, without the ancient ceremonial, and, especially, without animal sacrifice; while “Zadok the Priest, and his brethren the Priests,” were left in the tabernacle of the Lord, in the high place at Gibeon, that they might “offer burnt offerings unto the Lord, upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord.” (1 Chron. xvi. 40.) In a few words, the “tabernacle of David,” as set up by David’s prophetic act, was the representation of a pure and spiritual worship of God, without any of the accompaniments of the ceremonial law,—a worship in which the Gentiles are represented as taking a part; inasmuch as the Psalm with which this sanctuary was opened, makes reference to them in this particular. (1 Chron. xvi. 7–36.) This “tabernacle of David” remained for many years, attended by its spiritual worshippers; but, as the nation relapsed into idolatry, it fell into disuse and neglect; but the Book of Psalms, including Psalm cv., could hardly be used without the memory of it surviving. Viewing the subject in this light, the prophecy is full to the point for which it is quoted by the Apostle James the Less.

It was no matter of doubt to New-Testament believers of all classes, whether there should be a spiritual worship founded on faith in Christ ; but many believed and taught, that the ancient ceremonial was an unabrogated and necessary appendage to this worship. The Apostle, after hearing the sentiments of the rest, turns to this prediction, and regards it as foretelling the setting-up of a spiritual edifice in which the ceremonial law of Moses had no recognition : then he justly infers the right of the Gentile to be freed from the yoke of circumcision. The wisdom of this Apostle, in thus reasoning from Holy Scripture, brought the matter to its issue ; for there was now no further deliberation.*

§ XVI. And once more : the circumstances of the appealing party were not perfectly unique, but rather analogous to circumstances which have occurred in the history of the church, and may yet occur.

The law that the Hebrew institute should fail, and the Christian church take its place, was a leading provision of the kingdom of heaven ; but, in the application of this law, the subject had to be viewed in various aspects, according to the circumstances of communities and individuals. If everything had been done suddenly and violently, absolutely abrogating the Sabbath and circumcision, to one party, and requiring from the Gentile, the other, no abstinence from articles of food which served as a test of idolatry,

* So far am I from undervaluing lay-teaching in God's church, that I thankfully acknowledge myself indebted to a layman of many virtues and attainments,—George Smith, Esq., of Trevu, Camborne, in Cornwall, who has expanded and illustrated the prophecy at large, in a discourse in the "Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine," 1849, p. 241, *et seq.*,—for aid in this inquiry.

then the persecuting strife would have been so fearful, that, as we have said already, the early church would have perished in the storm: but collective wisdom interferes, strengthens the weak, protects the assailed, resolves the scrupulous, and warns the lax,—and all under sanction of the same primary law. Thus questions have arisen respecting the prompt abolition, or otherwise, of all traces of caste among the Christianised natives of India, and respecting the possession of slaves among the professing communions of North America, which single churches have not been able to settle to their satisfaction, or, at least, not so far as to enable them to bear the full weight of that responsibility which their opinions have imposed; and in these instances a case has arisen in which collective wisdom might have, and perhaps has, been brought to explicate, in synodal form, an already known law of Christ in its bearing on the whole details; taking care to observe in all cases, as most necessary to the spirit of the Gospel, that the parties appealing, and the parties deliberating, are bound to each other only by this compact; namely, that it is insufficient wisdom deferring to that which is—at least, is deemed—sufficient; and that, in every case, the resolutions and ordinances made by an aggregation of churches, and binding on single churches, are simply rules by which the laws of Christ may be in particular instances applied, and not, in the strict sense, laws actual.

With regard to the part which was taken by the laity or people at the synod of Jerusalem, we shall speak of this in the proper place: but now, in drawing the conclusion, nothing appears clearer to us, than that its decrees were decisions of associated Ministers of

several and distinct churches, affirming a doctrinal standard and test, or forming together—under the usual light and teaching of the Holy Spirit, as to what was best to be done at a particular crisis—decisions which were confidently, not in a spirit of lordship, imposed upon their flocks as a whole; and therefore this arrangement may be imitated.

§ XVII. Reviewing this chapter, we have, then, noted three branches of evidence upon which to repose our main doctrine:—First, that in the times of the Apostles there was generally in each of the churches a plurality of Ministers, and that these Ministers were united and directed by a *Præses*, or “Angel,” or *Pastor Pastorum*, thus forming a ministerial union within the church. Secondly, that several churches, or larger congregations, were necessarily distributed into minor assemblies, or rather were raised out of these latter, all, however, being subject to the same body of Elders. And, thirdly, that, in a case of perplexing controversy, a synodal decision of many Elders is made to take effect upon the churches, both of Syria and Lesser Asia; thereby affirming, to this extent, the lawfulness of resolving controversies by synodal decision, and, *pro tanto*, likewise the lawfulness of a common jurisdiction. Beyond this we cannot carry the primitive ideal. Enough was elicited, during the lives of the Apostles, to show what the churches of Christ might lawfully, not what they must necessarily, be in after-ages. Great injury has been done to the cause of truth by extreme systematisers: high Episcopalians labouring to show that at Jerusalem, Ephesus, and similar places, there were the Elders in their respective parishes, and the

Bishop prelatically over them; high Presbyterians, that the teaching and ruling Elders superintending the early classes in these places, were themselves the church representative, meeting statedly in synod, and thus carrying on the work and doing the will of the King in Zion; ultra-Independents resolving the churches into separate religious republics, each of which acknowledged no office-bearers but whom its own members appointed, and no decision on doctrinal or economical matters but what a majority of those members approved. We are bold to say that, as they are thus stiffly defined, the Scripture repudiates all these schemes, as much as it would a stiffly-defined Wesleyanism: the handywork of God is not thus to be reduced to man's measure; or, rather, the "beauty of the Lord our God" upon us is not to be defaced, or quaintly set forth in the hard lines of "our handywork." The human master-builder, therefore, has mainly to do this,—to watch how a living and loving Christianity expanded itself, when the world was all against it; preserving inviolate the relations of all God's people to each other, and making provision for the strengthening and perpetuation of Christianity,—in order to see what are fundamental laws, and what are circumstantial and transient details of arrangement, and to act accordingly.*

§ XVIII. With these Scripture deductions candidly considered, then, let every upright-minded Christian look over the particulars in which the Wesleyan Societies form one united body; and then let him be asked, if such a regimen cannot bear

* See Note (B), Appendix.

as fearless an appeal to the spirit of the apostolic institutions, as can other systems which are loudest in their claim of apostolicity. Several Societies in a town, and in the villages surrounding it, are placed under the care of several Elders or Ministers, who in mutual council and conjunction instruct and oversee the whole, as well as attend to the raising and direction of office-bearers: they are appointed in regular turns to the several congregations by one (usually the senior) of their own number, the Superintendent, to whose disciplinary control they are likewise amenable. This is a Circuit. A number of Circuits round a particular centre form a District; and once a year, the Ministers and Stewards (who are laymen) of the Circuits meet in a kind of synod, called the District-Meeting, and exercise their various functions in adjusting the temporal and spiritual affairs of the year; and here is likewise a presiding Minister, annually elected by his brethren, who not only guides the deliberations of this assembly, but becomes the recognised medium of communication between it and the Conference. Lastly, the Conference itself is constituted, according to Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration, by one hundred ordained Ministers of certain standing, duly maintained in its full number by the regular supply of vacancies made by death or superannuation from year to year. This Conference reviews the acts of the District-Meetings, hears all appeals, receives all candidates for the ministry, ordains all who have been tried and approved, and exercises a general oversight in respect of the whole "Connexion." In this assembly, too, of necessity there is a President, annually elected, *προεστὼς*, but not *prælat*us.

This arrangement, for upwards of a hundred years, has preserved prompt and effective ministerial discipline where otherwise it could not be exercised; maintained purity of doctrine intact, amid surrounding changes in that respect which are almost without parallel in the history of Christianity; and secured the possession of places of worship on a basis which nothing but general anarchy could shake. If the guidance and oversight of ministerial brethren be simply regarded, so far it has Episcopacy, vesting, however, the ordaining authority in their whole body: if the equality of those brethren in point of order, so far Presbytery: if the recognition of the call of Ministers, and voluntary contribution of the people towards their support, then, in these respects, Independency, though, no doubt, the cast of the whole is essentially Presbyterian: but, on the supposition that only common faithfulness had been exercised from the first days of Mr. Wesley's ministry to the year of formal separation from the Church of England, in response to the call of Providence, and towards the souls of men, no power could prevent it from becoming what it has become, to the great offence of many, —a "Connexion." And if there were a Scripture precedent for applying the term "church" to the consoiated congregations of a whole country, no communion could put forth a juster claim to the title; inasmuch as its Pastors, being continually moved from Circuit to Circuit, are rather Pastors in common of the whole, than specially of several and distinct parts. Such a constant transference may be, and is, attended with its peculiar inconvenience and losses; unscriptural it cannot be deemed, so long as we have

the example of similar journeyings and transfer of labour in the Acts of the Apostles : but this necessitated implication of Society with Society, through the common interchange of Preachers and Pastors, has rendered the very notion of isolating a particular people, in a particular place, utterly abhorrent and alien from the entire spirit of the communion. It is not a mere conventional or voluntary arrangement by which the Methodist Circuits are bound together : the union rather grows out of real and spiritual relations between men, which are recognised in the New Testament : for there are persons located here in this sphere and Society, who owe deference and love, and their all of spiritual good, to servants of Christ who are now labouring yonder, in another Society. The spiritual bond, to say the least, is much stronger than that which ties the archdeaconries of a diocese, or the dioceses of a province or nation, together. Besides this, no Society or Circuit has come into this union without soliciting a benefit from that relationship which it could not command, being isolated : it has, therefore, sought for jurisdiction ; and, connexional government being sought for, the right of its exercise can be a question no more. And again we say, it is of no avail for an opponent to object, that there was no annual conference or organized union of the churches in the apostolic days ; for so there was neither diocese, as it is now, nor yet congregations with single Pastors : it is enough for us if the *principle* of union be not only unforbidden, but on a somewhat smaller scale affirmed and embodied in fact. Eyeing the same type, seeking the same objects, giving expansion to the same gifts, and exer-

cising the same restraints, as the early churches, we find ourselves in our present position. If we are in this ship, and the scene is dark and stormy, and the vessel is assailed by mighty waves, it is Christ who has constrained us to enter it, and we may safely trust Him with the results.

§ XIX. And all this helps us, lastly, to come to a distinct conclusion, as to the sin or innocence of disturbing the peace, or subverting, by strife or debate, the order, of such a communion. He who would recklessly agitate and tear it in pieces, and trample upon its acknowledged rules,—that is, when the system makes all reasonable provision for the expression of the opinion and wishes of distinct persons and Societies,—sins against those very principles, which he would sin against, if he were the arch-disturber of a single congregation. There is no claim made upon his deference and love by the single congregation, which that communion does not make upon him in the name of Christ with even added authority: there is no Scripture rule, written in plain words, compelling his acquiescence and approval, relating to the avoidance, in his own little circle, of ambitious strife, of clamour and divisive rancour, which does not bind him, and that the more awfully in proportion to the vaster breadth over which the evil or good of his example may flow, in reference to his position, as it stands related to the whole aggregate fellowship: and, therefore, if there be such a thing contemplated in the apostolic writings, as a man convicted of violating the Saviour's great and holy LAW OF PEACE, *he* is so convicted, whether the matter be brought home by his own acknowledgment, or by the testimony of

others, who, himself the servant of sin, and promising others liberty, disturbs the churches to the paralysing of religion, and the undoing of souls.

§ XX. But, in expounding these views, my mission has not been aggressive. I have no heart to assail those forms of church order in which other brethren express their piety and faith. And had not piety and faith been assailed through the medium of a combined attack upon my own, I had not been even their defender. If the main requirements of New-Testament law be fulfilled in the Congregational or other regimen, be it so: I shall lose nothing by the fruit which they lay up to life eternal, but rather rejoice in the fact, that other sheaves are gathered beside my own. If unfaithful and immoral Ministers are censured or silenced; if heresies are condemned and arrested; if the weak and right are protected against the wrong and strong; if Christian doctrine is preserved in purity, and a succession of faithful men in the churches secured, by any means, formal or informal, established or free;—I will learn, by the help of God, with Barnabas, to be heartily glad in so seeing His grace. But in asserting and defending the Wesleyan regimen, which particularly aims at these things, and while candidly acknowledging what is doubtful therein in respect of minor particulars, I claim to be as honest, fearless, and thorough-going in scriptural investigation as they, or any dissentient parties formerly of our communion, can be. Whether, however, there be form or no form, essential connexion is God's own order, and connexion, too, by the bond of jurisdiction. Without its main conditions, no Missionary Society could be formed, nor the Gos-

pel extended in the more neglected parts of our own land. Even Independent brethren must have county associations, when they would spread abroad the truth; for, by combination in these cases, they raise churches, and provide Pastors for them. And no wonder: the principle pervades all nature. Look how the sun, with its law of attraction, governs the earth and moon: see how the moon governs the ocean, and the ocean the atmosphere and clouds, and they, again, the thirsty earth. And say not, that this is mere sentiment, a sort of music of the spheres, or that it is no type for us to follow; for, where there is such an influence of vast forces, there is all the energy, as well as the sentiment, of law; and although Jehovah, who cannot err, be the Lawgiver, yet if His children imitate Him as well in His purity as in His other perfections, there will be no speech or language where that voice is not heard; and as we use His words to guide our devotions, so we shall use His works as the model after which to frame our institutions; that is, if there be anything in the New-Testament history or revelation as to those institutions, true as they are to universal nature, which requires to be illustrated in minuter form.

 APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 254.

REV. I. 16.—“In accordance with the uniform symbolical use of the Revelation, the stars denote rulers. Compare, upon the stars as symbols of a ruler’s greatness and glory, vi. 13; xii. 4. By the explanation given in verse 20, the seven stars signify the overseers of the seven churches. The representation of these under this symbol

certainly accords ill with the view of those who maintain the democratic character of the Christian polity. 'Pure society officials, whose authority flowed from no other source than that of the church itself,' who 'were simply the church's Presidents, and nothing more,' could not possibly have been represented under stars. This quite plainly betokens *a power over the community*; as does also the circumstance, that generally a double symbol is given for the rulers and the spiritual community, which strangely disagrees with the view now so much cried up; and, still farther, the strength and greatness of the charges which are given in the Epistles to the rulers, which necessarily imply the elevation of their office. For only to whom much is given can much be required of them. Equally at variance with the view now currently entertained, is what Paul says, in Acts xx. 28, to the Elders of the church of Ephesus, &c., if only it be viewed with an unprejudiced eye, and not in the light of this present time, which is so much averse to all the restraints both of law and authority. That Christ has the stars in His right hand, marks His unconditional power over them."

"We have no room to doubt from whom the sending proceeds: the angels are God's messengers: the angels of the churches could only be the angels whom God had sent to the churches, and had intrusted with the charge of them. Compare Matt. xviii. 10; according to which the angel of any one is the angel to whom the charge of him is intrusted. (Acts xii. 15.) But, on the other hand, the messengers of the churches could only be those whom the churches themselves had sent, or their commissioners."—PROFESSOR HENGSTENBERG on Revelation, vol. i., pp. 102, 112. 1851.

Note (B), page 281.

It will scarcely be denied, that, however in the apostolic age, and during the second century, each Bishop was so far independent, as that there was no central Bishop in a kingdom or province who could exercise authority over him, there was, nevertheless, a virtual and acknowledged bond of connexion among all who laboured in the same province, the restraints of which were hardly less than those which we are supposed to legalise. There was restraint as regards doctrine: all rulers of churches were under common obligation to avoid and withhold recognition from a teacher of error, according to the precept of the last surviving Apostle: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is

partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10, 11.) There was, likewise, no intercommunion allowed of the members of one church with another, except when the parties concerned brought from their respective Pastors the *literæ communicatoriæ*, *commendatoriæ*, or *dimissoriæ*, as the case might require; and these letters the Pastors in question might give or withhold. (See BINGHAM, book ii., chap. 4.) And, besides this, there was mutual consent to ratify acts of discipline; so that no person expelled from one church could be received into another, without repentance, and the consent of his former Pastor. It is difficult to fix, with any precision, the date of the Apostolical Canons; but the labours of Bishop Beveridge, in his *Codex Canonum Eccles. Prim.*, 1678, have left scarcely a doubt remaining, that, however they were first known in documentary form, they are the embodiment of what was custom and usage in the best-regulated churches, from the death of the Apostles to the earliest of the Councils on discipline. Canon xii. may be taken as a specimen of the spirit of these rules, so far as this mutual understanding to ratify and observe the acts of the several churches is concerned: *Si quis Clericus aut laicus segregatus, sive non recipiendus, discedens in aliâ urbe receptus fuerit, absque literis commendatitiis, segregetur et qui recepit, et qui receptus est.* "If any Minister or layman who is excommunicated, or not to be received to communion, leaving, shall be received in another city, without his letters commendatory, then let him who receives, and him who is received, be alike excommunicated." Those rules of antiquity, too, which require the Pastors of a province to join in Episcopal ordinations, look to the same point; as also those which provide for the trial of Ministers by Ministers. (*Con. Carth.*, can. 11, *apud* BEVERIGIUM.) The Connexionalism of America is the same in principle with that of the mother country, the great court of review and appeal being the General Conference, which is placed in the same relation to the subordinate Conferences as is the British Conference to the Districts.

In troubles which have arisen in the government of the Societies, the Wesleyans would have deemed themselves happy if neighbouring Christian churches had, with due candour, respected their acts of discipline; but the circumstance that several of these churches have thrown open their places of worship to persons cut off for contumacy, faction, and other violations of the New-Testament laws of peace and purity, and have recognised and cherished their factions, is one which has caused bitterest grief and astonishment; and has tended, more than anything else, to the dishonour of our common Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

LAITY: THEIR INFLUENCE AND CO-WORKING.

“ Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone.”—ST. PAUL.

§ I. THE mass of the people composing Christian churches have unquestionably their distinct rights; and Pastors, so far from infringing on those rights, are placed in the church especially to maintain them. The people cannot maintain them for themselves; for they have a right, by virtue of their union with Christ's flock, to a spiritual nurture and edification, which no combination, vote, or election of their own, could supply. Yet as they, as well as the Pastors, are accountable and subject to the Bishop of souls, their claim to take a share in church action will be exactly in proportion to the many or fewer particulars of their responsibility to Him. So far as He requires of them any special duty, so far they have a claim for a free and unencumbered sphere in which to fulfil that duty, fraught as it is, or followed, with its own appropriate joy and reward. Whatever keeps them out of this, is an usurped and unscriptural power; but, beyond this general exposition of the term, I have no conception of individual, collective, or official *right* in Christ's church, or any distinct portion of it. Churches are not set up to please, or even serve, men,

but to glorify God and extend His kingdom; and where every one, whether in office or not, is a servant, and must give account of himself to his Master, “right” can only mean a just position, where every obligation can be met, and every benefit promised to the individual be obtained, without the disturbance of hindering restraints.

According to this view, the first clear and righteous claim of the members of distinct churches is, to have the opportunity of recognising and attesting the Divine call of Ministers, so as to make this recognition and attestation an indispensable condition of their appointment.

It rests on such authority as this:—that they are commanded to “beware of false Prophets;” (Matt. vii. 15;) that the awful comminations of Peter and Jude, the Apostles, against false teachers, are so many implied exhortations to avoid them; that the Apostle John requires of believers, giving them the criterion to judge by, that they try the spirits whether they be of God. Our Lord lays down the rule that such are known by their fruits; and, explained as this rule is by the minuter teaching of His inspired expositors, a principle is declared, to the effect that teachers, or would-be teachers, who are void of the fruits of holiness, and are palpably heretical in doctrine, are to be shunned by all God’s people. This clearly involves a right to exercise, *primâ facie*, a common-sense investigation, as to whether the candidate for the ministry is a regenerate person, and holds the truth as it is in Jesus, and possesses all other marks of a person called of God. If, in any sense, men are called in Scripture to obey their Pastors, they justly

demand to have an opportunity of acknowledging that *they are Pastors*, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ : otherwise their obedience has not the character of a reasonable and intelligent service. No people exercise this right more fully than the Wesleyans. The claims of a ministerial candidate are not subjected to one congregation merely, but to many ; for, as every Minister is regarded to be a Minister *in state*, and not merely *in place*, a wider attestation of the validity of those claims is necessary. There is the suffrage of the congregations, first, which he serves occasionally as a lay, or Local, Preacher ; then that of the congregations to which he is regularly appointed as a candidate, or Preacher on trial, extending over the varied Stations of four years. Here disaffection on their part, or disqualification on his, is almost certain to show itself ; and all persons acquainted with the practical working of the Wesleyan economy, know how many there are who fail and disappear in this process, and are heard of in public life no more.

The Church of England acknowledges this popular right in theory, and makes provision that the Bishop, previous to ordaining the candidate, shall challenge the people to say, whether there is any crime or impediment to be alleged against him ; and, in case of such allegation, requires the Bishop to “surcease” from ordaining : yet, unhappily, no *caveat* is ever presented, however disqualified or unspiritual the person to be ordained ; for, when other portions of discipline are lost, it is of small avail to enforce this item.

§ II. Another right of the people, which, though

not directly stated, yet may be inferred from Scripture, is, that they possess security against misrule, and especially against hasty and prejudiced decisions, on the part of the Pastor.

It is founded on such considerations as these:— that they are commanded, not jointly with him to institute, but to concur with, and give practical effect to, those decisions, whether inflicting censure or separation, as in the following places:—

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him” (the offending brother) “be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican.” (Matt. xviii. 17.) “If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.) “Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.” (Rom. xvi. 17–19.) “But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also which are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” (1 Cor. v. 11–13.)

Men who are thus laid under the obligation of renouncing Christian communion with fallen or un-

governable members, have then, as we may reasonably infer, some claim to such provisions as shall make the pastoral acts or decisions affecting those members appeal to the understanding and conscience of the many; so that the censure which may be awarded to an erring brother, shall be, however adjudged, a punishment "*inflicted* of many." These provisions, which are chiefly framed to bring out the judgment and verdict of the laity, on any special case of accusation brought against one of their own number, must be adapted—so a scripturally-enlightened reason would dictate—to the different degrees of piety and intelligence which may be found in different circles of laity. Every one would make a distinction between a congregation of Kaffirs, and one composed of well-informed Englishmen; and, while ruling the one with a resolute fatherly will, as being conscious of knowing far better than they, would be most anxious to act, in the case of the other, so as to carry with him the convictions and acquiescence of the rest, or of the majority. Between these two extremes, however, there are various degrees, calling for Christian wisdom to interfere in the application of the principle; but one thing is absolute and clear, that these provisions in question, while they solicit and seek for the collective opinion and concurrence of the church, or of the specially wise and good members of it, stop short of placing those members in a position of co-administration with the proper spiritual Overseer or Ruler. His singular and official responsibility, as we shall see hereafter, remains unlesened, and cannot be shared either with five or with five hundred.

§ III. Against this it is objected by some, that, in

two places of Scripture especially, acts of censure and excommunication seem not only to be inflicted, but adjudicated, by the whole community; that is, both Pastors and laity being assessors in the case. The first is Matt. xviii. 16, 17; the other, 1 Cor. v., *et seq.* A brief examination of these places, however, will show how little there is even seeming to bear on any such conclusion.

The first need not take much time. It has been shown already, in the second chapter, that when our Lord says, "Tell it unto the church," by the *ἐκκλησία*, so far as He spoke anticipatively, He must have meant the church in any place, as it was to be hereafter constituted under the dispensation of the Spirit; because, during His own ministry, He was the sole and supreme Judge of all questions arising among His disciples: and the whole of the preceding pages, from the second chapter to the present, have exhibited the impressions made upon our understanding as to the character of its constitutions, especially so far as involving this particular,—that, as its Overseers and Rulers were directly called of God, and placed under peculiar and so far unshared obligations to Him, so *their* deliberating, deciding, and acting were to be proportionately different from the same exercises in the laity.

Whether a church be a single congregation, or an aggregate of congregations, does not affect the present point; for, as families are said in Holy Scripture to do what the parents, through their being at the head of the domestic constitution, do; (1 Chron. iv. 2; Jer. x. 25; Zech. xii. 12–14, *et alibi*;) and as a nation is said likewise to do what is done by its

Princes and official persons, civil or military, through their representing the whole estate of the realm; (Isai. ii. 4; Jer. ii. 11; vii. 28, *et alibi*;) so a church may be said to do what is formally and actually done by its constituted organs, especially if these organs are set up by the authority, and qualified by the gifts, of the Holy Spirit. No doubt, wise fathers will always consult their wives and children, and wise Governors their people, according to the wisdom and knowledge there may be in each case to appeal to; but still the act of the administration is held to be, in the common language of all nations, as well as of all Scripture, the act of the community. But, after all, the case of an offending or scandalising brother is not one which at all applies to the question of ecclesiastical trials, where guilt or innocence has to be investigated; or to the question as to who are the proper Judges in such trial. Those who here erect the whole church into a court or community of equal triers, to decide the case by a majority of suffrages, build upon a baseless assumption. The offence is a wrong and injury inflicted upon a brother, involving alienation between the offender and complainant; it is not a matter for inquiry and investigation, but a breach of known and acknowledged law, and, of course, involving sin: the offender spurns all private remonstrances and attempts at reconciliation; then the facts are to be made known to the church, through the organic medium which is appointed for receiving and dealing with such communications; and then, if impenitence still continue, every individual is commanded to join in giving effect to the sentence by which he is separated from the rest.

The passage is full to the point, that all censures and exclusions are to be managed fairly and openly, without any sinister or veiled proceedings; and that the obligations enforcing these censures should rest on palpable and acknowledged violations of law: but to say that the people, as a whole, take part in the primary administration,—this is a matter not only absent from the text, but is opposed by all known analogies, Jewish and Christian, which crowd around the question. And if the whole community here were, what we cannot allow it to be, a community of Judges, this text, even in that case, would not affirm the finality of its sentence: for, as the Jew who heard our Lord would be well aware that an appeal might lie from his congregation or synagogue to the council of Elders, so the disciple of Christ could have no assurance, but that so it might be hereafter with reference to decisions in his own church.

§ IV The case of the incestuous Corinthian, however, has been deemed by some more to the point.

It is here urged by our brethren who advocate the popular form of church order, that while St. Paul used his own apostolical wisdom in this case, and communicated his view of it in his Epistle, he so conducted the expulsion as to make it, not consequentially merely, but formally and administratively, the act of the whole church; inasmuch as he reserved the excision to the moment when they were gathered together with his spirit, and “the power of the Lord Jesus Christ;” (1 Cor. v. 4;) and, besides this, appealed to them in these words, “What have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge

them that are within?" (Verse 12.) With regard to the first point, there is nothing in the anticipated gathering of the Corinthians together, which necessarily implies their assessorship with the Apostle in the matter. The offence was open and known; for the church was "puffed up," that is, inflated with speculative opinions, by which they sought to sophisticate and excuse the crime; and thus, instead of its being a cause of humiliation, they made it an occasion of reflecting favourably upon their intellectual pride. As the sin was open, so it was needful the rebuke should be, and also sufficiently solemn to disturb the apathy of all the members. "Them that sin," said St. Paul to Timothy, "rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Tim. v. 20.) This, in the absence of an accuser or complainant, was telling the matter to the church, in the manner required by our Lord; and, as the private members had connived at the sin, and given no reproving utterance at all, the Apostle spake with final and decisive authority, saying, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, *have judged already*, as though I were present, him that hath so done this deed." (1 Cor. v. 3.) That is, the Apostle in his Master's name, without waiting for the action of the laity, who, indeed, by their connivance in the sin had taken the other side, decided the issue and the sentence at once, in order to vindicate his Master's law of purity. Is it likely that he would have summoned them together, as co-administrators in reference to the infliction or otherwise of the sentence of expulsion, when he had to arouse them from their sleep of antinomian pride and security, by his exposition of the law of Christ? It

has been affirmed that the Apostle, in the first verse, reproves them for not having done before, what he now required them to do; namely, to put away from themselves that wicked person: and from this the inference has been drawn, that the community, as such, were jointly and equally chargeable with the previous obligation to exclude him. Such an inference, however, cannot be fairly drawn from the words of the Apostle. They are reproved for not having *mourned*, that is, on account of the common contamination which they suffered, and *ἵνα*—"to the end that"—the person "might be taken away:" for the mourning of the private members, had it taken place, would have appealed to those among them who had a fatherly or pastoral relation to the rest, whose special obligation it was, by virtue of that relation, to see the Divine law revered and executed; and if these were apathetic and immovable, then it cannot be doubted it was the duty of every individual to avoid, that is, virtually put away, such a man, even without a church decision. "Put away from yourselves," does not necessarily mean, "Deliberate and adjudicate upon him;" but, as verse 11 explains, "Do not keep company with, associate with, or recognise him."

It has also been asked, Why, on the supposition that the Elders were intrusted with the enforcement of Christ's discipline, did not St. Paul, in this matter, address himself to the Pastors and Elders, rather than to the church? The answer is not difficult. If there were regularly settled Pastors at the time this Epistle was written, they must have been powerless, and their office nugatory, from the state of confusion and schism which then existed; that is, if they were

not themselves corrupted, and sympathisers with the accused and guilty individual. In the scope and order of his First Epistle he observes, that there were "contentions" among them; every eminent administrator of baptism having been regarded as a central person around whom others might rally. This circumstance made Paul thankful that here, at least, he had not been in more than one or two instances a baptizer. (1 Cor. i. 11-14.) He could not speak unto them "as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal;" for there was among them "envying, and strife, and divisions." (iii. 2, 3.) Then follows his direction to church-builders, how to edify or set up the sacred structure. In a beautiful figure, which, Dr. Wardlaw justly argues, may apply quite as well to the formation of a church, that is, the building up of its constituent materials, as to the selection and guardianship of its doctrines, the Apostle exhorts all who follow him to take care how they proceed; not to use wood, hay, and stubble, instead of gold, silver, and precious stones; which is the same thing as warning them not to have corrupt members introduced or held in the Christian society, who might endanger its stability, and render it an object for the offended justice of God in the day of fiery trial. So far the Ministers, then, *pro tempore*, of the church of Corinth *were* addressed, whether they were Prophets, Teachers, or what else; and especially under this strain of expression, which includes all who should follow them: "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon: but let *every man* take heed how he buildeth thereupon." (iii. 10.) So far, I say, *they are warned* to put away the unholy, in the prosecution of their own peculiar work (not

the people's ; for the people are the materials) of building up the church. As to the entire society, they are required to separate themselves, that is, to renounce companionship with a guilty man, one known to be guilty, who had not yet been excommunicated by ministerial sentence.

§ V It is believed by Dr. Davidson and others, that in Corinth at this time there were no settled Elders and Pastors, but that the church was in its "nascent" state. This is not an improbable opinion ; for, supposing this Epistle to be written about A.D. 59, it could not have been more than three or four years since the Gospel had been introduced there by Paul and Apollos. It is not, however, of any great importance to either side of the argument : for, if there were Elders, and they continued on the whole faithful, their united action must have been rendered impossible by the broken state of the church : and if there were none, and the lack of pastoral teaching was supplied by persons possessing various *charismata* ; (gifts which the Apostle lightly esteemed in comparison with love ;) or, what is more likely still,—considering the tenor of the eleventh chapter of the Second Epistle,—if those who claimed and held the office of the ministry were such as the Apostle could not recognise,—were "false Apostles," "deceitful workers ;" then the decisive course adopted by him only shows, that when office-bearers and people are alike guilty, rather than "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" be violated, or the purity of the Gospel remain unvindicated, a pastoral authority from without, whether Episcopal, Connexional, or whatever be its form, must interfere to do what the •

authorities on the spot ought to have done, or, taking another supposition, could not do. Some of these false Ministers had actual power over the Corinthians, even to the exacting of contributions to their temporal support,—a power which these people, so long as their Teachers flattered them, recognised and submitted to. Thus St. Paul asks, “If others have been partakers of [*] power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power.” (1 Cor. ix. 12.) From the hands of men of this order, he could not expect the administration of pure discipline; and therefore he at once disallows their claim to office, and acts in contravention of their apathy.

After expounding the figure of the building, in which the part of Pastors is, as we have seen, explained, the Apostle next vindicates his spiritual authority, as the nurturing father of the community; he then declares his judgment of the incestuous person, and acts decisively himself in harmony with the law of Christ,—puts away the hay and stubble from the gold and silver,—and demands their concurrence in the judgment, and their share in its execution. Could any process of thought be more consecutive or natural?

§ VI. The appeal of verse 12 has, however, yet to be examined: “Do ye not judge them that are within?” Here it is asked, Does not the Apostle leave it to be implied, that all persons in the church form one common tribunal in this case? In answer to this, it must be observed, that there is hardly a

* The word “this,” not being represented in the Greek, is omitted here, as rather weakening the sense.

verb in the New Testament which has a greater variety of significations than κρίνω,—these varying meanings often occurring in the closest vicinity to each other. It means, “to sue at law;” (Matt. v. 40;) “to form an opinion after deliberation;” (Luke vii. 43;) “to resolve;” (Acts iii. 13;) “to condemn;” (John iii. 17;) “to institute,” or “ordain;” (Acts xvi. 4;) “to decree;” (1 Cor. vii. 37;) as well as “authoritatively to administer law,” &c.

The exact import of the word, therefore, in any particular case, must be determined by the position and circumstances of the party using it. If a child judge, it is the expression of a not very weighty opinion; if a father, it is the rule of the household; if a friend, who is appealed to, it is a concurrent suffrage; if God judge, it is LAW absolute, and of necessity to be executed; and so forth.

Now in this case we know accurately what is meant by the Apostle's judging: it is the firm determination to deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh; that is, to cast him again into the broad and bad domain of the world,—Satan's kingdom,—and perhaps afflict him with disease in addition; that he might haply become so affected with the difference between the heritage of God's people, and the distractions and miseries of the unregenerate, as to deplore his fall, and seek for reconciliation; and thus, by God's discipline, in connexion with grace, (including, in such discipline, the effect of disease in reducing the physical appetencies to sin,) might have the flesh destroyed, and the spirit saved everlastingly. To judge, I say, in the Apostle's case, was to decide and act thus, even as in the case of Hymenæus and

Alexander, mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, where he likewise appears to be sole Judge; and as this was done apart from the deliberations of the rest, then "to judge," on the part of the rest, can only be to concur with, and act upon, his decision; so that the whole procedure, to use the words of Erasmus, should be "*ex Pauli decreto, ex multitudinis consensu, ex auctoritate Christi.*" This view is strengthened by the necessary import of verses 2 and 3 of the following chapter, where St. Paul asks, in allusion to their appealing to Heathen courts, in settlement of their temporal disputes, rather than to Christian arbitration, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" In what sense, we may ask, is it true that good men shall do this? by assisting to decide upon the individual doom of worldly men and wicked angels at the day of doom? The thought is shocking: this is the sole prerogative of Christ, the Judge of quick and dead. The saints, on hearing His decision, can only give, from a sense of its righteousness, their solemn and emphatic "Amen:" this is their part of the judgment. The argument involved is from the greater to the less: as the saints concur in the sentence of the absolute and final Judge, when the world receives its sentence, so the Corinthians, in the case just discussed, are required to concur in the decision of the Apostle founded on His law: nor would the sentence have been reversed or altered, had they still remained contumacious. And as St. Paul passes from the subject of sins against God to matters of dispute and litigation in temporal things, his argument, with perfect consistency, runs thus: "If ye, being found

finally saints of God, shall have this dignity conferred on you, of acquiescing with Christ in the condemnation of evil men and angels, shall you not be deemed competent to take a similar part in judicial matters relating to things of this life? and, if so, set them to judge or arbitrate, who are practically, by your present conduct, *οἱ ἐξουθενημένοι*, set at nought and despised? ‘I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not ONE that shall be able to judge between his brethren;’ (1 Cor. vi. 3–5;) not ONE primary arbitrator, whose decision others may agree in and confirm?” By these wise men, who were thus apt to resolve litigated questions, there is little doubt the “governments” mentioned in verse 28 of the twelfth chapter are to be understood.

Moreover, the democratic theory is disproved by the terms in which St. Paul reflects upon the subject in his Second Epistle. He refers to the punishment being “inflicted,” not the adjudication as being instituted, “of many;” inasmuch as the concurrence of the Corinthians in the Apostle’s sentence had been obtained, and made a blessing to the individual. In the meantime, as appears from 1 Cor. iv. 17, Timothy was sent to them, to bring to their remembrance the Apostle’s ways which were in Christ, as he taught everywhere in every church; under the mild and settling administration of which Timothy, and of Titus, who came also, it would appear that the schism was for a while healed, the man brought to repentance and re-admitted, and, to a good extent, peace restored. The Epistle exhorts the Corinthians to forgive the awakened penitent, inasmuch as his

offence, by covering the whole communion with shame, had injured them all; but the Apostle himself, who had been in a different position from them, and had not sustained this kind of injury, writes, as the Minister and servant of Jesus Christ, thus: "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person" (or "presence," or "sight") "of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us." (2 Cor. ii. 9-11.) Thus the forgiveness granted by those who had been scandalised, and that granted by the Apostle, were as different as were the spiritual relations to Christ of the parties respectively. That of the people was the restoration of the penitent to their confidence and company; that of the Apostle, his restoration to church-privileges: and, upon the whole, the tone of the Apostle's address to this church, in both of his Epistles, is that of a spiritual father appealing to the intelligent and confiding obedience of those who were indebted to him, and his companions in toil, for everything they had of Gospel hope, requiring their concurrence with his acts; not that of a defender of communistic will; inasmuch as we find him maintaining the truth and order of Christ, whether they concurred or not. The closing verses of the Epistle are all in proof of this.

Such is the bearing of this oft-quoted transaction upon the subject of controversy; and, if it be not in agreement with the doctrine hitherto advocated, and yet to be advocated, in these pages, then a hopeless intricacy and confusion surrounds the whole subject,

such, indeed, as no reverential mind could attribute to that book which claims to be a revelation from God.

Beside the two places now examined, I know of no portions of Scripture which are adduced in support of popular church-government,—except it be that some writers refer to the occasional use of the plural number in Christ's charge to the seven churches of Asia; such as, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison;" "That which ye have hold fast till I come;" and thence infer that obligations are here spread equally over all the members. But still, unless the Angel be got rid of, nothing is gained on this side, however the precepts enjoined are through him made applicable to the people.

We here discuss the matter so far as it affects the laity; though it must be manifest that one part of the subject involves the other, just as the convexity of a curve line involves a corresponding concavity on the other side. If the rights and privileges of the people be described with any accuracy of limit, so far we assert negatively what the obligations of the ministry are. These last, however, will come under particular survey in another place; so that we may now make the summary statement of doctrine on our present point, which is this:—That it may be inferred from Scripture, that the brethren, the laity of every Christian church, by themselves, or by their representatives, have a right to such a share in affirming the guilt or innocence of parties who are tried by the law of Christ, or by a law of fellowship, mutually acknowledged, which appeals to it, as to make the execution of censure declared by the Pastor, or its removal, to be in an intelligent sense the act of the whole

body.* The number of persons sharing in such procedure is never defined in Scripture: and, as long as there are children, young men, and fathers, the ignorant and the well-informed, the rude and the cultivated, to be provided for by the same Christianity, and often in the same place; it is, *à priori*, impossible to suppose that the Scripture should define it. It is one of those conditions which grow out of a previous relation; insomuch that, while the party who is chiefly responsible to Christ must be able to meet the obligations of that responsibility, without having his hands fettered, all influence beneath his own must depend upon the degree in which the claimant is a receiver or giver, a person enjoying or conferring a benefit.

§ VII. Another particular in which lay-influence and co-working are claimed, has respect to the appointment of office-bearers.

Here, too, as before, we are left to infer the extent to which this influence should be exercised, from general and admitted principles; rather than exactly to mark its limits; though we are emboldened to state at once, in order to open out this part of the question, that no clear case appears in Scripture, in which the consent of the community was *absolutely* requisite to the appointment of Minister, Deacon, or any other official person in the Christian society. A Christian who is called from the private ranks of membership to

* Calvin, who, on the ground of Paul's procedure, objects to the doctrine of one man exercising the function of excommunication, as in the Church of Rome, denies, at the same time, that the right resides in every individual, and gives it to the body of Elders.—“Commentary,” *in loc.*

fulfil spiritual or economical tasks, is one who takes up a delegated duty, the authority for fulfilling which, to use the figure of St. Paul, so beautifully developed in Ephesians iv., flows down to him from the Head, through the medium of those who are next higher. This is the descending scale, as marked by apostolical authority: first, Christ, who is over all; then Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors; then Deacons, and all who fill up what is behind of ministerial service; then the common company of believers: so that official authority does not proceed *from the feet upwards*, but *from the HEAD downwards*;* and, in order to keep this principle in its integrity, it is needful that the appointment to office, whether diaconal or of any other kind, should be formally and really that of the Pastor, as being in harmony with pastoral aims and purposes. Still it is evident that, in a free and spiritual society, these appointments must have the respect and confidence of the members of that society, otherwise they will fail of their effect; and here lies the necessity of making some provision for testing that confidence, or checking the rash or prejudiced acts of some possibly declining or unwise Pastor. And again: as these persons so appointed are generally obliged to labour in conjunction with others in the very same functions, and are, besides,

* BISHOP PEARSON: "*Tota potestas spiritualis non redundat à populo ad Clerum, sed à Clero derivatur ad populum: non à domo, sed pro domo Levi, accepit virgam Aaron; non à populo, sed bono populi fit institutio Ministri; non ab hominibus, neque per homines, sed à Christo Sanctus Paulus Apostolus; non à populo, neque per populum, sed à Deo per S. Paulum Titus Episcopus.*"—"Minor Theological Works," vol. ii., Concio vi., p. 74. Oxon. 1844.

brought into co-deliberation with them, it is but an application of the same principle, to say, that those who are already in office, ought to have the opportunity afforded them of objecting, should any ground of objection in the matter of unfitness or unspirituality lie, to any proposed person, and to the confirmation of his official appointments ; and, *vice versâ*, likewise the opportunity of giving or withholding a verdict as to any fault or disqualification, through the occurrence of which the office might be subsequently taken away. Thus arises the reasonable claim of Christian office-bearers, as far from a democratical authority and demand, as the pastoral is from absolutism.

§ VIII. But let us now sustain the position by a reference to the New Testament.

The first instance adduced in support of the popular theory, is the appointment of Matthias to the vacant apostleship ; (Acts i. 15–26 ;) where it is urged that ALL the disciples, being addressed by Peter, “appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias ;” and then prayed, and then “gave forth their lots” in order to the ultimate decision ; and therefore all had equal influence in the matter.

In reply to this, it must be observed, in the first place, that it is by no means certain that the pronoun “they,” in verse 23,—“And *they* appointed two,”—refers to all the disciples : it is, at least, as proper to refer it to the Apostles alone, and for such reasons as these :—

First, it is of the twelve that Peter is speaking throughout, when he says, first referring to Judas, “He was *numbered* with us,” (as being one of the

twelve: the others were not numbered,) “and had obtained part of this ministry.” “Wherefore of these men”—the disciples “which have companied with us,” &c.—“must one be ordained to be a witness of His resurrection.” Peter is appealing to his fellow-Apostles in respect of men who had companied with them, and were then present; therefore, when the narrative proceeds, and says, “And they appointed two,” it is natural enough to understand that by the word “they,” the party immediately appealed to, on the point just mentioned, the Apostles, is meant. Besides, if we were to concede that this is doubtful, it would be a fair rule of interpretation to explain this place by all other places where appointments to office are spoken of; and then, reserving the case of the seven Deacons for separate consideration, the fact is not doubtful, as we shall have occasion to see, that, whoever might take a concurring part, the Apostles or Evangelists themselves appointed. Several “clear texts” are always allowed to turn the testimony of a doubtful one on their side.

Next, it is but congruous that they who were most concerned to fill up the vacant place in this ministry and apostleship, rather than the whole body of disciples, should be regarded as identical with the “*they*” who prayed on the occasion and cast lots, inasmuch as Peter’s very phraseology is preserved in the petition: indeed, in any view of the case, a portion only of the whole company can have engaged in the act; for on solemn religious occasions Jewish women did not cast lots.

In another point of view, likewise, this place would ill suit the theory which it is quoted to serve; for

the whole body of disciples, the one hundred and twenty who were here, would, exclusive of the women, be nearly made up of those who had received a ministerial commission from Christ, and would fall far short of the actual number of Christian believers then existing ; for Christ had been seen of five hundred brethren in Galilee at once. The seventy disciples who had been sent out two and two, and whose commission had not ceased, as is evident from our Lord's renewal to them of His promises after their return, (Luke x. 19,) being present with the Apostles,—a supposition far more likely than otherwise, seeing they were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, rather than to Galilee or Samaria,—the assembly in the upper room at Jerusalem would be anything but a popular assembly, in the modern sense of that expression, and their decision anything but the result of a popular resolution. Indeed, the matter was so fully committed into the hands of God, notwithstanding the nomination of two by the twelve, that all human wisdom and authority were renounced, as was most fitting, in asking for an Apostle,—a special messenger of Christ,—and the matter was entirely left with the Searcher of hearts. Their prayer was not for direction how to choose, but for a revelation as to fact, as to whom God had chosen ; and they adopted that method to ascertain the Divine will, which had been so often sanctioned in the history of their nation. In a word, when this passage is fully and impartially examined, it will be found to yield no testimony in favour of constituting church-officers by the authority of the whole congregation ; its teaching tends in the opposite direction : and, indeed,

if it were otherwise, the Congregational principle would here be equally impugned; for the congregation at Jerusalem would then appoint a person whose authority as an Apostle must be recognised in any other, in Galilee, Samaria, or elsewhere.

§ IX. The next case usually adduced is that of the choosing the seven Deacons of Jerusalem. The argument is mainly the same: namely, that the multitude of the disciples is called together; the matter is laid before them; they “look out” or choose the individuals, and therefore the appointment is that of the whole community. Plausible as this conclusion may seem, it is one-sided and unsound. Let it be granted that the word ἐξελέξαντο has its full sense, “they chose;”—for it cannot with consistency be softened, or made to mean anything less than a real election, founded on previous deliberation and comparison;—still, the disciples did this in obedience to a ministerial suggestion and requirement. The Apostles themselves had in the first place the care of the widows, but they desired to be relieved of this service: the plan originated with themselves, and was devised as being in harmony with that system of truth, in its far-reaching consequences, which it was their charge to establish and maintain, and with the future operations of Christ’s church in the world. The wisdom of the disciples had nothing to do with its origination, but it was needful that they should concur in it; and as they in a body supplied the funds which were to be distributed, so it was necessary they should have confidence in the brethren to whom the work of distribution, with whatever other duty it might involve, was confided. Following the direction which the

Apostles gave them, as to the sort of persons they should select, they chose Stephen and six others ; yet they did not choose or appoint Deacons, but persons whom the Apostles were to *appoint* or *make Deacons*. “Look ye out,” said the twelve, “seven men whom WE MAY APPOINT over this business ;” and these persons they set before the Apostles, who, when they had prayed, laid their hands upon them, and they were appointed accordingly. Had the proposal arisen from the people, or had they taken primary part in the execution of it, the transaction would then have assumed a popular form ; but it did not so arise : or had they decided, likewise, any of the qualifications for the office ; but they did not so decide : or had they taken part in the appointing act ; but they did not take such part. They concurred in the proposal, and found out the persons described ; and, as fellow-citizens in the kingdom of heaven, and on principles of natural justice, they had a right, so far, to judge in this case ; inasmuch as by confiding to these persons the apportioning of their contributions and charities, they ceded to them a portion of their own individual responsibility, and required to have, on that account, knowledge and approval of their personal character. There was not a Ministers’ side and a people’s side on this question : it were an anomaly to regard these seven as a popular counterpoise against the pastorate, when they were instituted to relieve the pastorate. It was not a choice of church Rulers and Teachers, but of church assistants. All this saved the principle of lay acquiescence ; and the authoritative appointing act of the Apostles saved the other principle already mentioned and defended,—an implied doctrine which

runs through the Scriptures; namely, that the right to minister in the congregation comes down from the Head of the church, through the medium—or, in certain cases, with the simple acquiescence—of those who occupy the more responsible position. How else should Paul say to Timothy, (1 Tim. iii. 15,) after he had given him directions as to the qualifications of Deacons, and how to select them, “These things” (that is, respecting Deacons) “I write unto THEE, hoping to come to thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that *thou* mayest know,” ἀναστρέφεισθαι, “how to occupy *thyself* in the church of God.” How was Timothy concerned to do this, if the churches absolutely originated whom they would? Here, again, let one place cast its light upon another, and let us not be afraid of too much illumination.* In the case before us, the

* Cyprian, who, in places torn from their connexion, has often been quoted in favour of popular suffrage, says very clearly: “*Meminisse autem Diaconi debent quoniam Apostolos, id est, Episcopos et Præpositos, Dominus elegit; Diaconos autem post ascensum Domini in cælos Apostoli sibi constituerunt episcopatus sui et ecclesiæ Ministros,*” &c. “The Deacons ought to remember, that our Lord chose His Apostles, that is, Bishops and Rulers; but the Apostles for themselves, after His ascension into heaven, constituted the Deacons to be the Ministers of the church and of the episcopate.” With much more to the same effect.—*Opera, Oxon.*, 1682, *Epist.* iii., p. 6.

Dr. Davidson thinks that because ἡμεῖς is not prefixed to καταστήσομεν, while it is inserted before προσκαρτερήσομεν, the sense will run thus: “We (Apostles and brethren) may appoint, but we (Apostles alone) will continue in prayer,” &c. But instances are not wanting in the New Testament, where, in the same passage, there is a personal pronoun inserted, and a personal pronoun understood, and both have exactly the same value and import; (see John iv. 14, *et alibi*;) so that we greatly doubt whether this distinction can determine the sense. It can only be truly determined by the proper antithesis of the passage, and the natural coherency of the narrative;

right of the Apostles to appoint, which they practically maintained, plainly involved the right to refuse, if there were cause for refusal; and the twelve Apostles, who were native Jews, appealed chiefly to the murmuring Hellenists, who hitherto had *been strangers to them*, to point out, by means of their more accurate knowledge, who were the fittest persons whose case as candidates might be entertained.

§ X. Another place supposed to look favourably towards popular suffrage in its widest form, as regards appointments to office, is Acts xiv. 23: "And when they" (Paul and Barnabas) "had ordained them Elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." The stress in this passage is laid on the verb *χειροτονέω*, which signifies, it is said, the giving of a suffrage by stretching forth the hand; and the whole meaning is understood to be, that these apostolic persons ordained the Elders by acquiescing in

and if no question had arisen on the subject, I cannot imagine that a candid reader of the second and third verses would come to any other conclusion, than that the "we" who were not to leave the Word of God (*ἡμᾶς καταλείψαντας...*) were the "we" who were to appoint others. All the way the persons addressed are necessarily *ye* or *you*, and the persons speaking and acting, *we* or *us*; these last are the Apostles, and then the emphasis in the second and fourth verses will naturally stand thus: "Look YE" (the multitude) "out from among you seven men," &c.; "but we" (the Apostles, &c.) "will give ourselves." Allowing, however, the utmost scope possible to the above criticism, surely Dr. Davidson would not settle a principle, as he seems to do, upon a foundation so doubtful; but, whether or not, the concurrence of the church in the matter, *sine quâ non*, is a point which we should not at all contend against. It is clear enough the Apostles would not have appointed any who were objected to by the church.

the appointment of the whole congregation, as expressed by this gesture.

It is not doubted that this was the original meaning of the word, and that it was specially used to express the act of stretching out the hand, and voting, in Grecian assemblies; but, in the lapse of time, words lose their exact etymological meaning, and acquire an import more abstract and arbitrary. How bewildering, for instance, at first it would be to a learner of English, to say respecting any man, that he had *imposed on*, put something upon, his brother, if the meaning were that he had deceived him; or that such a fabric of cotton was manufactured, intending to intimate that it was made by hand, when the meaning merely was, it was produced by machinery. So the word in question after a time meant simply to elect, appoint, or ordain, whatever the mode of appointing or ordaining might be;* and there were Greek writers, such as Philo, contemporaneous with the writers of the New Testament, who used the word in this sense, without having any respect to suffrages whatever. St. Luke, who, as the author of "the Acts of the Apostles," is the writer we are now considering, uses the cognate verb, *προχειροτονέομαι*, in verse 41 of the tenth chapter, in the sense of simple designation. And in the passage before us the word above mentioned is not capable of bearing any other meaning; for they who had confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the faith, were they who ordained these Elders. The

* ZEIGLERUS, *De Diaconis et Diaconissis*, cap. v., § 4, 5; *et SELDEN, USSER., apud ZEIG.*

action must be restrained to these two ; and, whether they stretched forth the hand or not, or whether or not they ordained, as Dr. Hammond thinks they did, by *imposition* of hands, they were the parties who authoritatively appointed to office. Indeed, Dr. Davidson candidly gives up the popular argument, so far as it is made to rest on this word, and is content with saying, that the Apostles would not in this or other cases ordain without the concurrence of the churches ; —a statement which we have no wish to oppose.

Besides these, I know of no other passage quoted in favour, on this point, of democratical claims, except it be 2 Cor. viii. 19, where the brother is spoken of who was “chosen of the churches” to be Paul’s travelling companion, and the treasurer of the contributions of the Gentile churches. But, in the first place, here is no church office-bearer at all, but a person delegated to fulfil a financial mission or trust ; one whom the communities concerned might very properly send, if they could meet for the purpose of agreeing on the matter ; though, remembering the trouble of such a procedure in those days of difficult travel, the probability is immensely on the side of supposing that the individual was fixed upon by the letters commendatory of the Rulers of these churches, —the usual method, indeed, in such cases during the apostolic age and the age which immediately followed.

In reference to the popular appointment of Ministers, Dr. Davidson acknowledges that there is no Scripture proof at all ; and, indeed, in reference to the other particulars, he evidently feels dissatisfied to rest entirely on his expositions, and chooses rather to rely on a general theory drawn from considerations exterior

to Scripture,—a theory which assumes that there is and must be popular concurrence when the people are not mentioned; and that the people may, after all, suggest acts which they did not engage in, and approve of functions which they had not the ability to discharge: but all this is remote from the real point in question. For our part, so far from using the optative form of expression on the subject, we contend for the *propriety* and *necessity* of having the approval of God's people in pastoral appointments; this is to assign to them a sphere of active influence and co-working which shall extend accordingly as they possess, not the passion for political privileges, but the light and unction of the Holy Spirit, thus qualifying them to serve and become great in that kingdom which belongs to the poor in spirit, and only stops short of yielding them an equal assessorship or co-pastorate,—short of that point where the Shepherd is the Ruler: and as to the concurrence itself, it is only reasonable that it should be drawn from as great a breadth of the people, as is likely to furnish any contribution of wisdom or light to the decisions or rules concurred in. The Gentile churches were practically concerned in the Steward's function of Paul's travelling companion, and were able to suggest advices as to the kind of person it would be right to intrust; and therefore all are said to have acquiesced in the selection. All the Wesleyan Societies distributively are interested in the exercise of ministerial functions, and therefore all collectively acquiesce in the appointment of Ministers. This is the last link in that golden chain of gracious provisions which reaches this world of sin, and connects it with a better.

§ XI. And this concurrence of the people on a large scale, meets all the conditions demanded by freedom, on behalf of a connexional body, however many consociated Societies it includes ; for, if the members of those several churches, as a whole, acquiesce expressly or tacitly in the body of the rules by which the aggregate communion is governed, (rules, I say, of application ; for laws to bind the conscience absolutely no human society can make,) to impute tyranny to the pastorate, when it administers the whole, is as ridiculous and unjust, as it is insulting to the churches in question.

Let the Scripture view of the work of the Holy Ghost in the Christian church be fully expounded, and then the truth on this subject finds a basis on which to rest. For while, with Neander, we reject the *sacerdotal* distinction ; with all the purest and best catholic churches we admit that the Divine call, and the associated qualification of certain persons, throw upon those persons the obligation of taking the initiative in teaching and governing, thereby creating a *New-Testament* distinction. Moreover, the modern intuitional philosophy which pervades the theology of Germany, so thoroughly colours the entire Church History of this writer, that his sum of doctrine seems to be this,—that through all the forms of external order in the Christian church, and through all its variations of doctrinal teaching, the same religious consciousness has existed ; sometimes powerfully excited, sometimes half asleep, sometimes perplexed and involved, but always there ; an everlasting plastic thing, moulded into special manifestations by the human heart and intellect, in which it lies from

age to age, in all subjective life. This so shuts out the notion of a special Divine government, including that of a particular dealing of the Holy Ghost with men to whom His gifts and calling are at first, as His own Person, objective, that the doctrine of a special vocation to the ministry is altogether merged and lost.

Mosheim, in respect of any question of historical fact or investigation, may be safely trusted; but his cold and spiritless theology, or rather his want of theology, in attempting to elucidate the annals of apostolic times, hopelessly vitiates his general conclusions on the subject. Thus, when he says that the assembly of the people "chose their own Rulers and Teachers, or [that is] received them by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others; rejected or confirmed by their suffrages the laws that were proposed by their Rulers to the assembly;"* this may be so explained as to accord both with our views of the Scripture history and our Wesleyan practice. But when, breaking off into more general deductions, he adds, "They excommunicated the profligate and unworthy members of the church, restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges, passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and disunion that arose in the community, examined and decided the disputes which happened between the Elders and Deacons, and, in a word, exercised all the authority which belongs to the sovereign power;" and when, in the preceding passage, he writes, "The people were undoubtedly the first in authority;" we ask, in utter amazement, Where is the proof? Sentiments more opposed to

* "Ecclesiastical History," chap. ii., § 6.

the whole scope of the sacred narrative could hardly be imagined.

Alas ! this savours too much of this world,—of the forum, the hustings, and the hall. A little light of that rich theology of which Christ is the centre and the sun, soon casts a glow over such a monotonous and dreary scene, and transfers us from the low sweep of the wilderness to the hills and valleys of Immanuel's land, where high and low, vast and little, barren and exuberant, grand and lovely, and all harmonising, are the attributes in type of moral church scenery. The Acts of the Apostles cannot be explained without a deep study of the Epistles of the Apostles, any more than the transactions in the Garden, or at the Cross, can be explained without the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement ; or, to go far back, than the migration of Abraham can be understood without an understanding of the evangelical covenant.

§ XII. In further support of democratical claims, it is said that “the brethren” were present at the Jerusalem meeting, the nature and object of which have been already discussed ; and that they were associated with “the Apostles and Elders” in the promulgation of the decrees. All true. But in what position were they present, and to discharge what duties ? “All the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul,” &c. ; and after they, (Barnabas and Paul,) *σιγησαι αὐτοὺς*, “had become silent, *James answered, saying,*” &c. That many of the people were present, is accounted for by the deep interest which they took in the subject ; but that they should have taken part in this deliberation, is a

supposition not only discouraged in the text, but one impossible to be true : for the people of Jerusalem and Judea, as well as the Antiochians, came to have the question resolved for their own guidance and comfort, not themselves to resolve it. “The *Apostles and Elders* came together for to *consider* of this matter :” (Acts xv. 6 :) the others were but present. And how were the church associated with the Apostles and Elders in respect of the decrees? Not in forming or instituting them ; for, in verse 4 of the next chapter, these are said to have been ordained of the Apostles and Elders ; but in authenticating them to other churches, affording the weight of their testimony to the fact, that these were the very decisions of the Apostles and Elders, and also, of course, in giving their hearty approval of the sentiments they contained.

It is in the work of appointing “*chosen men*” to be messengers, that “the church” are joined with their Ministers, as described in verse 22 ; and it is when *letters* are written and transmitted, that “the brethren” send their greeting, together with that of the Apostles and Elders, “unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.” When the decrees themselves, and their authority, are alone regarded, it is the work of the ministerial college : when these decrees have to be attested to others, then the whole church, or the brethren, are added.

An exactly parallel case occurs in the superscription and sending of several of St. Paul’s inspired Epistles. That to the Corinthians (First Epistle) thus : “Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the

will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church," &c. That to the Galatians thus : " Paul, an Apostle, and *all the brethren which are with me*, unto the churches of Galatia." To the Thessalonians, both in the First and Second Epistles, thus : " Paul, and *Silvanus, and Timotheus*, unto the church of the Thessalonians." Now here it will not be doubted whether the matter of the Epistles in all the instances be produced by the inspired wisdom of Paul alone,—whether he be the sole authority in the case : no one in any age of the church, so far as I know, has ever thought of laying to the account of the brethren on the one hand, or to that of Sosthenes, Silvanus, or Timotheus, on the other, the authorising, in whole or in part, of any doctrinal decision, or binding precept, addressed to the respective communions. The introduction of the brethren in the superscription was to signify that these had already received and believed the truths of which the Epistle treated ; and now, by concurring with the Apostle in sending it through the medium of a bearer, they testified that this was the very teaching of Paul, and not some spurious production foisted upon them.

And so with regard to the other Epistles : whether Timotheus and Silvanus had any degree of inspiration or not, is nothing to the point : the Epistles are held to be those of Paul. His co-Apostle Peter, addressing all Christians, and therefore the Thessalonians, speaks of them as his : He, " Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you." (2 Peter iii. 15.) They profess to be such, and contain this note of attestation in conclusion, " The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every

Epistle : so I write." (2 Thess. iii. 17.) These Thessalonians appear to have been tampered with by a forged Epistle, as from the Apostle, which enunciated deceptive doctrines respecting the day of the Lord : (ii. 2 :) hence arose the necessity of having known witnesses to the genuineness and authenticity of apostolic communications ; and the names of Timotheus and Silvanus, who were then with St. Paul, are therefore appended to the initial address.

In this way, then, the superscription of the pastoral or synodical letter to the Gentile churches (Acts xv.) is explained. The brethren were associated with the Apostles and Elders, as testifying to the truth and reality of the acts of these latter in council, and that this document was a faithful account of those decisions and the recommendations thereon.

§ XIII. Thus far the inspired volume ; and I do not feel under obligation to seek for evidence from any other quarter. The object of our present inquiry is not, What has been the doctrine or practice of ante-Nicene antiquity ? but, What saith the Scripture ? Yet, as antiquity has been quoted by opponents, we may, in passing to our conclusion, just glance at the spirit of its testimony. To my conviction nothing can be clearer, than that the earliest minute and authentic records of ecclesiastical proceedings are, upon the whole, in harmony with the doctrines of these pages. Such records are first found in the age of the martyred Bishop of Carthage.

Cyprian resolved, he said, in one of his letters, "to carry on no affair without the consent of the people ;"*

* *Epist.* xiv., p. 33.

that is, he had adopted, voluntarily, this principle of administration,—he yielded this: it was not then demanded of him, or why did he mention the matter in this form at all? Nor did this admitted concurrence of the people interfere with his own particular obligation and right to receive persons into the church by baptism, or remove them by excommunication. He re-admitted, on one occasion, a lapsed brother to the fellowship of the church, the people also being present who were of the faithful; but the reason assigned is, not that they had a co-ordinate jurisdiction in the matter, but that “this honour was due to the faith and reverence of those who had stood firm in time of persecution;”* and it must not be concealed that, as restoration to the church was then thought to be one with the forgiveness of sins, so the influence of living confessors, who had suffered for the faith, was deemed available to procure it.

Still this is nothing like admission by popular suffrage; and, when separated from his people by persecution, Cyprian appointed several persons to church-offices without any consultation whatever, and so far departed from his general principle, thereby showing that he did not consider his pastoral acts invalid, because that principle could not be brought invariably to bear. But the other, the converse rule in those days,—maintained from the apostolical Fathers,—that nothing should be done *χωρὶς ἐπισκόπου*, or *ἄνευ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου*, “without the Bishop,” or without his known sanction, WAS NEVER DEPARTED FROM; for such acts as were in that sense done without him,

* *Epist. xiii., apud NEANDRUM.*

the centre of unity, were invalid, and had to be done again. This points out the relative value of primary obligation on the one hand, and admitted concurrence on the other,—the very matter we are all the way endeavouring to illustrate. He directed also, in the name of a synod, that Bishops should be chosen in the presence, and with the acquiescence, of the people over whom they were intended to preside; but it must not be forgotten that the episcopate was a dignity which had then much to do with all the varied interests, secular and sacred, of the community, with the administration of funds,* and various domestic regulations. The Bishops, except in a very few instances, were Presbyters and Ministers of Christ previously to their episcopal election, and not made Ministers by such election; and though sometimes the cry of an excited community would prevail at once to procure the election of a Bishop, as in the case of the great Ambrose at Milan, and Fabian at Rome, yet the instances are quite as frequent in which Bishops are designated by private ministerial appointment. So Alexander, on his death-bed, nominated Athanasius, who succeeded him.† These noisy and tumultuous elections, when they did occur, were no credit to Christianity, and have given too much occasion for the cold sarcasms of Gibbon: they savoured far more of the political spirit of the empire, than of the seriousness of Christians who were anxious to know “those who were over them in the Lord.”

* That is, the apportioning of his own and his Presbyters' salaries, and the distribution of the offerings for the afflicted and distressed.—*Epist.* vii., p. 14; lxvii., p. 173; xli., p. 80.

† SOZOMEN, *Eccles. Hist.*, cap. ii., § 17.

The learned Bishop Beveridge takes it for a rule in early times, that Presbyters were not designated by popular election, but only Bishops;* and Bingham, who demurs to this, can only bring such instances as those of Cyprian and Augustine, in whose case there was special reason for publicity, to bear in the other direction. But, however this may be, no person could be admitted actually to any clerical office, but by those who were in office before him, and in particular by the Bishop. Laymen were oft admitted, too, into provincial Councils in the age of Cyprian; and, in cases where the assembly of Ministers rarely exceeded in number those composing a modern Wesleyan District-Meeting, this might be done without any inconvenience; nor, considering the position which the laity took, was there any inconvenience in some of them being present at the Council of Nicæa, and other large assemblies: but there is nothing on record to prove that they took part in deliberations or decisions affecting Christian doctrine or precept, or in the spiritual administration of the churches concerned in the province. The suffrages of the Bishops and Clergy were slowly and verbally given, and the decision taken accordingly. Thus at the Council held on the subject of the baptism of heretics, at which eighty-five African Bishops and much people were present, none are mentioned as having spoken or acted, or even as having given their suffrage, but the Bishops.†

* *Pand. Canonum. Notæ in Can. vi. Conc. Chalced.*

† CYPRIANI *Opera*, Oxon., 1682. *Conc. Carth.*, A.D. 256. Also "Cyprian's Life and Times. By the REV. G. A. POOLE, M.A., 1840," p. 366. Some writers, in reading the account which Eusebius gives of the Council of Antioch, which condemned Paul of Samosata, have

And, upon the whole, whoever, instead of culling single passages, will study the entire ecclesiastical spirit of the Cyprianic period, he will unquestionably find such things as these: first, a deep-seated regard for the ministerial office, and a belief that, in some respects, it had an unshared responsibility; second, a stern repudiation of any Teacher who had not ministerial, that is, in that day, episcopal, sanction; third, a thorough recognition of the totally distinct duties and responsibilities of the laity in the church of God. And, therefore, in this state of things, Bishops and Presbyters could largely invite the people to go with

wished to understand him as saying, that the laity of several churches were present, and took part in the procedure. The superscription of the conciliar letter is as follows:—"To Dionysius and Maximus, and to all our fellow-Ministers throughout the world, the Bishops, and Presbyters, and Deacons, and to the whole catholic church throughout the world under heaven; Helenus, Hymenæus, and Theophilus, and Theotecnus, and Maximus, Proclus, Nicomas, and Æmilianus; Paul, and Bolanus, and Protogenes; Hierax, and Eutychius, and Theodorus, and Malchion, and Lucius, and all the rest, who are Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons dwelling with us in the neighbouring cities and nations, together with the churches of God, wish joy to the beloved brethren in the Lord." It is perfectly clear from this, that the churches of God were in some way associated with the Syrian Pastors in deposing this heretic; but how were they associated? The same writer informs us, in his twenty-eighth chapter, a little preceding, where he says that Pastors of the churches at Pontus, Tarsus, Iconium, Jerusalem, Bostra, and other places, assembled at Antioch, on the occasion referred to, in vast numbers; but they were Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. The churches of God were present, then, in the persons of their ministerial representatives; and many of these communities had, no doubt, long groaned for the removal of this proud, insidious, and yet fascinating and popular, enemy of the truth. It was the logical acumen and Christian zeal of Malchion, Presbyter of Antioch, which carried the decision of this Council.—EUSEB., *Eccles. Hist.*, lib. vii., cap. 30.

them: they only strengthened themselves by seeking for lay concurrence and co-working, as far as it was practical. The general tone of lay feeling, with regard to the ministry, in that age, was perhaps the very opposite of what it is in the present.

And, ascending higher, if we regard the testimony of Clement of Rome, who is the connecting link between the Apostles and the men of the second century, he says, in his Epistle to the Romans,* that Presbyters were at first appointed by the Apostles, afterwards “by other approved men, with the approbation of the whole church;” plainly showing that by “other approved men” he meant men similarly set apart, though inferior in order to Apostles,—Evangelists, Angels, Bishops, or Presbyters; and by the whole church, the laity, as distinct from them. And then, if we take the statement of Cyprian, already mentioned, who is the link of connexion between the second century and the age of established hierarchy, and whose testimony may be supposed to involve that of the somewhat earlier Tertullian, (for, it is said, he never passed a day without reading that Father’s works,) he declares what is nearly the same thing; namely, that the Bishop is “chosen of God, by the judgment of Christ, the testimony of the Clergy, and the suffrage of the people;” † that is, chosen from men who were already Ministers of Christ, and had been ordained Presbyters by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery. Nothing was further from the notions of that age, than that of making the Bishop the mere organ of the will of the people,

* *Epist.* i., 44.

† *Epist.* liii., *apud* NEANDRUM.

either in excommunications or the appointment of church office-bearers. To them he was, in a higher sense than modern notions would recognise, the Minister of Christ; and no schismatic adventurer, such, for instance, as Novatus at Rome, who plotted to obtain the episcopate, ever reviled or lowered the office, in order to gain his point. The history of his schism, and that of Felicissimus at Carthage, is full of this, and full of many other things which modern Methodist history has re-produced. My wonder is, that able and serious men, found in the ministerial ranks of those bodies which have separated from Wesleyan Methodism, should allow themselves to quote loosely from other authors passages violently detached from ancient writers, in support of opinions which Scripture does not teach, and which these passages themselves, fairly understood, do not contain, and when the conclusions deduced from them are wholly opposed to the spirit of the period which they represent.*

§ XIV. And now, again, let us pause for a moment, and, leaving antiquity out of the question, let us draw from our present survey of the Scriptures alone the general doctrines which, in connexion with the whole of this subject, they teach. They are these:—That the Steward or Pastor is directly responsible to the Head of the church for the preservation of His truth, and the maintenance of purity; that although every member (he included) is under the same law, yet he is the EXPOSITOR OF LAW, and answerable for its enforcement; that, in the adjudication of discipline, appeal is to be made to the

* See Note (A), Appendix.

people, as to whether that law has been broken, so as, from their verdict or concurrence, to make the act, whatever it is, the act of the whole; yet that, if in particular and momentous cases that verdict or concurrence, through faction, be withheld,—or if doubt should arise as to whether the law of Christ, in those instances, applies, or as to how far it applies,—then must the matter be resolved and decided by the collective pastorate, as in the cases of Jerusalem and Corinth.

On these principles, though amid many involuntary mistakes of administration, the Wesleyan Ministry, since Mr. Wesley's death, has acted, as I trust to show more fully in the succeeding chapter; but here I hasten to notice the theoretical objections which have been drawn, as well from defective and partial views of the Scripture places we have noted, as from a speculative assumption. These objections may be all involved in one general statement, which is this:—That the application and administration of governing authority proceed, in Christ's church, on the same principles as in civil polity; and that, therefore, there ought to be a balance of power between the governors and the governed, so well defined and settled as to make the whole *régime* constitutional, in the *political* sense. This is the theory maintained by the writers of the "New Connexion," and, I grieve to add, of one now gone from us, on whose sympathy and co-operation we had counted to rely till the end of life.* On this postulate consequence after consequence is heaped, without the slightest misgiving, as

* REV. GEORGE STEWARD, in his work, "The Principles of Church-Government, and their Application to Wesleyan Methodism."

though its truth were beyond all question, until a full-proportioned structure appears; but it is as baseless as a cloud-castle in the air.

§ XV. There is, indeed, a happy conjunction of influence among Ministers and people, where all alike abide in the truth, which answers all the *harmonising* purposes of a political constitution, even while it aims at purposes far higher; but this is not brought about by what statesmen call “balance of power,” but by the mutual fulfilment of a system of duty which Infinite Wisdom has arranged. The Scripture puts the matter thus: it says to the Pastor, “Maintain and extend the truth at all hazards; do it with fidelity and love, so as to win all hearts and understandings to your side, so as to gain a personal reward, and make those you win the instruments of its further extension; but still, whether you succeed in this or not, maintain the truth.” And to the people it says, “Fix your eye on the objects which the truth reveals: seek and obtain pardon and holiness, and, after a constant course of walking with God yourself, as well as of bringing others to the same blessedness, defer to the light and guidance which the Ministry brings; and, in this relation and employ, you shall so act upon your Pastors, and they shall so act upon you, as that you shall be together one body, and have one mind.” It is here that we have the analogy of chords in music, or that of the conjoint action of members in the same living frame; or, to use the wondrously expressive language of St. Paul, the whole body is “fitly joined together and compacted by that which” (not a political expedient, but) “EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, according to the effectual working in the

measure of EVERY PART.” It is a religious influence, acting upon and re-acting from every member, that makes the unity: not a defined distribution of privileges here, and suffrages yonder; for these must needs vary, as the intelligence of any given Society varies.

§ XVI. The term “balance” is taken from *secular* politics: it signifies an equipoise of powers or interests, else it signifies nothing; or, let our author’s account of it be adopted, “such a combination of forces of different kinds as serves to modify the ascendant one, and in action to represent them both.” Still the analogy it suggests is a false one. The Magistrate deals with the man as he finds him: the Pastor is laid under obligation to make him, by spiritual teaching, what he now is not; and this is the very soul of his office. The civil Sovereign is the administrator of law which is thoroughly understood and authorised within the community: the Pastor is the administrator of law, the authority of which is ABOVE THE COMMUNITY, and—considering that its members are being continually drawn from an alien world, which is ignorant of spiritual things—of law which he must gradually expound to a great proportion of that community. The formal unity and harmony of the civil state is the Sovereign’s aim: but the formal unity and co-working of church-members is only a means toward the attainment of *our* great end; and the securing of that end may often demand a disarrangement of the means. The rights of civil subjects are vested and inalienable: the rights of awakened and penitent men, seeking admission, or admitted into Christian society, are neither vested nor inalienable, but acquired. The oneness of the

State is made out of the healthful counterposition of its constituent parties ; the oneness of the Church, by having no parties at all, but by all deferring to the Sovereign Head.

The Ministry is a motive power, drawing the help and acquiescence of others after it, not absolutely requiring that help and acquiescence as necessary to action. It *ought* to be ascendant in wisdom, in goodness, and in energy ; and this ascendancy ought not to be counteracted, or so modified as to have its free power impaired, however the resolutions and acts which are prompted by it may subsequently be tested.

Besides, there may be a political harmonising of parties,—a balance of power ; and it may be a wrong and bad one. In geometry we acknowledge that two lines, called perpendicular, may be perfectly parallel with each other, and yet both sadly out of right angle in relation to the base from which they spring : so in ecclesiastics, a ministry and people may exactly work into each other's hands in the way which a balance suggests, and yet may be far gone, and farther going, from truth and holiness. What were the atrocities of the French Papistic Sovereigns, but results of the evil balance of power practically at work between churchmen and laity in the ruling councils ? If the one had been weaker, or the other stronger, those results could hardly have happened. What were the oppressions of the High Commission and the Star-Chamber in this country, but decisions in which the lay authorities coincided with the Bishops, and often formed the numerical majority ? On the theory in question, there can be no independent action on the part of the Ministry ; no means of meeting a sudden emergency arising

in Christ's kingdom, where emergencies are so often arising,—and all the more frequently as the end draws near. The Reformation would have been impossible, under the sway of such a principle; and the rise of Methodism itself would have been impossible. If Martin Luther and his co-Pastors, and if our own Founder, had waited for an equipoise with their own of lay influence, before they made their bold advances on the kingdom of darkness, history would have shown a very different page. Lay suffrage on any comprehensive scale would, at first, have been against their scheme; but they drew on lay co-operation as a consequence to follow, and that was the proper and heaven-appointed order. Moreover, the “balance” has been already weighed in God's own balance of the sanctuary, and, in respect of gaining the purposes sought for by it, has been found wanting. So far as its principle is embodied in the ruling eldership, or assessorship with the Ministry in the church, of non-pastoral persons, it has had a fair trial in the course of the last three centuries. Has it preserved Calvin's church of Geneva in a right interpretation and administration of the law of Christ? Has it preserved intact to the people the Helvetian Confession, or abolished that document,—that testimony to the faith of the Reformation? Has it expelled those Pastors who denied the Lord that bought them, and brought in damnable heresies? Has it not rather given up everything precious in the Gospel, and silenced the people by telling them that their representatives were concurrent and in court? Has it kept up the least shadow of godly discipline in the consistories of France? Has it fenced off the Protestant professors of that

country from philosophical neology and semi-unbelief? Has it preserved the venerable Church of Scotland itself from schisms and disruption, whether on the ground of doctrine or discipline? And, if we take the theory of balance in its more Erastian form, has it preserved the parishes and schools of Protestant Germany from nursing and diffusing the worst heresies which, since the days of Gnosticism, have afflicted the Christian church? Or, to come nearer home, has it given to the Methodist New Connexion, and other offshoots from ourselves, an energy, expansion, uniformity of teaching, and power of witnessing for Christ, which the parent Connexion does not possess? Surely not. In the last case the stock-still balance is the only one realised.

§ XVII. The scheme in question is one which puts down Christian virtue in some of its highest and noblest forms. The Ministry must not move except in a prescribed routine; no great thing must be done on a sudden turn, but according to a conventional compact; no seraphic ardour must burn out of the ordinary line; no luminous wisdom must act, until others are brought up to its own standard. Every man must be timid of personal responsibility, and must do nothing till it is thoroughly put to the vote and conventionalised. The Pastor must glide along, in slumbering calm, with everything arranged beforehand for him, by compact; never, with an aroused conscience, uttering an emphatic “No!” or, from the prompting of a glad heart, giving an equally free and generous “Yea!”—deeming the untroubled character of his course to be the *ne plus ultra* of pastoral régime. Is this the imitation of the apostolic spirit,—this the

reflection of New-Testament polity? Where was the balance of power, when Paul had to complain that all they that are in Asia were turned away from him, and he was left to contend for the truth alone? Such a notion is as abhorrent to New-Testament Christianity as is the notion of lording it over God's heritage.

Now the Wesleyan Pastorate, its opponents being judges, has to this day held the TRUTH,—not without controversy, not without defensive struggles, sometimes against individual Ministers, and sometimes against portions of the people; yet, through all dangers, and with much suffering, it has held the truth, both in respect of the catholic doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and in respect of the application of Christ's redeeming benefits to the souls of men. *This is the true test to which a church should be brought*, as any man may see who will read our Lord's charge to the seven churches; not the test of being able to present from year to year the picture of undisturbed co-working between Ministry and people. And this holding of the truth is the starting-point from which all good must proceed. And yet everything of the harmony which the political balance-scheme professes to aim at, has been realised in the best periods of Methodism, by those higher and holier means which we have described and expounded above.

§ XVIII. Such a harmony was in full force in the few years immediately preceding the democratical tempest of 1848. The Societies were in peace, the Missions to the Heathen were enlarged, new Circuits were organized, and prospects of usefulness were opening on every hand;—(our author himself, up to that time, and for the working course of twenty years

previously, had been the subject of no misgiving as to the polity of the body; this he confesses;)—when several ambitious and disappointed Ministers, by extensively circulating anonymous publications, slandering the character and motives of their compeers, and using other methods of like tendency, and sowing the seeds of suspicion in the minds of the people, so as to alienate their confidence and affections from the joint Pastorate, and then appealing to that political passion which the event above-mentioned had awakened, produced the dreadful rent over which we all have to shed bitter tears, and which this writer attributes, in a great measure, to the character of Connexional government. A most fearful form of sin is introduced,—that against which the most affecting apostolical warnings are registered: the consequences of sin in their accumulated form appear, and the result, forsooth, is placed to the account of bad and absolute rule! Alas! if sin has introduced disturbance in the administration of the government of God, surely it will be available to agitate the very best systems of man, whether consolidated by balances of power or what else. There is no setting off a dynamical counterpoise against this evil, while letting the evil stand: it must be annihilated.

It is of very little avail to follow our author (alas! that I should have to say it,—our assailant) into all his minor reasonings; for they are all founded on the untenable position which is here examined, and must stand or sink with it. A hundred axiomatic sayings, indeed, there are in his Essay, the truth of which we own, but the adverse application of which, in the case before us, we utterly deny. The chapter on “Mode-

ratism" (how different from the Moderatism which some in this controversy have advocated !) is mainly a compendium of principles which Methodism is practically administering ; though they are here held up to us with the intention to warn and to shame. The attempt recoils : there are sentences which half reveal the writer's misgivings, and amongst them this : "If differences arise between them," (men and their Ministers,) "as to what that" (Christ's) "truth is, in particular cases, either as to doctrines not commonly understood, or as to duties not *primâ facie* acknowledged, either mutual forbearance must procure their union, or conscientious objections dissolve it."*

So, indeed, we think ; and such has been the simple and deep conviction of the whole Wesleyan body during the strife. Such has been the monition which the Conference especially has endeavoured, with the utmost compassion, to utter in the ears of the restless leaders of that strife, but in vain ; and when in this case a part—and, if it were thoroughly analysed, a small part—of a community would force its nostrums on the whole, which is the persecutor ? When men are drawn by temptation to act the demagogue, and to convulse a great people, or a great part of them, with a view to the utter subversion and prostration of the Ministry, Christian wisdom has only to whisper, in the audience of the cheated, victim multitude, this warning,—“Conquer, and you are ruined !”

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 331.

So far as the testimonies quoted in various ways by our opponents go to favour the usage of popular concurrence in the appointment of Ministers or office-bearers, and in other important church acts, I have no disposition to cavil with them, whether they be clear or doubtful. The question to be decided is, not whether the people should have A voice in the matters just stated, but whether they should have THE voice. No community lays greater stress upon popular acquiescence in the ordination of a Minister, or upon having the opinion of the wise and good in ascertaining the guilt or innocence of persons *sub judice*, than the Wesleyan; or provides more thoroughly for the expression of both. But as many of these testimonies are apparently introduced to favour the notion of a primitive sharing, between Pastors and people, of what we have called "primary administration," it is necessary to occupy a brief space, for the purpose of showing their irrelevancy, and, in several instances, their incorrectness. First, as to those testimonies of Cyprian which are alleged to bear on the point. He is represented ("Jubilee Memorial of the New Connexion") as "according to the people the right of suffrage in the appointment of their spiritual teachers, declaring that they have the fullest authority to choose those who are worthy of this office, and to refuse such as may be unworthy;" (page 125;) or, rather, that they "have the right to choose the worthy, and depose the unworthy;" (page 127;) and the paragraph in which this is quoted proceeds to state, that this right of deposition was actually exercised in the case of Martialis and Basilides, Bishops of Leon and Astorga in Spain, "who were deposed by their people for idolatry." Now the letter of Cyprian which refers to this transaction is the Synodical Epistle of the North-African Bishops, being the sixty-seventh of the Cyprianic collection in the Oxford Edition; and from this letter it appears, that these Bishops had fallen into idolatry and sin; that the people, in consequence, had justly left them; that other Bishops had been appointed in their place, according to the custom of that day, by the laying on of the hands of neighbouring Bishops; and that, as the fallen men just mentioned had made a party who still cleaved to them, the faithful churches appealed to Cyprian, to be quieted in the possession of those new and faithful Ministers who had been made to take their place. (See the Epistle at large.) How, then, does this prove the point contended for?

Those who are fond of such lore, may find in Cyprian passages as opposed to the principle pleaded for, as light is to darkness.

With respect to the quotation introduced at the foot of page 127, ("Memorial,") it is hard to say why it is inserted, except that the writer intended to confute himself; for if it does not assert the very contrary of what it seems to be intended to assert,—namely, the people's power of deposition,—then there is no real meaning in the passage. The words are found in CYPRIAN'S "Epistle to the Lapsed," Epist. xxxiii., Oxford Edition: "*Inde per temporum et successionum vices, Episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiæ ratio decurrit, ut ecclesia super Episcopos constituatur: et omnis actus ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur. Cùm hoc itaque Divinâ lege fundatum sit, miror quosdam audaci temeritate sic mihi scribere voluisse ut ecclesiæ nomine literas facerent, quando ecclesia in Episcopo et Clero, et in omnibus stantibus, sit constituta.*" "Thence, by the changes of times and successions, the ordination of Bishops and the rule of the church so run on, that the church is constituted UPON the Bishops; and all acts of the church are controlled by these same Rulers. Since, then, this is settled by a Divine law, I wonder that some with bold temerity should send me a letter as in the name of a church, inasmuch as the church is constituted of the Bishop, the Clergy, and all the faithful." And thus the letter proceeds, enlarging on the same point, and repelling the notion that a people without a Bishop, or out of communion with him, could act of themselves as a church at all.

Too much has likewise been made of the passage, not only alluded to by our brethren above, but quoted by many other writers on the ultra-popular side: "From the beginning of my episcopate, I have determined to carry on no matter of my own will without your counsel," (the counsel of the Clergy,) "and the consent of the people." (Epist. xiv.) And again: "In ordinations of the Clergy we have been wont to consult you beforehand, and to weigh the merits of every individual in common council." (Epist. xxxviii.) Now, to what do these places testify? They testify to the doctrine of the people's acquiescence in the appointment of their Pastors, which doctrine we also heartily receive; but they testify equally to a distinct and purely ministerial council, in which appointments to office and all other matters were deliberated on. Moreover, the language in both extracts is not that of a man who was acting according to received and well-known usage, but that of a man who, through prudence and humility, resolved to act in a somewhat singular way—singular for those times—in carrying the judgments of others, and

especially of those who suffered for the truth, along with him; and they do not refer to popular suffrage as being co-equal authority, but simply as giving a testimony to character.

Still, if it even could be proved that the people ever absolutely elected persons to the Ministry in this age, such a fact would form only part of the case. The received doctrine of that age was, that the *exors potestas* of the Bishop before spoken of, and the authority of the Clergy to administer the sacraments and discipline, were all so connected with episcopal ordination, which to them involved the gift of the Holy Ghost, that no man, however elected, could possibly be a Minister, or discharge a single sacred function, until this ordination took place. Whoever clamoured for this or for that person, the doctrine never was given up, that Ministers could be made by the Ministry only. Almost a tenth part of the Cyprianic Epistles, whether from or to himself, might be quoted to bear on these points. A few references must suffice. In the first place, Cyprian himself ordained Aurelius, (Epist. xxxviii.,) without any concurrence on the part of others whatever, and thereby asserted a principal and responsible power in this department, his office being the principle of unity to the whole church. In the next place, such sentences as this, taken from the Epistle (lxx.) to Januarius and the Numidian Bishops, on heretical baptism, show the connexion in his mind of the doctrines of episcopal succession and sacramental grace: "But who can give that which he hath not? or how can he who has himself lost the Holy Spirit minister spiritual gifts?" &c. "*Quis autem potest,*" &c. In the third place, his Epistle to Rogatian, a brother Bishop, (Epist. iii.,) sufficiently shows his mind on the subjects referred to above: "Grievously and sorely were myself and colleagues who were present affected, most beloved brother, on reading your letter, in which you complain of your Deacon, because he, unmindful of your sacerdotal position, and forgetful of his own office and ministry, vexed you with his misdeeds and insults. And you indeed, O brother, honoured by all about us, have acted according to your usual humility, so that you have preferred to complain of him to us, when, as a Bishop, with the power and authority of your Bishop's seat, you had it in your power to avenge yourself of him at once; assured of this, that we, all your colleagues, would have been well pleased with whatsoever you, in your sacerdotal authority, should have done to your insulting Deacon; including, as we do, men of this kind within the Divine precept, when the Lord spoke in Deuteronomy xvii. 12: 'And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest that standeth there to minister before the

Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously," &c., &c. *Ab init.*: "*Graviter et dolenter*," &c.

In the fourth place, in order that it may be seen that Presbyters and Deacons also acknowledged these principles, take the commencement of the reply which the Clergy of the Church of Rome, filling these offices, made to Cyprian's letter, addressed to them on the subject of the discipline which the latter had been administering at Carthage, in respect of the lapsed: "Although a mind that has its own clear conscience, that is supported by the strength of evangelical discipline, and bears witness to itself that it has acted according to the Divine commandments, is wont to be content with God as its only Judge, and neither seeks other men's approbations, nor fears their charges; yet they are worthy of double praises who, while they know their conscience is subject to God only as its Judge, do yet desire that their administration should have the approval of their brethren." "*Quonquam benè sibi conscius animus*," &c. (*Epist. inter Cyprianicas*, cap. xxx., p. 56.)

And in the fifth place, to show what was the authority of the Ruler then in the matter of that discipline itself, namely, excommunication, and receiving members into the church: it is matter of history, dwelt upon by Neander and others, that this Bishop would often, in harmony with the principle stated above, and especially in deference to the confessors who had suffered for the truth, hearken to these latter when they interceded for the restoration of lapsed, but penitent, persons to the church, and would associate these confessors with himself in the act of restoring them. But when several Presbyters in his absence, who were disaffected towards himself, had absolved and admitted many of these unfaithful persons without their having given sufficient proof of repentance, and without the Bishop's consent, though associating with themselves the confessors just mentioned, with whom they had tampered; then Cyprian firmly denied the validity of the act, and disallowed it; as in this, as well as in all similar cases, he had a veto upon all the acts of individuals and companies of individuals within the pale. In writing to the martyrs and confessors, he told them at length, that the part they had taken was far beyond their line. (*Vide Epist.* xv., pp. 33, 34; also *De Lapsis*, pp. 129, 131, 138; *Epist.* xvi., p. 37, &c., &c.) To his Presbyters and Deacons, with even greater energy, he inveighed upon the pride and divisive tendency of the act, and declared his intention of suspending them from office, if it were repeated.

It will be said, "But in all this there is the introduction of the principle of Jewish sacerdotalism, and a consequent misapplication of the Old Testament." No doubt there is; and we, equally with our New-Connexion brethren and others opposed to ourselves, repudiate that sacerdotalism. But we ask, Why, then, appeal to this authority? If there be traces of concession to popular rights,—which concession, after all, when properly understood, never went farther than we allow,—what avails all this when countervailed by such tremendous powers as were then understood to be lodged with the Bishop?—giving or keeping back the Holy Ghost, and the like?

Let the prelacy and sacerdotalism of this period be allowed, and then the principle recognised by the Roman Pontifical in the form of ordaining of Presbyters may be safely granted along with it; which principle, indeed, ought always to be recognised, even where priesthood is repudiated and unknown. The Pontiff is made to say, that "it was not without reason the Fathers had instituted that the people should be consulted respecting the election of those who were to serve at the altar, as to their life and conversation, in order that that which was never unknown to the many, might be known by the few; and that the more readily they might yield obedience to those who were ordained, having given assent to their being ordained." "*Neque enim fuit frustra,*" &c. (*Pontificale Romanum. Antverp.*, 1627.)

Thus that which seems to promise a license almost democratical in one point of view, is made to cohere with truly unshared power in the other. Men have here a voice in elections to ministerial office, who have nothing but absolute submission left to them, when once that office is constituted and filled up. Even in these modern days, the people of the congregations in the Church of Scotland are invited to express their dissent, if they profess any, from the appointment of a ruling Elder; but when he is appointed, they are not consulted again as to any of his disciplinary acts.

Coming back to the very contemporaries of the Apostles, Clemens Romanus is re-quoted from Colman: first, as addressing his Epistle, not to the Bishop, but to the church of the Corinthians; next, as admitting the authority of the church in cases of the election and removal of officers, and in the admission and removal of members.

If the matter were indeed so, this would be an important testimony, seeing that Clement was a fellow-Christian and fellow-labourer with St. Paul. But what are the facts? The Epistle, according to Archbishop Wake's argument, must have been written at the close of the persecution by Nero, and about the year of Christ 70, or between 64 and 70, not more than ten years after the date of

St. Paul's Second Epistle to that church, and much earlier than the date of the charge to the seven churches in Rev. i., which churches then acknowledged some to be *primos inter pares*. No wonder, then, that Clement did not write to the Bishop; for there was no such official person—that is, no Elder to whom the term “Bishop” *distinctively* applied—in existence. The church had not passed from that early synagogal form which all the Christian communities had first taken in the Apostles' days; and as to the Pastors, they had been treated by the aspiring and schismatic Corinthians with contempt, and practically set aside, much in the same way as they seem to have been a while before, when the Apostle Paul addressed this church. As to Ministers being chosen *συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης*, “with the consenting of the whole church,” this is clear enough; but did it imply a primary share in the transaction on the part of, and absolute control over them by, the people? Let us hear the fellow-labourer of the Apostle, in his whole account of the transaction; for so far we have seen only one side. Clement first alludes to their state of peace subsequent to the reception of the Epistles of St. Paul, and the coming of Titus: “Ye” (then) “did all things without respect of persons, and walked according to the laws of God: being subject to those who had the rule over you, and giving the honour that was fitting to such as were the aged” (Presbyters) “among you.” Then, passing to their change arising from ill-used prosperity and pride, he says, “So they who were of no renown lifted themselves up against the honourable, those of no reputation against those that were in respect, the foolish against the wise, the young men against the aged: therefore righteousness and peace are departed from you.” Then, having alluded to the order and subordination, so far as these merely are concerned, of the Ministers and people in the Old-Testament church, he proceeds: “They” (the Apostles) “appointed the first-fruits of their conversions to be Bishops and Ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit.....Having a perfect knowledge of this” (disposition to strife), “they appointed persons, as we have before said, and then gave directions how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry. Wherefore we cannot think that those may be justly thrown out of their ministry who were either appointed by them, or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church.....But we see how you have put out some who lived reputably among you from the ministry, which, by their innocence, they adorned. 'Tis a shame, my beloved, yea, a very great shame, and unworthy of your Christian

profession, to hear that the most firm and ancient church of the Corinthians should by one or two persons be led into a sedition against its Presbyters." ("Genuine Catholic Epistles," ARCHBISHOP WAKE. Second Edition. London, 1710.)

The venerable writer does not address the Pastors, any more than did his greater and inspired contemporary; for these were powerless: but does he acknowledge the church as being the authority which set them up? No: this he attributes to Apostles or "other eminent men," as Evangelists, while the church was, however, and rightly so, a consenting party. Does he acknowledge the right of the congregation to dismiss them? No: he denies it. Does he recommend a mutual adjustment and compromise? No: he charges the church with sedition, and exhorts them to submission.

As a witness on the side of pastoral obligation and responsibility, I might, as it is well known, quote Ignatius, who lived a little later, freely; but, as his Epistles are suspected to be interpolated, I forbear.

But the cause of scriptural truth does not need them. Writers who set up a special plea from passages which are taken here and there out of their proper connexion, may often make out a plausible case on any subject; but a wider and more patient survey dispels the illusion. On the subject treated in these pages, some supporters of ultra-popular theories call their witnesses from antiquity; but when they are cross-examined, they prove far too much for their advocates: and therefore, as to the cause for which they are called, they prove nothing. How much they testify which tends in another and counteracting direction, I leave the reader to judge.

CHAPTER X.

LAY INFLUENCE AND CO-WORKING, AS EMBODIED IN METHODISM.

“MANY are we now and one,
We who Jesus have put on :
There is neither bond nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in Thee !”

§ I. NOT to detain the reader a moment by any preliminary observations in the treatment of this part of our theme, I proceed to observe at once, that the Superintendent, or his colleague acting for him, is required to prove the fault or sin of any accused person, who is liable to be censured or separated, before the Leaders in the Leaders'-Meeting ; or, in the case of the person demanding a trial, they are invited to judge, and determine by their verdict, whether or not he is guilty of a violation of some law of Scripture, or of the particular Society with which he is connected :* and if he be found guilty, then, before the Superintendent shall formally and by pastoral act separate that person, or administer any other censure, inasmuch as the Leaders'-Meeting is only an incomplete representation of the wisdom and piety of the whole Society, he is required for the space of a week to take counsel, not only with the members of that Meeting, but with others beyond it, in order to obtain a

* “ Minutes of Conference, 1835,” vol. vii., p. 581, *et seq.*

solid judgment, as to the righteousness, or otherwise, of the full or mitigated censure to be inflicted ; leaving, however, as must be the case in a united Church both to the party accused and the Pastor the right of appeal to the District-Meeting and Conference ; if either the one complain of an unfair trial, or the other of being hampered and restrained by a prejudiced verdict,—one which is palpably at variance with facts. Where the alleged sin or violation of rule is not denied, and no trial is asked for, it only remains then for the Pastor, in the spirit of fidelity and meekness, to execute the standing regulation in the case.

But against a sentence of expulsion pronounced by the Superintendent, after the verdict of a Leaders'-Meeting, the regulations of 1835 give to every member or local officer the right of appeal to a Minor District-Meeting ;* and in the modifications, too, made in the year 1852, it is provided—*for extraordinary cases*—that, should there be dissatisfaction, on either side, with the verdict of a Leaders'-Meeting, then, before the appeal goes to the superior tribunals, there shall be a re-hearing of the case, before a jury of twelve persons, chosen by the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit in which the offence occurs, and a new verdict taken ; in order that this wider appeal to persons more likely to be dispassionate and disinterested may have the effect of bringing the case to a speedier and more satisfactory conclusion ; and so making the appeal to the District-Meeting, and the Conference, which is the final authority, only a last resource. In

* "Minutes of Conference, 1835," vol. vii., p. 581.

the same regulations it is likewise provided, (only thereby explaining a rule of 1794,) that where a Trustee of a chapel is accused, the co-Trustees of that chapel, being members of the same Society, shall, in the case of a trial, meet with the Leaders, and take part in the verdict.*

While Mr. Wesley lived, admission to, and exclusion from, the Societies, were functions which he and the Superintendents acting with him performed on their own responsibility. But, in the year 1797, it was conceded, that no person should be expelled for any breach of the rules, or for manifest immorality, till such fact or crime had been proved in the way just mentioned. Disaffected parties, in Mr. Kilham's division, in the schism at Leeds, in Dr. Warren's breach in 1835, and in the strifes of 1849-1852, have all claimed for the Leaders'-Meeting, on the ground of this concession, all the democratical power of an Independent church, where the members decide, not only upon the guilt, or otherwise, of the party, but upon his sentence as well,—where they, in their collective character, bind or loose him. Now, if the Conference had indeed done this, it had done an evil and unscriptural thing,—a thing that ought to be undone ;—it had resigned a responsibility, received from the supreme Bishop of souls, into the hands of those who had not the means of sustaining it. The arguments of a former chapter, and of others preceding, have, it is hoped, made this matter clear: but that the Conference did not resign this intransmissible power, is most evident from the accu-

* "Minutes of Conference, 1852," pp. 161-166.

rate detail, by the Rev. Dr. Beecham, of the transactions connected with the "Plan of Pacification," and the subsequent Regulations of 1797, in his most lucid "Essay on the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism,"* and from the explanation given in the "Minutes of Conference," in the year 1835; the whole being confirmed, subsequently, by the solemn testimony of aged living Ministers who took part in those anxious affairs at the time.

Then the Leaders have a right, likewise, of declaring any candidate for admission into the Societies unfit to be received, after which declaration the person is not received. Office-bearers, as Leaders and Local Preachers, have the right of objecting to the introduction amongst themselves of persons whom they may deem unfit, or with whom they may not be disposed officially to associate; as, also, of deliberating mutually in reference to the discharge of their mutual duties, and of deciding on the fault or delinquency of those who are accused of neglect, incompetency, or any other fault involving the liability of removal from office.

Laymen receive, hold, and disburse all the funds contributed for the relief of the poor, and support of the Ministry. Laymen, that is, two from each Circuit, sit in every District-Meeting, and vote on every subject which is not connected with its purely spiritual functions. Laymen, in equal numbers with Ministers, regularly chosen or changed, sit and vote in the Missionary Committee, and in the Committees of the Theological Institution, the Kingswood and

* Third Edition, 1851. John Mason, 14, City-road. See also "A letter to Richard Matthews, Esq. By the REV. WILLIAM ARTHUR, A.M."

Woodhouse-Grove Schools, of Education, of the Chapel Fund, the Contingent Fund, of Privileges, and all others. Laymen, in all the Circuits, through their official organs, the Circuit Stewards, can invite particular Ministers to labour among them; and this invitation, unless public reasons of a paramount nature intervene, is always ratified, and acted on, by the Conference. Laymen, through the medium of their own Quarterly Meeting, can memorialise the Conference on any subject whatever, not involving an infraction of its constitutional principles.

As the Annual Conference approaches, the leading lay members of all Committees, and many other lay persons of intelligence and worth, are summoned to a preliminary deliberation on all the economical subjects of the year; and nothing is ever transacted in Conference, affecting the several departments, without securing in this way, previously, their general and pledged concurrence. So that, although they do not sit in Conference, their influence, in reference to subjects to which that influence is legitimately applied, is brought more directly to bear than it could be by a mingled assembly. Socrates tells us, in substance,* that before the Council of Nicæa opened, there were many little knots and circles of advocates and rhetoricians, who tried their skill on the great questions in previous dispute; but no account of their discussions was taken. Here, however, the results of our lay deliberations are taken and acted on *bonâ fide*; and every advantage is gained from the energetic co-operation of brethren,

* *Eccles. Hist.*, lib. i., cap. 8.

without the mischief and destruction which would result from the blending of totally distinct functions, and the annihilation of a Pastor's accountability. And with regard to the general rules which are thus adopted by the Conference itself for the regulation of the whole body, the laity, in the first Quarterly Meeting after, have the opportunity accorded them of declaring their disapprobation of any particular rule, if they judge that its operation would be unfavourable to themselves; and in this case it is provided, that its enforcement shall then be suspended for a year in that Circuit, until the Conference shall have had an opportunity of testing all the Circuits upon the question. And this, we are bold to say, is the primitive and apostolical plan,—the Ministry first devising the rule, and then commending it to the calm and dispassionate consideration of the people. What the Ministers have left is, the guardianship of the truth, disciplinary power over each other, the regulation of spiritual services, and so much right of office, in judicial respects, as enables them to put away sin from the Christian congregation, and stand clear with their Divine Master. And if, in times of trouble and agitation, when the usual forms of procedure are set at nought by violent and restless men, the power of the Special District-Meeting is brought in, to adjudicate and set in order everything *pro tempore*, it is but applying the episcopal authority, which always inheres in the collective Pastorate, to meet a special emergency; yet, in the application of this, the laity are not excluded from giving testimony and advice.

Where, then, it may be asked, is there a commu-

nion on earth whose laity has so wide, intelligent, and influential a sphere? Do the churches of even republican America go further? The vulgar clamour excited in times of controversy,—mean and spiritless expedient of demagogism,—that the people are slaves, has been repeatedly silenced, not more by the firm bearing of the Pastorate, opposing sin, and enduring, for a while, ignorant delusion, than by the manly suffrage of tens of thousands of the people, who have declared the contrary, and who never could see that the maintenance of their own rights demanded the subversion of those which belong to that peculiar relation subsisting between Christ and the shepherds whom He calls to the charge of His flock; but who did see that the removal of this last would be taking away the guarantee of their peace, their order, yea, and, in the end, even their rights.

When Mr. Isaac Taylor accuses even primitive Methodism, the Methodism which Mr. Wesley administered, as being “ultramontane,” his haste, if not his rashness, overbears his usual candour. How can a Pastorate which claims authority over no man a moment longer than he voluntarily acknowledges his relation to it, whose worst infliction is putting a guilty person out of that relation, be “ultramontane?”—a designation proper only to a system which rules over all within its territory, claims authority over every baptized person, inflicts upon the offender bodily pain, and often, by a savage sentence, gives him over to the secular power. And if the Methodism of Mr. Wesley’s day knew no law but that of love in harmony with truth, the modifications since his day have certainly been intended as complimentary to the

intelligence, energy, and fidelity of the laity of the body. What duty or obligation laid upon the people in the New Testament is there, which they have not the sphere and freedom for fulfilling?

§ II. And it is in the face of those facts, that the writer alluded to in the last chapter* holds up the Wesleyan system to the eyes of the people, as being one of pure absolutism. The facts themselves are by him, and particularly with respect to the District-Meeting, defectively, and therefore unfairly, stated. But our answer is, that *we deny the charge*. Absolutism is where an individual or a body acts from entire self-will; consults with no one, concurs with no one. This is not the case here; there is consultation and concurrence on every side: and if in momentous instances, where the truth and Christ are concerned, the Pastorate must act alone, and on its own responsibility, this is no more than must happen even according to the principles of our opponent in his own so-called parallel instance: for, let the civil constitution be as representative as it may, and the balance of power as perfect as can be secured, the Sovereign in Privy Council must often decide what the ordinary course of law cannot. Is he, therefore, absolute? It will not do in this large argument to raise abstract theories, push them out to all their consequences, and then reason upon those consequences. It is easy for our author to take some point or single feature of the Wesleyan order, as the "Deed of Declaration," the power of the "Special District-Meeting;" and, starting from these, to raise a

* The REV. GEORGE STEWARD.

rounded system, and call it "absolutism," overlooking all its modifying appliances. Just as fair would it be to call ultra-Congregationalism "Popery." It would not be difficult to show that Dr. Wardlaw's (and our author's) exposition of Matt. xviii. 18, if carried to all the extent of its application, is identical in principle with that of the Papacy; namely, that a given church, so far as it extends, is the kingdom of heaven, and that exclusion from it is exclusion from Christ; whereas Dr. Wardlaw's practical administration might be, as no doubt it was, most mild, beneficent, and holy. In the same way it might be made to appear, that ultra-Presbyterianism is the very essence of despotism and oppression, stopping the mouth of complainers by yielding the show of representation, when, at the same time, it has produced as many martyrs and sufferers under oppression—at least, in modern times—as any other section of Christ's church.

§ III. Truth is not to be found by exploring the *nebulae* of abstract theories: its light is a little nearer to our own orbit. In other words, we find it in the routine of hard daily duty, where practice, in a thousand ways, corrects principle, and principle creates practice. A few years' pastoral toil in a Connexional church,—a few years' labouring and faithful contact with the details of things as they rise, and a wise disposal of them,—will make a wonderful difference in a man who set out as a luxuriating church-systematiser: and so it is in our Christian course all the way through. We do not learn the truth of our Bible well, if we fix on some peculiar text, and, starting from it, call the whole doctrine "Augustinian;" or,

starting from another, call it "Calvinian;" or from another, deem it (much as we abide by John Wesley's expositions of the Gospel) "Wesleyan." Divine philosophy has taught us, that in this life "all things WORK TOGETHER for good to them that love God:" and observation proves that there is no conjunction or mutual action and re-action of things more beneficent, than those in which our theories and practice have daily to rub and modify each other; and therefore, when a Christian church which has no secular arm is called to struggle, for a hundred years, with the emergencies of time, and the varieties of human nature, it can never keep up a sharply defined and unmixed theory. This dealing with idealisms will never lead a man on, either in goodness or in energy. We are in the clouds when we ought to be at our post. The *Magna Charta* of the Wesleyan people is secure, not through a political, but a spiritual, or scriptural, constitution; not through a balance of power, but an adjustment of relations. The powers which the laity exercise are not favours granted; they are rights recognised,—rights, because they involve the discharge of obligations under which those persons themselves lie to Christ,—rights which have gradually grown, because the obligations from which they have taken their origin have themselves grown gradually.

And when our author, in his anxious explorations, would hint about a separate lay conclave, or second chamber,—to say nothing of the utterly uncatholic character of the project, such a thing never having been heard of in Christ's church,—is it, we would ask, as the conclave must needs be elected,—is it for the yearly tug, and strife, and debate, inseparable from

constituencies and candidates, that he would exchange the present state of things? Would this preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? No: never. Besides, are we all the while appealing to abstract human nature, with its *siccum lumen*, as Lord Bacon calls it, of mere intellectual life? Are we to suppose no holy influence coming from above,—no sweet unction from the great High Priest flowing down to all the grades, even the meanest, of His people,—no charity, the very “bond of perfectness,” uniting all hearts, even the hearts of those in most dissimilar positions? Are we, I say, to make no account of all this, act as if such things were not, and make our rules accordingly? Then we are leaving out the better half of our Christianity,—its COMMON LAW. It is to leave no room for the play of holy affections, but rather legalise and stereotype everything.

§ IV As to the representation, that the spirit of the Conference is necessarily anti-popular, and that it is severe and exacting upon those individual Ministers who oppose its traditions, the answer to this lies mainly in the preceding pages. It is jealous of that kind of license in its own members which would break away from the original spirit, because it has not so much to govern a body as TO MAINTAIN A TRUST; exactly as it would be impatient of any man who, under pretence of freedom, would violate a will. But as to being anti-popular, so far has the collective Pastorate been from treating public questions as though they had a Preachers’ side and a people’s side, that several permanent arrangements were adopted through the first suggestion of the people, and almost forced upon it by them; such as the administration of the Lord’s

Supper; the origination of the Class contributions; and the Fund for the Aid of Supernumerary Ministers and Ministers' Widows: and, in all the sorrows of the present conflict, nothing has sustained the suffering and harassed Minister more than this consideration,—that he has had the sympathies and prayers of the great majority of the people, knowing, as most of the people did, that he was striving to maintain their privileges even more than his own. Only let us be told, that if we are outvoted at a meeting, and if, in consequence, a certain heresy is allowed to run rife, and a certain sin to pass unrebuked, we must acquiesce in it, and there is no help for it; then the question is much narrowed: but our author shrinks from this. Nor is it of much avail to set up a distinction between co-ordinate and concurrent jurisdiction; for, in any matter to be adjudicated, let the decision have to turn on this question,—whether that teaching be a heresy, or that act a sin against Christ's purity and peace?—then, so long as a mingled council or meeting of Ministers and lay-officers determine the question by the votes of the majority, the laity are then *practically* co-ordinate. They might admit the distinction between a jurisdiction which runs along with another, and a jurisdiction administered by the same order; but all this would be harmless logic,—a metaphysical plaything; and, to all real intents and purposes, there would be no distinction at all.

It is some abatement of the concern of the faithful Wesleyan, on being unsettled by a former teacher and guide, to know, that our author can find no rest for the sole of his foot in any church systems, now exist-

ing, whatever. He casts doubt upon every known outward institute for the embodiment and conservation of professing Christianity. Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Independency, State connexion, and Voluntarism, are all seen only on their failing and deficient sides. It would seem as if history had yielded no lesson, and as if catholicism, in its best sense, were only an airy dream. Alas! is Christ's church on earth yet in its babyhood? and have ages of strifes, heresies, desolations, disruptions, and martyrdoms, passed over in vain? and, now the final conflict, as many good men think, is drawing nigh, have we to study the first principles of Christian organization? Have large churches been ruled beneficently and successfully in vain? Must those principles be set at nought which have been recognised from St. John's time until now,—which Romanism itself has rather debased and caricatured than denied? Must all be unlearned, and men begin anew? We are exhorted to give up "*the Divine right dogma*:" and it is not the first time this vague phrase has been employed to misrepresent the principles of men who, whatever their faults may be, would rather degrade themselves than displease God; nor do those who use it seem concerned to mark what a fruitful source of controversy vague phrases are, and how many senses may be attached to this in particular: but if by "Divine right" is meant a right to fulfil an obligation which is divinely imposed,—imposed upon Ministers in a way, and to an extent, in which it is not imposed upon any other,—then, as to giving up, however we may deplore and be humbled for our manifold unfaithfulness, we will give up life sooner. It is

like asking us to give up conscience and understanding.

§ V And when he leaves the region of abstractions, what is our author's charge against the polity which, for twenty years, he joined to uphold? He does not say that the Conference has violated its trust, or broken its pledges, of 1797 : he affirms the contrary of both these, and takes away the basis on which a party of persons, calling themselves "Mediationists" and "Moderates," have grounded their opposition.* He maintains that the Conference has been faithful to first principles, and seems to make this the *gravamen* of his complaint. He does not say that Wesleyan office-bearers are Elders, and ought to be assessors with the Pastorate. He does not say that a Leaders'-Meeting is a church representative, and that it ought to decide upon a censure, as well as upon the guilt of an accused party. He does not say that the Conference has spared unfaithful and sinning members of the Ministry, or that it has been severe and oppressive towards good and faithful men, or that it has laid heavy burdens upon the people : he is unable to affirm these things, because of principles admitted and laid down. What, then, is the practical re-construction which he offers? one that, in principle, at least, has been so tested and tried, as to come with a fair claim to be regarded? Alas!

* Persons of this class can only, on Mr. Steward's principle, oppose the present government of the Societies on the ground that Mr. Wesley was a tyrant. This shows how harmless such words as "Pope," "tyrant," and the like are, when found in such connexion ; and only proves that such Popery, such tyranny, have procured more Gospel and intelligent freedom for the world, than whole ages of previous indifference and spiritual laxity.

there is no offer at all, nor any allusion to past successful experiment and test: everything is unsettled; but there is no attempt at a better construction. We labour amid clouds, and hope we are approaching a dawning light, but no light streams: we are deprived of our so-called traditions, but no revelation appears.

*“O lux Dardaniæ! spes O fidissima Teucrûm!
 Quæ tantæ tenuere moræ?
 ut te post multa tuorum
 Funera, post varios hominumque urbisque labores,
 Defessi aspicimus!”*

In very deed, when an individual appeals to a great Christian community, on the subject of the polity which unites its members, and labours to withdraw their love and confidence from institutions which have ministered to their richest joys and holiest hopes,—which have raised their social position, and furnished an object for their affections only next, if indeed next, to the domestic bond,—he ought to be prepared with some great illumination, as a recompense for the sorrow, unrest, and unsettlement which, if successful, he is likely to occasion, and for the damage which he inflicts, in that case, on the cause and kingdom of Christ. But there is nothing of this here: the people are led into a mist, and then their guide disappears. It is reckoned to be a reflection upon the head and the heart of the sceptic against Christianity, that he provides nothing to dispel the darkness that he creates; and, surely, (where a Christian *is to be* compared with an unbeliever,) he incurs only a less responsibility, who tries to shake the confidence of a loving people, and then leaves them to fill the void in their heart as they can, and to find as best they

may an object on which that confidence may fully rely. The possession of intellectual endowments, and a Christian reputation, only makes this responsibility the more momentous.

§ VI. And now to leave opposition-theories. I cannot tell what honour is conferred on the laity by the current speculations. The dignity of a Christian in secular life lies in filling his own circle of duty with appropriate Christian graces,—in lighting up a trade, manufactory, or sphere of service, with the lustre of Gospel principles,—just as the beauty and splendour of an orb depend upon its keeping within its orbit. Obedience, rightly guarded, is a grace no more devoid of dignity and honour, than truthfulness, or meekness, or singleness of heart; and there are persons mentioned in the New Testament of whom it is said, that their obedience went abroad unto all men. It is a feature of Christ's image, a particular of His own conduct when He was on earth. To serve God in a layman's sphere, and obtain a full reward, requires an absorption of time and thought which cannot afford to work in two different directions. To touch the things of this life, and turn them into gold, is a high concern, the neglect of which is one great cause of the impoverishment of Christianity in the world,—that is, in senates, in warehouses, in factories, farms, and, most of all, in families,—and has the effect of bringing tinsel into request to supply the void. Men cannot be Kings and Priests unto God in secular life, vindicating their spiritual birthright and unction there, and at the same time watchmen upon Zion's walls, looking at the phases of the night and morning, or shepherds plying their pastoral care. If such a

state of things be attempted, the Priest puts off his beautiful garments, and leaves the world and the church without their connecting official tie: the would-be watchman, thus necessarily anything but vigilant, is surprised by some stormy event, against which there is no time or wisdom to prepare, and the wolf from the wilderness ravages the non-tended, or, what is the same thing, the self-tended, fold. If every one in the Christian society, yea, if every official layman of any age and class, is to be concerned by primary obligation in everything which is done within it, there is then an ocean-like restlessness called forth, a distraction and endless stir, of merit against merit, right against right, man against man, which would make the working out of individual salvation, and the accomplishment of priceless individual labours, an impossible thing; and the portion of God's people would be little different from that of the wicked, who are like the troubled sea which cannot rest.

§ VII. Laymen, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, bring immense power to bear upon the church in all its interests, when they occupy their vantage ground; for they can perform, in such a case, what Ministers cannot. If they are holy and earnest, how can an unholy or slothful Ministry arise, or be sanctioned?

To assert that the inmates of the work-room, the office, the exchange, or the farm, are to be occupied, amid their other toil, in devising and determining spiritual matters which have to do with the training and edification in the truth of hundreds of thousands, and with the general guardianship and purification of

professing Christianity, is only to utter a gibe or sarcasm on the individuals in question.

This all human consciousness feels ; and it is only because the theory we are opposing has been practically departed from by its friends, that evangelical religion has maintained such a good estate in the world. I would rather, for my own part, looking on the Gospel in the persons of its Ministers, adopt the tone and moral of Augustine, and regard the inspired Apostle John as a mountain whose top was bathed in light, so as that other hills caught the radiance, and mellowed it for the valleys, than view a dreary level waste, where everything bright or beautiful is cried down. At all events, I should rather keep up the notion of such a hill, and be looking out for it. With regard to Wesleyan Methodism, far be it from me to think that it is intended to become the religion of the nation or of the civilised world : its main value lies in the testimony which it bears to precious Gospel truth, and the high degree in which it fosters the internal life of regenerate men, and fits them for awakening, by word and work, others who are asleep in sin. Its order is so framed that, while Christianity within its own pale is kept intense, it is sending forth influences and agencies beyond it, just as a well-fed lamp is needful to light up other unlighted lamps around. If men propose that it shall become a fellowship indiscriminate of all sorts of so-called Christian people, and that limit of territory shall be nearly the only bound ; that all shall come and partake of its spiritual gifts without being obliged to submit to any conditions whatever ; let this kind of liberty be regarded as a right, then of course, by

thousands of individuals, the present restrictions would never be borne. We all know this well ; and we know that already these restrictions are intolerable where a worldly spirit prevails over a simple desire of fleeing, and luring others to flee, “from the wrath to come.” And with regard to that large breadth of aim, that elevated mental bearing, that hatred of moral and physical oppression, which Englishmen are wont to claim for themselves ; if the discipline in question does not give a chastened vigour to all these, how is it that they have been created and nurtured so largely in New-Zealand, West Africa, the West Indies, and other portions of the world, by its influence ? Men amongst us are taught to revere the laws of general order, it is true ; but who ever did a great or good thing, who cherished a reverse sentiment ? By Wesleyan theology, learned in the inmost heart, they are so led into the peace and joy of the Gospel salvation, that the faithful among them—though this advantage is purchased at the cost of making any Antinomian abuse of that theology stand out with a more startling glare—become the subjects of love to God in Christ so ardent, and with such a yearning of pitying affection towards all men, that, compared with its steady ardour, the bright fitful schemes of the secular philanthropist, and the rhetorical flashes of the party pet of the multitude, are but sparks of perishing fire. Let men be kept right with God, and they cannot go contrary to the interests of society. Let them stand right and fair as children of eternity, and they shall not damage the interests of their age. Let the mightiest energies of the human soul be stirred, as indeed they are, when Christ dwells therein by faith,

and you have the highest instrumentality for accomplishing the highest things ; and he who, by calumny, and other acts of schismatic heaping of evil together, would dam up that channel of life, that strong overflow of hearts, which swells on between Ministers and people, and between both these and the world, (madman that he is !) not only daringly defies the very God of love and peace, but perils the most precious interests of mankind. To recur to a former simile : the Heathen had their fable of Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven to animate his dead workmanship of clay ; but they never had a fable of any one who put out the flame.

If we are to preserve the vital doctrines which have been taught for a century, with such hallowed results upon the nation and the world ; if we are to keep up a discipline of such an order as that which, while it raises up a spiritual agency, and throws a guard over all sincere and childlike disciples of the Saviour, testing their purity and faith, will repel those who disturb peace and paralyse love and zeal ; if, in a word, we are to watch over souls, not content merely to tell them to watch over themselves ; then we hold that the ecclesiastical relations here reviewed and expounded are not only scriptural, but so indispensable that no corollary on subjects of a moral nature is more fairly deduced than this. Given the first, the other is a sequence which must be allowed by all who can join two cognate spiritual conceptions together.

CHAPTER XI.

PASTORAL OBLIGATIONS.

“ I HAVE planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase.”
—ST. PAUL.

§ I. THOSE who, in arguing against us, assume that we represent Pastors *only* as being responsible to Christ for the state of His household, waste their arguments upon the winds. Other office-bearers, and the people, are responsible too; but in other relations, and for other results. They are responsible as to their power of suffrage in attesting a ministerial call, and ratifying all economical arrangements not absolutely determined beforehand by Holy Scripture, as also in pronouncing upon the guilt or innocence of any one in alleged violation of rule or law; while those who are over them in the Lord are obliged to answer directly to Him, not only on account of their own direct official deeds, but as to the fidelity with which they have endeavoured to call forth the actions and concurrence of others. The subject of this chapter, as to some of its details, has been in part, and unavoidably, anticipated: it requires now to be exhibited in its full proportion and logical dependency. The importance of doing justice to this part of our plan must, therefore, be our excuse for any instance of saying over again what we may have said before. Proceeding according to the order of the New Testament, we observe then,—

IT IS THEIRS TO FEED THE CHURCH OR FLOCK OF GOD. This has been so often adverted to, that I need not dwell upon the point, but only give this brief exposition.

To “feed the church,” not only means to supply, by preaching and exhortation, all its ordinary members with the instruction they need for advancement in holiness, and to furnish them with the means of defence against temptation; but likewise to raise up and qualify, by proportionate teaching, all subordinate agents who are themselves, and in a lower sense, teachers, having the same common end in view: thus making the Ministry not merely an institute for doling out milk and crumbs to children, but for maintaining and strengthening, from age to age, the whole Christian household, through all its labours, conflicts, and exigences. So that if, in a period of intellectual activity, when sensible, inquiring, and speculative men are found pressing into places of employment and trust, the Ministry does not excel them in breadth and comprehensiveness of view and extent of acquirement, or surpass them in the knowledge and use of the Holy Scriptures, the paramount condition is not fulfilled: “The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.” A Ministry that *can* and will feed, cannot successfully, or for long, be resisted or scorned: ignorance in the Pastor is a grievous inlet to temptation towards schism and rebellion in the church. A famished and longing flock cannot afford to quarrel perpetually with a good shepherd. “Every scribe,” said our Lord, “which is” μαθητευθεὶς, “instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth

out of his treasure things new and old." (Matt. xiii. 52.)

§ II. IT IS THEIRS TO PROVIDE FOR THE PERPETUATION OF THE MINISTRY IN THE WORLD.

To the Apostles Christ's first great commission was given: to them it was said, "Go, teach all nations," and, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." If all nations, therefore, were to be taught, the men who first received this mandate were concerned to provide for a succession of teachers: if an order of persons exist with whom Christ, in a peculiar sense, is, those who first entered into the "fellowship of this mystery," as being best acquainted with the qualifications necessary for becoming the subjects of it, as well as bound with the obligation, are enjoined, on this account, too, to appoint fellow-labourers, and these, again, to appoint others, that no part of the church on earth may ever be without a Ministry. In other words, this is to assert for the Ministry the right and power of ordination, though never to be exercised without the concurrence of the people. That this is the doctrine of New-Testament Scripture, is evident from several collateral sources of proof. First, it is in harmony with the law of expansion, mentioned in the second chapter. Secondly, it alone agrees with that order of connexion described in Eph. iv.; namely, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers; and then the body of the church. If the right actually to ordain, as Dr. Davidson seems to think, resides in the community, then the stream of influence and authority from Christ runs not direct, but broken and zig-zag; not as through that opened heaven, where the mes-

sengers of God are ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, establishing a communion between His humanity, or human ministry, and ours. It is rather strangely represented as passing down from Evangelists to people first, and then back from people to Pastors,—a notion perfectly abhorrent to the divinely-established plan, inasmuch as the ordaining party must needs have a prior *status* and authority to the party to be ordained. And, thirdly, our position agrees likewise with all the instances of ordination which can be found in the New Testament, and all the precepts which are given there on the subject. Who ever ordain there but *Apostles* and *Evangelists*? Where or when do the Apostles give the churches any precept as to their alleged right of exercising ordination, or instruct them as to its exercise? That Pastors rather should do this, is involved in the arrangement by which they are given for the function of edifying,—building up the body of Christ,—as that is distinguished from the function called “the work of the Ministry:” nor is *election*, even, strictly speaking, the office of the community; for God it is who chooses, while the people affirm and recognise *His* choice.

§ III. The word “ordain,” in our version, represents a variety of expressions in the original Greek; as, for instance, Jesus “ordained” (ἐποίησε, “made”) “twelve to be with Him;” (Mark iii. 14;) “Must one be ordained” (γενέσθαι, “constituted”) “to be a witness;” (Acts i. 22;) “And when they had ordained” (χειροτονήσαντες, “chosen”) “them Elders in every church;” (Acts xiv. 23;) “By that Man whom He hath ordained;” (ὥρισε, “determined,”

or “marked out;” Acts xvii. 31;) “Whereunto I am ordained” (ἐτέθην, “set forth”) “a preacher;” (1 Tim. ii. 7;) “That thou shouldst ordain” (καταστήσης, “appoint”) “Elders in every city.” (Titus i. 5.) No term, beside these, that I am aware of, is employed to express the formal act of ministerial appointment: and although it would be no good reasoning to say that such a variety of expressions tends to the conclusion, that ordination is a rite of little or no moment or exactness,—for the Christian sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are allowed to be exact and momentous, are themselves variously described,—yet, in this way, the subject is presented in such a breadth of view, that the narrow Roman dogma, with all cognate doctrines built upon it, is thereby more thoroughly refuted. Thus ordination is affirmed to be “a sacrament, *ex opere operato*, of the new law, in which spiritual power and grace are conferred, for the purpose of rightly and decently discharging ecclesiastical functions;”* and “not given in or with the sacrament by the receiver’s faith or devotion, but *by* the sacrament, *per impositionem*, ‘through the imposition’ of hands.”†

The prevailing idea here is, that a mysterious potency is imparted to the acts of the ordained person, and an indelible character fixed upon him, by which, whatever may be the amount or deficiency of his Christian graces, those acts are availing for the spiritual consequences which they outwardly represent. Tried by the standard of the ministration which exceeds in glory, all this is as poor in form

* DENS, “*Theol.*,” tom. vii., *De Ordine*, no. i.

† *Rhem. Test.*, in 2 Tim. i.

as it is awful and destructive in its practical consequences : it is not more contradicted by any one single text, than by the whole spirit of the Gospel ; and we may well afford here to leave it in its impious presumption, only just observing that, as far as imposition of hands is concerned, this act is one which the scope of Scripture history brings out in such different applications,—for instance, as giving outward expression to a father's blessing, as the act of benediction by the Lord Jesus Christ, as a sign of healing the sick, and of imparting miraculous gifts, as well as of Timothy's separation to the work of the Ministry,—that he who would make it more in these days than a gesture by which the soul expresses its most ardent desire, hope, and prayer, in reference to him who is thus pointed out, and strongly expresses its own choice and designation of that very person, is likely to be wise in no ordinary degree above what is written.

§ IV Does ordination, then, convey no authority ? or is the authority which it conveys simply derived from the election of the people, so as to become their own transmitted authority ? and is the spiritual grace connected with it limited to the result of the prayer which is made at the time on behalf of the person ordained ? Is the Brownist theory, subsequently adopted by Mr. Robinson of Leyden, and the framers of the Cambridge or New-England platform, our *via lucis* on this subject ? I answer at once, that it does not fulfil the requirements of Scripture : for, first, there is no such thing as an instance of the absolute appointment by the people of a Pastor, in Scripture ; and then, as the Pastor, from the hour of

his ordination, which is the time when he fully enters upon his office, stands in a relation to Christ different from that of other believers, so the faithfulness of the great Head of the church is pledged to the assurance, that “*His* grace shall be sufficient for *him* ;” (2 Cor. xii. 9 ;) that, (if the ancient promise stands good to all God’s children,) “as *his* days, so shall *his* strength be.” (Deut. xxxiii. 25.) “Feed my sheep,” is a command given by implication to an Elder, as well as to an Apostle, the Apostle himself being witness : (1 Pet. v. 1, 2 :) and it were an anomaly in the covenant of grace, to arrange that Christ should impose a Pastor’s obligation, without imparting a Pastor’s spiritual gifts. If ordination in any sense be admitted, then He who instituted it pledges Himself to impart grace, which shall be in proportion to the exigences of the new position which is by this very act created. To explain by a figure or analogy,—without adducing that analogy as argument,—ordination is an act by which, according to the will and commandment of Christ, His present disciples are constrained to go forth into the agitated sea of a ministerial life, while the power and faithfulness of the Master sustain them, as they sustained the Twelve on the Sea of Tiberias ; or it is, both on the part of the persons designating and the persons designated, an act of faith in the Chief Shepherd,—venturing on Him for that peculiar grace which the usual store vouchsafed to an ordinary Christian does not furnish. Of course, prayer on the occasion is all the while supposed ; and prayer of more than ordinary earnestness and power ; though it cannot be conceived, that the half of what a candidate needs, can be tho-

roughly pleaded for in the course of an ordination service.

If the authority of teaching, of jurisdiction, and of ritual administration,—all which functions are comprehended in the entire work of a Gospel Minister,—be simply derived from the election of the people, as Dr. Davidson asserts, though without supporting the position by a shadow of scriptural proof; then it would follow, that the person elected was a Minister from the first hour of his employment by the people, whether ordained or not; and that this ordinance would be nothing more than a service of prayer and admonition for the benefit of one who held previously all the authority which could be given him. There is no way of bringing Scripture to harmonise with the lowering of the ministerial appointment, but by degrading the ordinances which he administers, making them amount to almost nothing. This, of itself, is enough to awaken, in a spiritual and ingenuous mind, strong suspicion.

But why, if we *must* speak of election, must the other component part of a Christian church be put out of the way? In arguing from Matt. xviii. 17, “Tell it to the church,” our opposing brethren say, that the term “church” means both flock and shepherds. Why, then, should it not be so here? Why are the latter to be put in or out, merely to suit the convenience of a failing argument? Besides the people, or private members, there is another party concerned, who have an equally important stake in the matter,—the Pastors already in office. They are under obligation to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Gospel, as far as in them lies, they are pledged to preach unto all nations; to

maintain His truth in the world ; to commit to faithful men, who are able to teach others, the things which they have heard ; in some instances, even, to act contrary to the people, that is, “ meekly to instruct those that oppose themselves,” warned, as they are, that a time will come when men “ will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall, having itching ears, **HEAP TO THEMSELVES teachers,**” (2 Tim. iv. 3,)—in such wholesale accumulation shall faction act. These Pastors, I say, are concerned, also, to elect ; and as St. Paul lays down the principle, that the candidate must be tried before he is appointed, (1 Tim. iii. 10,) so the ordination of every Christian Elder, which pre-supposes the testing of his previous fidelity and call, is the act in which a *ministerial* election is expressed, and, simultaneously with it, a fraternal committal of him to their common Lord and Master, and to those peculiar blessings of the covenant of grace which are given to man in this position,—blessings which may be improved by fidelity, or lost for ever by sin. There is a sense in which men obtain ministerial grace by faith, as well as a sense in which they are justified by faith ; and an ordained person, who uses the ordinance in the spirit which the occasion demands, is a Minister, who was no Minister before, excepting so far as the omniscient and prevenient intention of Almighty God—which, of course, cannot be made a part of the question—is brought into the matter.

§ V It has been said to us by some, “ True it is, that Apostles and Evangelists ordain ; but on what ground is the right to exercise this function claimed

for Elders?" The answer to this is threefold. First, Because their necessary occupancy of the Apostles' pastoral position (Matt. xxviii. 20) in the world requires it. Second, Because the function of the Presbytery, in the case of Timothy, is the example of it. Third, Because the whole scope and tenor of the ecclesiastical Epistles to Timothy and Titus involve it. The first point has been sufficiently illustrated already. With regard to the second, St. Paul says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) The word "prophecy" here has the same import as in verse 18 of the first chapter of this Epistle: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the *προφητείας*,"—the "prophecies which went before on thee;" denoting, as it does, those sacred *χαρίσματα*, or powers of spiritual insight, expository illumination, and the like, which were given to Timothy by the Holy Ghost, previously to the writing of this Epistle, setting him forth as an elect person; that is, elect of God to the Ministry. Yet, however he may have received from the Holy Ghost the *προφητείας*, or however the gift may have been communicated by the putting on of the Apostle's own hands, as is intimated in 2 Tim. i. 6, still the Presbytery (probably of Ephesus) had a function to fulfil; and as other things needful for that extraordinary time had been extraordinarily given, they imparted all *they* had to give,—the eldership. Not but that the office of Evangelist would involve it, and in this way it would be doubly given; but the probability is, that this transaction took place some time before Timothy entered upon that

office; for the Epistles seem to have been written to prepare him for it: indeed, the clause above, "This charge I commit to thee," especially, has the aspect of being the form of a more solemn committal of it; and this incident of his concurrent appointment by the Presbytery is left on record to show that Elders, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, do impart the authority which they receive. The gift was given him *διὰ προφητείας*, "by prophecy," but *μετὰ*, "with" the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery: here, as Bloomfield says, *μετὰ* only "denotes concurrence in the thing;" that is, as the *προφητεία* was given of the Holy Ghost by the putting on of the Apostle's hands, the Presbytery, acknowledging this gift, concurrently imparted to him the eldership; St. Paul taking him afterwards, and no doubt by Divine direction, to exercise the higher, the evangelistic, function,—that to which chiefly the gift had respect. The Apostle's act in this matter had a different end in view from that of the Presbytery, and proves nothing in favour of Prelacy, however a simple Episcopacy—*primus inter pares*—may be here again vindicated; for the imposition of his hands was the sign of the impartation of a non-transferable gift, the fruit of which was to be shared by all the community; and there is no proof that this act of St. Paul had anything to do with Timothy's separation to the Ministry at all, excepting as it was preparative. This same Timothy is exhorted to "lay hands suddenly on no man;" but if Timothy, and all men in his position, could convey the rich graces of the Holy Ghost by such action, actually making the elect person what, in ministerial respects, he ought to be,

which is the Roman theory, and runs through the *Pontificale Romanum*, then there seems to be no reason for this anxious mandate: but if Timothy is warned not to commit ministerial responsibilities to any, except those whose call has been ascertained and tested as his own vocation was, then all is impressive and clear.

If it be asked, Why, then, did not St. Paul address his ecclesiastical Epistles unto Elders? the ready answer appears to me to be this: These were a class of persons then only *in course* of appointment, and had generally to be selected by the Apostles and Evangelists, in their visitations of the churches. To have written to the Elders of all, or even of many, churches, would have been impossible; to have selected the Presbytery of one, would have laid the foundation for a kind of pre-eminency there, and fomented jealousies among others: but to address the Evangelists, was to address them all through the natural and authoritative medium of communication; and, as those Evangelists were to pass away unsucceeded, they, like the Apostles, would be out of the reach of all harm which might accrue to their humility, from a view of the distinctive eminence of their position. And this, then, is the third point of our reply, that the Apostle writes to Timothy in his two-fold character of Elder and Evangelist, under both of which distinctions the latter is laid under the obligations to teach, regulate, and ordain, inasmuch as the Presbytery ordained. The obligations that are enjoined are such as must necessarily lie on some persons, that is, on single or associated men, until the end of the world. If we must needs pass over the various places where

Timothy and Titus are addressed relatively to the ordering of offices and of churches, saying, "These are instructions for Evangelists, but not for modern Elders," then the greater part of the Epistles is to us a dead letter; the shepherds of Christ's flock are left without a directory at all. In this way many portions of Scripture which were inconvenient to us might be got rid of entirely. Different as are Prelatists, Plymouth Brethren, and the adherents of the Cambridge platform, from each other, yet, if the apostolical precepts in the inspired documents above are to be carried into effect at all, they must of necessity adopt one of these conclusions,—either that there now exists, or ought to exist, an order of Evangelists, *endowed with the same χαρίσματα and powers* as were the associates of the Apostles, in order to do what must be done, but what Presbyterian Pastors may not do; or else that the successive labourers in the word and doctrine who now exist, are left to the discharge of their momentous functions, until the end of time, with scarcely any authoritative Scripture direction whatever;—that the Epistles above mentioned were written solely for men who were to live only a few years after their date:—that is, one horn or other of this dilemma must be chosen, if we are to reject what appears to be the unavoidable inference drawn from the scope of the whole; namely, that the apostolical precepts must be even now obeyed, and that those persons must especially obey them—Elders in council—to whom the Evangelists have transmitted their eldership, though not their extraordinary and co-apostolical charge. Is it possible, that any sincere lover of his Bible can ponder the last words of St. Paul to Timothy and

Titus, and mark the anxiety of that Apostle for the preservation of the truth, after his death, amid the dangers that surrounded it; can attend to his commands that Elders should be judged, that vain talkers should have their mouths stopped, that heretics should be rejected after due admonition, that only faithful men should be chosen to the Ministry, and that the Apostles' own manner of life and purposes should be followed; and yet, after all, come to the conclusion that this was intended only for the infancy of Christianity; that when Timothy and Titus were dead, all things should move on just as the people of the different congregations, partly Jew, partly Gentile, and partly philosophical, should guide them; that when Christianity became complicated, and persecuted, and surrounded with difficulties in proportion to the lapse of years, there should then be no ministerial judging of Elders, silencing of erroneous teachers, and rejection of heretics, or selecting of faithful Pastors, at all? If so, it is possible to regard the Bible as an old Almanack, true for the year in which it was written, but having no use afterwards. How every principle of reverence for the Holy Spirit's work recoils from such an insulting degradation of the Divine oracles! I know of no principle on which the ecclesiastical Epistles in connexion with the first chapter of the book of Revelation can be harmoniously expounded, except this,—that all the way there is assumed to be existing, apart from the people, a power to ordain, to order, to judge, to rectify, not only congregations, but Ministers. This involves a connexion; and as to whether Evangelists, or Presbyters, or Bishops, form the centre of its unity, our Lord's charge to the seven churches,

perhaps, gives the best answer. Our exposition of Scripture keeps us clear of the difficulties which are here, on other theories, so formidable. If it be deemed presumption to claim for Christian Presbyters, called and qualified of God, the right and obligation of ordaining Ministers,—which, to my apprehension, is best and most scripturally done; most in accordance with Rev. i., where some chief Minister takes the lead in it,—and thus providing for the increase of Christ's kingdom in the world; how inexpressibly greater must the presumption be, to vest that right in the hands of a company of persons, composed of merchants, and traders, and artisans, apprentice youths, women and maidens, as well as of grave and fatherly Christians,—to make this the authority for designating and directing the responsible servant of Christ! I cannot but think that a jury of plain sensible persons, clear of the influence of all arbitrary dogmatisms about individual and inalienable rights, would decide against such a notion at once; and *that* by them would be deemed right,—every one's right,—which was most harmonious with Gospel truth and the sovereign rights of the Saviour. Many privileges which we have as men, or as members of secular society, we yield, the moment we are under a law to Christ.—So clear to us is the doctrine, that they who hold the office are the parties to convey it, however the concurrence of the community is a necessary guard to the right exercise of the conveying act; and from this will flow the consequence that every rightly elected and ordained person is Preacher or Pastor *in statu*. He has a right, by virtue of his office, to go wherever there is an open door, and, especially, into

the heathen world, and by preaching and teaching to recover men to Christ ; and then, being the spiritual father and guide of his converts, and devoting himself to the work of edifying them in faith, he rules them at first independently of, and antecedently to, their own choice. Were it not so, indeed, how could the world be evangelized and saved ? He is an Ambassador of Christ, standing between the same parties as did St. Paul, propounding the same terms of reconciliation between God and man, obtesting by the same authority ; and only different from that Apostle in the circumstance that plenary inspiration, and the power of imparting *χαρίσματα*, are here wanting ; and that a calling of the Spirit, attested by men, comes in the stead of a commission from the personal mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The same arguments which are here adduced to prove the primary responsibility of Ministers in the ordination of other Ministers, will also prove their primary responsibility in the appointment of other office-bearers ; taking care, however, to preserve the principle of lay concurrence in its widest possible application.*

§ VI. IT IS THEIRS TO ADMINISTER THE SIMPLE AND IMPRESSIVE RITES OF CHRISTIANITY CALLED "SACRAMENTS."

As we entirely reject the notion of a priesthood in the Christian Ministry, so do we disclaim, without the slightest reservation, the idea of any influence or efficacy resulting to receivers of either sacrament, from the person or standing of the administrator. Even Tertul-

* See Note (A), Appendix.

lian,* in his day, who held no low notions as to the effect of these ordinances,—that of baptism especially,—argued that from the admission of universal Christians to spiritual priesthood, they had a consequent right, when necessity called, to administer ; though, as to order, he distinctly assigned the office in baptizing to the Bishop, his Clergy, or some one appointed by him. Whatever may be said as to the argument, we have no disposition to quarrel with the conclusion. We accept neither of the scholastic explanations of sacramental efficacy : it is neither *ex opere operato*, nor *ex opere operantis* ; neither in the thing done, nor in the character of him who does it ; but in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafed in connexion with all the required circumstances ; which grace ordinarily, therefore, is dependent upon the faithfulness, more or less, with which the terms of the evangelical covenant are complied with, and is always suited to the age and spiritual acquirements of the person concerned. The Apostles and Evangelists usually baptized ; but there were seasons when they may have devolved this act upon unofficial parties, as it is likely Peter did in the case of the Gentile converts ; (Acts x. 48 ;) for to this inference the text is open : and when Paul declares to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. i. 17,) that Christ sent him “not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel,” this must at least be his meaning, that his *main*, his *great* work, was *rather* to preach the Gospel than to baptize ; for some leading Corinthians, nevertheless, had received that sacrament from his hands, and he must have

* *De Baptismo*, cap. 17.

deemed that he was really commissioned with right—as all the other Apostles, being behind them in nothing—to baptize, yet still in subordination to preaching. But this is only part of the case. There is another view to be taken. Those who in Christ's commission are enjoined to preach and teach, are commanded to do this also, and to make the baptism and the teaching mutually dependent on each other: so that if there are instances, in the course of the Apostles' ministry, when it was expedient that, like Paul, they should refrain from baptizing, or where they would depute to other holy men the performance of acts properly their own, by calling upon these latter to baptize; still they never transferred their responsibility: whoever poured out the water and offered the prayer, it was still their act. It was their authority which directed the baptism. Peter even, on the occasion referred to above, *commanded* the converts to be baptized.*

We rightly deduce from Scripture, that the sacraments are signs and seals of the covenant of grace;

* There is a letter preserved in Eusebius, book vi., chap. 44, written by Dionysius of Alexandria to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, respecting a certain Serapion, who, having fallen into temptation in the time of persecution, was taken mortally sick, and ardently desired to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. A Presbyter was sent for, but he, too, was sick, and could not attend; but as the Bishop had made previous arrangement respecting such cases, the Presbyter sent a portion of the consecrated bread by a youth to the dying man, restoring him to peace with his brethren; and Serapion received it, and expired.

It might be said here, that the youth administered the sacrament: it was, however, only his hand that conveyed the outward element; it was pastoral wisdom which judged respecting the propriety, in that case, of its administration, and pastoral authority which sanctioned it.

and whoever are appointed to open and propound that covenant, and offer its conditions to guilty men, these are the persons to affix the seal, as being most concerned, and most likely to know when these conditions are accepted. This is a primary principle in a matter, not of disputed right, but of indisputable New-Testament order. They who receive infants into Christ's church, by the initial ordinance, bind themselves subsequently to teach those who have thus been made subjects of it ; and, by promoting an efficient system of household or parental nurture, or by making these children catechumens, and instructing them as such, prepare them for full communion : they who receive adults only, have already taught them : so that baptism, especially on Mission-stations, stands intimately connected with the first pastoral function ; namely, that of admitting members into the fold : and as the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, is not only the confirming and edifying ordinance, but that by which the membership in Christ's body of every believer is recognised, this also stands immediately connected with the power of admission and exclusion.

The faith which is exercised in baptism is faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, involving affiance in each Person, for the grace which, in the economy of redemption, that Person is pledged to bestow, accordingly as the recipient shall apprehend and apply for it in solemn supplication ; and the faith which is exercised at the Lord's Supper pre-supposes an acknowledgment of personal guilt, and the abandonment of self-righteousness, with a committal of the whole soul to the merit of the Sacrifice of the Cross ; and, when genuine, is necessarily followed by a holy life

and conversation. But who is the proper person to put the seal of affirmation upon the profession of this faith in either case, but he who is called, gifted, and ordained to, as well as practised in, the exposition and teaching of the same? The teaching and signifying are joined together, as naturally as body and soul; and “what God,” in this case, as well as others, “hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” As long as it is written, “For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread;” so long must the administration of that bread have something to do with the recognition, in particular communions, of membership in THE BODY; and that recognition is one which no company of Christians, apart from the Pastor, and without his distinct affirmation, can give. In early antiquity, as we have seen above, this principle was recognised: whosoever formally conveyed the elements, they were given from the Pastor; and when they were withheld, this was at once the sign and result of the greater or less excommunication, accordingly as the censure was limited or absolute. He who, to use the language of a somewhat more advanced period, set up “a different altar,” that is, administered the Lord’s Supper to any people apart from the sanction of their own proper Pastor, or contrary to it, was an openly declared schismatic.

It would be easy to cover the page with quotations that bear on this point; but, as antiquity is not my sphere, I forbear to adduce them. Unquestionably, an act like this involves the very soul of schism,—the essence of passion and pride. By that law in Christian ethics through which all inverted or diverted

ordinances are made hurtful in proportion to their original sacredness and value, the man who divides against the Pastor at the Lord's table, which is the sanctuary and home of loving unity, is one who divides indeed; and all the more, if the reason is, that he has been restrained by the law of order from being himself an administrator. Sins, however, like these, bring their own punishment, and defeat their own end. Who could object to any holy man giving the bread and wine, in the name of Christ, to his prayerful and believing friends, if there were no ordained or responsible Pastor near? or to his baptizing any of their children, in case of like or equal necessity? All this is special; but as to the RULE which has been acknowledged from the beginning, all the harmonies of Scripture, and all the instincts and intuitions of God's people, are on its side. It is a case which has hardly needed the investigations of exegesis or of reason: the Christian conscience has spoken out on the subject at once. Serious and sincere believers in all ages have been willing to receive the sacraments from those only who had been separated to the work of the Ministry, and were *ex officio* the received expounders of Christian doctrine.

However levellers have endeavoured to show that this service is nothing more than a feast, which any two or three of their own will might institute, the soul alike of "babe" and "father" has spurned the doctrine, if even for a while the reasoning faculty might halt or waver. If the Pastor were not there, or if his heart and will were not there; if the people were not gathered together "with *his* spirit;" they have

felt, more perhaps than they have seen, that in this case the ordinance was vitiated; nay, that it was void. The administration of the Lord's Supper to the Societies by the early Wesleyan Preachers was in harmony with the doctrine of these pages; for the Preachers were their Pastors.

So it ever will be, unless human nature should alter entirely: for private Christians, or Christians occasionally exercising their teaching gifts, to administer the sacraments, is CONTRARY TO THE ORDER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH IN ALL AGES; while to administer in wilful opposition to him who watches over the souls of the whole, and for a selfish purpose, instead of being the seal of faith and charity, is the seal of division, and leaves the perpetrator to the righteous anger of the Omniscient Head of the church, as that anger is revealed against disturbers and dividers of His household; and that, too, apart from whatever guilty passion of pride, jealousy, or envy, may, on its own grounds, have equally incurred that most just wrath.

§ VII. IT IS THEIRS TO EXERCISE RULE OR DISCIPLINE IN THE ADMISSION OF MEMBERS, AND IN THE CENSURE OR EXPULSION OF THE UNFAITHFUL AND UNHOLY.

If no controversy had ever arisen from other considerations, it could not be doubted whether all this might not be deduced from any of the titles by which a Minister is designated. As a Pastor, how can he tend a flock without separating therefrom all who are corrupted and cannot be amended? As a Teacher, or expositor of the law of Christ, how can he acquiesce in the misapprehension, or slurring by

popular gloss, of that law. As an Overseer, why should he overlook a spiritual community, unless he be able to ward off danger and remove infatuation? As a Watchman of souls, who must give account unto the King who placed him in that position, how shall he be able to discharge his function, unless he be able to take away from the fellowship of believers those who, by their sins of flesh and spirit, are perilling the very souls respecting which the account will have to respond? As a Ruler over God's household, a Ruler over "many things," and made such by reason of having faithfully used the talents which were previously given, how shall he retain even a shadow of that distinction, if he be merely the organ of a community? As to the declarations of Scripture, what can be plainer? "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men;" (Rom. xvi. 19;) the context showing that it is not merely obedience to the faith, but to persons: "His inward affection" (that is, of Titus) "is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him:" (2 Cor. vii. 15 :) A Bishop must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.)

The argument here is from the less to the greater; and is in harmony with the tone of St. Paul's other Epistles, especially those to the Corinthians. A good father, in ruling his family, will pay the greatest respect to all the reasonable wishes and expostulations of his family, and especially those of the wife of his

bosom ; and generally he will be able to go on in accordance with them, when any given matter is fully considered : but a case will arise, at some time, in which he will have to act decisively upon some point affecting either the whole house, or the position of some one in it ; and, after having weighed every testimony that judgment or feeling could give, to take the responsibility of that act upon himself, if even there be only a minority to acquiesce in it : for the Father of all, who created the paternal relation amongst men, has made it impossible to transfer to any man, or any whole family, the paternal obligation. A Christian father, in such a case of difficulty, can only offer the Psalmist's prayer, which is often sublime from its very anxiety : " I flee unto Thee to hide me. Teach me to do THY will ; for Thou art my God : Thy Spirit is good ; lead me into the land of uprightness." (Psalm cxliii. 9, 10.) So it is in the church of God. In ordinary times, and on all ordinary matters, Pastors and office-bearers will mutually agree. But there are other periods when truth and purity are implicated ; and, however dimly this may be seen by the community, entangled with questions of social, friendly, personal, or political interest, when a pastoral decision, in respect of a person declared by all to be guilty, must be pronounced, and the obligation it involves cannot be shared, either, with any number of men. Again : " A man that is an *heretic*" [a faction-leader] "after the first and second admonition reject ;* knowing that he that

* Vitringa deems this word to be very strong,—the word used by Greek writers when speaking of the repudiation of a wife ; which consisted of exclusion from her home, and all her former intercourse.

is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus iii. 10, 11.) That is, "Where the fact is palpable, and a party-leader does not disavow his character and design, then, O Titus, proceed upon that fact, and separate the offender from the sound part of the community ; for what need of further testimony or procedure, when the sinner falls from his unity with the body, and condemns himself?" "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." (Heb. xiii. 17.) If, by the Apostle's direction, some in the church are to rule, and others to submit and obey, it is inconceivable that every particular of inward regulation should be carried by the suffrage of the community.

On the democratic theory, all that is needed is, a person who shall perform the twofold function of expounding Scripture and presiding in the midst of the people, simply to keep order in their deliberations, and execute their will. But this presents no idea of rule which would satisfy a simple and honest mind. Invest your chairman as you will with all the outward signs of office, and keep up the phraseology of deference as you may, still, if he cannot, through an adverse vote of headstrong youths, or prejudiced parties, put away sin, or reduce schism, he rules not. Dr. Wardlaw repudiates the notion that in his scheme all the people are rulers, and that no place is left for any one in the church to be obeyed ; but I look in vain to him, or to others of the same denomination, for any logical warding off of this denied consequence. Brethren of this school affirm, of course, that the

Pastors may not do anything without the concurrence of the people ; and, assuming this to be admitted,—not in all the length and breadth of the sentiment granting it,—may I ask, if the converse of the proposition is practically allowed to be true ? which is, that the people shall do nothing without the consent of the Pastors. Assuredly it is not ; and all that a faithful man can do, when crippled in action by an adverse majority, is not to save the observance of Christ's law, but to save his peace of conscience by retiring from such a flock. What becomes, then, of even the doctrine of mutual concurrence ? Richard Baxter, who by the troubles and controversies of his times was obliged to study the subject, and who brought as much piety and understanding to bear upon it as any of his great compeers, has the following note upon the text last quoted :—“ God that hath made the Bishops or Pastors to be your guiding Rulers in church affairs, obligeth you to obey them, and to submit yourselves to their government, and not to live unruly or as in confusion : for the charge of watching for your souls is committed to them so far as belongeth to their office, by teaching publicly and privately, and personally watching over the state and conversation of every single person to their power, and instructing, exhorting, reproofing, comforting ; entrusted with the seals of the administration of God's covenant, and with your public church communion, by judging of men's capacity, and receiving or excluding, binding or loosing, by the power of the keys. And of all this they must give account to God ; which, as it will be terrible to them if they be unfaithful, so it will be to you if their faithfulness be

without success; which else will be to the joy of them and you. And they have not any constraining power of the sword, and can govern and profit you only as voluntary by your own consent: and therefore, as you love your comfort, and regard them and their labours and comfort, obey them, by obeying God's word which they preach....Note, that God having trusted the Pastors by office with church government by the keys, it is very false that the people should govern it by vote: though it is true that, being governed but as voluntaries by their Pastors, their consent is needful to their subjection, and to their profit and salvation." At greater length still in his public documents and in his other works did this eminent man testify, as we shall further see, on this subject:* and the most eminent and learned interpreters are on his side† in the exposition

* See Note (B), Appendix.

† On this point it is curious to take and translate the testimonies as they rise in POOLE'S "Synopsis." "*Obey them*: not only in matters of evangelical doctrine, but in those belonging to government."—GROTIUS (Dutch Reformed). "*Acquiesce in the rectitude of their counsels*."—CALVIN (Genevan). "*To Bishops, without exception, we must render obedience after the same manner as unto parents, or the Lord; although they may be hard and severe. (Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 18.)*"—ESTIUS (Romish). "*For as we must obey the King and our parents, not absolutely, but so far as they do not command anything contrary to the precepts of Christ; so the same kind of obedience must be rendered to Pastors.*"—CAMERON (French Protestant). "*We must obey them next unto God.*"—JUNIUS (Dutch Protestant). "*And submit yourselves*: show to them such honour, as those who are less show to those who are greater; for this the Greeks often express by *ὑπέκω*."—GROTIUS.

So also, elsewhere: "By the words *πείθεσθε, ὑπέκετε*, the deference is indicated which yields to the admonition of others, and submits to be led by their precepts."—BRETSCHNEIDER and KUINOEL, in BLOOMFIELD, *ad loc.*

"*ἡγούμενος*, in verse 7 above, is clearly used in the sense of

of the same text. The line of teaching which we find in the places of Scripture just quoted and dwelt upon, is sustained by the whole tenor of the apostolical Epistles. There is no correspondence or likeness

Teachers, who were, in fact, the guides or leaders of the Christian community. If there be any difference in this case between *πείθεσθε* and *ὑπακούετε*, the first has reference to positive obedience in regard to any directions given them; the second prohibits any opposition to the Teachers, in the measures which they might adopt to promote the improvement and the order of the religious community.”—MOSES STUART, *Com. in loc.*

“Obey them in those rules and directions which they are authorised by Christ to give you, and submit yourselves (to them) with a becoming respect, even though their office should sometimes oblige them to make such addresses to you as may for the present be disagreeable to you.....Behave towards them, therefore, whilst they are pursuing the several duties of it, in such a manner, that they may do it with joy, and not with inward groaning and discouragements arising from your unkind treatment, or from such other irregularities of your conduct as may require them to interfere by methods of severity.”—DODDRIDGE (Congregational).

Modern Congregational Ministers have likewise used language on this subject which, to some Wesleyans, would be not a little startling. Thus, Dr. Davidson: “*In meetings of the church, NO MEMBER SHOULD SPEAK without permission of the Elders; nor continue to do so, when they impose silence. THE ELDERS GIVE AND WITHHOLD LIBERTY OF SPEECH, when the church is assembled. In such meetings no member should oppose the judgment of the presiding Elders.*”—“*Eccles. Pol.*,” p. 274. The Rev. John Angell James: “*All the proceedings at a church-meeting should either emanate directly from the Pastor, or from others by his previous knowledge and consent.....No member should presume to bring forward a candidate in opposition to the opinion of the Pastor.*”—“*Christian Fellowship*,” p. 172. The late Rev. John Ely, of Leeds: “*The Pastor is not the despot, but he is the ruler. Authority must be maintained, not with the high, but with the firm, hand. He must expound law, and demand its administration. If his rule be disobeyed, he must lay down his pastorate.*”—“*Posthumous Works*. Hamilton, Adams, and Co. 1848.”

between *ἀρχιποίμην* and *ποιμήν*, between “chief” and “under shepherd,” as mentioned in St. Peter, unless tending and keeping pure the flock by the exclusion of unworthy members be implied in both cases; with this Divine arrangement, however, understood,—that the under shepherd shall be ruled and judged by the higher. (1 Peter ii. 25, and v. 4.)

St. John, in his Third Epistle, declares, in reference to the ambitious Diotrophes, “If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.” (Verse 10.) That there was a place of pre-eminence in every church occupied by several, we here need not argue, it is proved elsewhere: that this Diotrophes was an Elder, is evident from the function which he exercised: and the note of reprehension in the preceding verse, that he “loved to have the pre-eminence,” points to the fact, that either he had no right to the eldership, that is, the oversight of the people, he having assumed it; or that he was overbearing, scheming, and tyrannical in respect to his fellow-Elders, of whom Gaius (probably of Corinth, and therefore his church the church of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14) was one. Now the Apostle does not remind the church of their supposed right of resisting excommunication: but he declares his intention of dealing summarily with an individual who had unrighteously, that is, in a way contrary to Christ’s law, exercised the Elder’s function, by casting out members from the church who entertained and brought forward on their journey the true preachers

of the Gospel; and, in the spirit of this conduct, setting himself against, that is, above, the Apostles. He may have been, as Grotius and Hammond think, a Gentile who was opposed to countenancing the Christian Jews who adhered to their ancient customs. In St. John's Epistle, then, we have the *Pastor pastorum*, the embodiment of a power for censuring and controlling the misrule of the Ministry, but not the advocate of a plan for directing the most responsible act of that Ministry by a public vote. The people here were treated unjustly and oppressed, and an authority above their own was brought in for their protection. In the charge to the Angel of His church of Ephesus, the Saviour approves the act of that Pastor, in that he could not bear with the evil, and tried those who said they were Apostles, and were not; and, in the charge to the Angel of the church of Thyatira, the same office-bearer is reprovèd for suffering the woman Jezebel (perhaps called so from her resemblance to the wife of Ahab) to teach and to seduce others to fornication and idolatry; (Rev. ii. 2, 20;)—all in harmony with preceding statements. The guilty parties might have pleaded that they acted from conviction, and had the opinion of the majority on their side: but this plea is not admitted by the Lord, who holds the Pastor to account for this disorder.

With regard to St. Paul, to quote from him all that refers directly and by implication, in general spirit, and in precept, to the point before us, would be to transcribe a great part of the Epistles to the two churches of Corinth and Thessalonica. The case of the incestuous Corinthian we have considered. In

2 Thess. iii. 14, he commands that the contumacious person be noted and shunned : in Rom. xvi. 17, that the authors of divisions and offences contrary to the truth should be marked and avoided : and in 1 Cor. v. 11, there is an express direction, that if any man “called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one” to have no communion, “no not to eat.” These precepts, however they may solicit the concurrence of the community, and however some of them may indicate a lighter censure than absolute excommunication, are not in their actual application made contingent upon that concurrence. St. Paul demands that these things be done. There is a direct ministerial application of the law of Christ,—the law of purity.

§ VIII. Here, however, we may again be met with an objection already in part refuted. “True it is,” some will say, “the Apostles, as vicegerents of Christ, *might* have power to bind and loose without respect to the opinions or wills of others ; they *had* the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and God ratified their acts of opening and shutting : but can this power be claimed for ordinary and uninspired Elders ?”

The fallacy which lurks in this question, lies in confounding the inspiration of the Apostles,—by which alone *they* determined the conditions on which men were admitted into, or excluded from, the kingdom of heaven, and by which they alone bound or loosed the fundamental statutes of government for Christ’s church,—with their personal acts, as Ministers of Christ, and Shepherds of His flock. In the first character they are unapproachable : there has been

none, there can be none, like them. In the second character they neither acted absolutely nor infallibly: not absolutely; for they took the judgment of others along with them, and proceeded, not from a miraculous insight into human character, but from the warrant of evidence obtained in the usual methods: not infallibly; for the errors of both Paul and Peter are recorded in the sacred volume. The plain answer to the question is, therefore, that so far as the Apostles, ministerially and as Christian Elders, used their own power, which was supernaturally given to them; so far we, or any other lawfully-called Ministers of Christ, not only may, but must, use it: and it would be well for all speculators on this point to mark, that *just in proportion as they deny to modern Pastors, called of God, the obligation to fulfil the ordinary ministerial duties which the Apostles fulfilled, and the right of that mild authority, involved therein, which the Apostles claimed, in that very proportion they withdraw them from that presence of Christ—that special blessing—which is promised in the primary commission.* The conclusion is irresistible: either the ordinary duties of the Apostles must be now done, and their common ministerial authority must be now exercised, or there are no persons on earth to whom the words, “Lo, I am with you alway,” apply, and no church on earth which can claim the comfort which that promise supplies. Besides this,—requesting the reader to refer once more to the second chapter,—we must again protest against the confounding the term “church,” and the phrase “kingdom of heaven,” as though they meant one and the same thing. Simon was received into the church at Sama-

ria by the Evangelist Philip; but this Simon was subsequently proved to have no part or lot in the matter, and consequently to have no place in the kingdom. And how proved? Not by Peter and John having an absolute knowledge of what was in man, apart from outward evidence; but from the enormous impiety disclosed in his proposing to make the gift of the Holy Ghost an article of traffic and means of aggrandisement.

In the awful judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, the Apostle Peter seems to have a moment's supernatural discernment granted him only in the case of the first-mentioned: (if, indeed, here he had not been led to make the public inquiry through a previous and partial knowledge, from individual sources, of the facts of this man's sin; for there is nothing in the sacred narrative to preclude the notion of a previous faint rumour of it:) and when his wife came in, she was convicted on her own evidence, and sentence was pronounced by the Apostle on the unhappy pair, through the impulse on his mind of a Divine influence. The Apostle Paul judged by evidence of the incestuous Corinthian, before he put him away from the church: he did not discover the fact of the sin by any voluntary exercise of the gift—for most likely he had it not—of the discerning of spirits: there was a *fama clamosa*, “it was commonly reported,” and, the matter being sought into, the sin was not denied. If the whole apostolical college did not deal with the churches by evidence as we do, but rather with the constant use of infallible knowledge as to men and minds, how can we suppose they would either have allowed a hypocrite to enter, or have suffered him to remain, if

by chance he had entered? If the power of the keys *is to be* spoken of as applying to the admission of persons into, and the exclusion of them from, the *church*; then, even in the Apostles' hands, it is only a subordinate power, and ratified as to its application to the kingdom of heaven, only on condition that the act shall be in accordance with those infallible decisions of the Holy Ghost, which, in their inspired moments, they were enabled—indeed, prompted—to give. In Matt. xviii. 18, their original charter, "*Ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε*," "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c., did not, as we have before seen, comprehend persons, but things;* that is, principles, laws, statutes: it is their doctrinal decision which binds or looses as to the kingdom of heaven; their ministerial act only which admits to, or shuts out of, the church: so far is the Lord from giving, even to His Apostles, the awful power of admitting to, or excluding any one from, life eternal. "He openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7.) The Apostles and Evangelists, as extraordinary men, had to do with churches, the members of which were often extraordinarily gifted; we, who are ordinary Pastors, have to do with those that are ordinarily gifted: the relation between the two component parts of the Christian body is perfectly analogous, the reciprocal influence identical. They did not exclude offenders without trial of their guilt by their flock; nor do we: but they did not make the will of the majority, as to their retention or exclusion, the abso-

* "*Sed hoc obstat, quòd Christus non dicat ὅσους, quoscunque, sed ὅσα, quæcunque: unde patet, ipsum de rebus loqui, non de personis.*" —VITRINGA, p. 754.

lute rule; neither do we. They carried with them the judgments of the wisest and best in all their acts, as far as it was possible, taking care, however, to assert that the faction-leader was subverted of himself, *ipso facto*, and saving their peculiar obligation to answer to their Lord for the conservation of His truth and the purity of His household. This is the position which, so far as the analogy before mentioned holds, we fain would take. If men recoil from having the keys put into the hands of modern Ministers, simply on the ground that these last are devoid of supernatural powers, and therefore would have them put into the hands of the whole community, whose faculties of conscience and spiritual judgment, it is only fair to infer, are yet further removed from the supernatural; and thus give the people the opportunity, by their numbers, of carrying it against the Pastorate; how, supposing the scriptural argument were in abeyance, is the cause of democratic rule to be maintained on the high ground of purity? And, what is of far more consequence, how is Christ magnified, and His truth and law upheld, especially in times when both are in peril from popular theories and popular excitement? If modern Pastors are exhorted, and very properly so, to imitate the Apostles in piety, let them not be harshly judged for following, as far as possible, the same high examples in fidelity.

§ IX. As to Christian antiquity, which we only mention because those who have gone from us have sought to draw special pleas from it,—alleged usages,—in their own defence; even the earliest authentic testimonies are all on the side of this distinction between pastoral

and popular responsibility, which we so plainly recognise in holy Scripture. Ignatius, Irenæus, and Justin scarcely refer to the subject of church censures, or to the admission and exclusion of members. Tertullian, who lived chiefly in the second century, makes mention of the last, simply with respect to its influence on the individual, though in such a connexion as to leave it to be inferred that the sentence, and act of excision, was with the "*probati seniores*."* There is no testimony, except that which the "Apostolic Canons" afford, previous to the age of Cyprian, which can be brought as decisively authoritative on the point. Here, however, the testimony from all sources is uniform. Though Cyprian himself, more than contemporary Pastors, in dealing largely with lapsed members and restoring them to the church, as well as in excluding others, was wont to consult his co-Presbyters and his flock; yet, notwithstanding, this exercise of administrative functions was not absolutely determined by the want of their concurrence, as we have seen in the Appendix to chapter x.; but by the manifest bearing of the case on some divine and revealed law, of which, in a crisis, he was bound to be the faithful expositor. Throughout that age, and onwards, as Bingham largely shows, the Bishop, or a Presbyter acting under his direction, was the excommunicating authority. The excommunication was considered lawfully to take effect, first, when the guilt of the party was acknowledged by his own confession; secondly, when witnesses deposed to the fact on which it was founded; thirdly, when it was

* *Apolog.*, cap. 39.

so notorious and palpable, and contrary to the canons, as made it excommunication *ipso facto*. "That all the power of discipline was primarily lodged" (whatever co-deliberation might be provided, or sought for) "in the hands of the Bishop, as all other offices of the church, is a matter uncontested, and evident from the whole foregoing history and account of the practice of the church. For the canons always speak of the Bishop, at least in conjunction with his ecclesiastical senate, his presbytery, as cutting off offenders from the church, and imposing penance upon them; and then again examining their proficiency, and either lengthening their penance, or moderating it, by his indulgence; and, finally, admitting them to the communion of the church by absolution."* In like manner is the argument from the history of the primitive church summed up by Vitranga: "Doubtless, as with the Hebrews this power was equally in the hands of the consistory of Elders, and in those of the President of the single synagogue or school; so the function of excommunicating is in like manner, from the most ancient times, exercised by the Bishops and Presbyters of the Christian church.† This we understand from the words of Selden just noted,‡ and gather the same from all the canons of the ancient church whatsoever, as many as treat of this argument: besides which, the highest reason demands the same. In place of a specimen look at the canons of the Councils of Eliberitanus [Elvira] and Nice. The same practice continues to this very time in all the

* BINGHAM'S "Antiquities," book xix., cap. iii., § 1.

† *Vide* TERTUL., "*Apol.*," xxxix.

‡ *De Syned.*, lib. i., cap. xxxviii., p. 143.

well-ordered churches of Christ; wherefore he who needs to be further detained to have this position further proved or illustrated, had need to be one of the most leisurely of men.”*

§ X. In practically maintaining this principle against all schisms and agitations, the Wesleyan Conference has been charged by many as standing alone among the churches of the Reformation. The charge is preposterous, and can only have been made in ignorance of the historical facts that can be readily brought to bear upon the case. It has acted upon the principles maintained by the best and purest Protestant churches, when these churches were in their most earnest condition—their Ministers and members risking martyrdom—of protest against Rome. If men insist that Protestant churches, as they are now, must be taken as the standard of appeal, such an illogical shift hardly deserves the trouble necessary for exposing it. The term “Protestant” belongs most fitly, as a positive designation, to those whose first opposition to Rome originated the term: and “Protestant Confessions” are those documents which record their views of the decisions of God’s word, on all subjects on which those Confessions treat. Many churches now called “Protestant” may hardly more justly claim that distinction, than some modern communities and publications may take the name of “Wesleyan:” so different from, and opposed to, their respective professed archetypes are they both. Some churches have utterly lost their discipline, some are Erastian, some are sunk in Rationalism, some have denied the

* *De Vet. Synag.*, lib. iii., pars i., p. 767, *ad verba*, “*Nimirum ceu apud Hebræos*,” &c.

Lord that bought them : they are utterly out of court in this inquiry ; but, while repudiating *their* authority, I gladly accept the suffrage of early, energetic, loving, and healthful Protestantism ; and there is hardly a Protestant Confession, if any other, but what confirms the doctrine of these pages.* Calvin, the Genevan Reformer, asserted our principle, though he created a new class of Presbyters, in order, with some colour of deference to democratic principles, to carry it out : nay, apart from those Elders, and on his own responsibility, he asserted it, as will appear in that episode of his personal history which is noticed by Hooker in the Preface to his “*Ecclesiastical Polity*,” as well as by his biographers, and which, as it may further illustrate the subject, I here insert, in my own words, with some additional particulars.

§ XI. Calvin, being obliged to leave France, came to Geneva, soon after the Romanist Bishops and Clergy had left that city, because of the determined attitude of the inhabitants in favour of the Gospel. At that time the form of their civil government was popular, and Geneva was a free city ; and, as to spiritual regimen and order, in this transition state, the people did what their religious instructors and guides could allure them to do. Calvin was admitted Preacher and Divinity-Reader among them ; and, on his admission, he was soon made to see how dangerous it was that the well-being of that Church should be made absolutely to depend upon the taste and liking of the community, many of whom were necessarily uninstructed in the things of which they were required to form a

* See Note (C), Appendix.

judgment. Accordingly, joining with himself two other of the Protestant Ministers, they, after much trouble, persuaded the people to bind themselves by oath, first, never to admit the Papal religion again ; secondly, to live in obedience to such a scheme of ecclesiastical regimen as they, the Ministers of God's word, had drawn up for the purpose. When this scheme was enforced and put in practice, it became a cause of disagreement between Geneva and neighbouring churches ; and this disagreement, for political reasons, the Genevese could ill afford to endure, so that the latter began to repent of their acquiescence and oath. Calvin and his associates, however, resolutely refused to administer the holy communion to those who would not quietly, without contradiction and murmur, submit unto the order to which they had bound themselves ; and for this, these firm Pastors suffered banishment from the town. A few years after, the places of one or two of the Ministers being vacant, the people were more desirous of taking back to themselves this learned Preacher from those who then enjoyed his labours, than before they were willing to be rid of him. Both the Senate and the Ecclesiastical Convocation, therefore, recalled Calvin ; but, before he consented again to become their Pastor, he required their solemn assent to a form of discipline, of which the main features were these :—First, a standing Ecclesiastical Court ; second, the Ministers to be perpetual Judges in that Court ; third, two of the people, to every one of the Ministers, to be annually chosen, to sit and have a voice with them : these to have the charge of the manners and morals of the citizens, without respect of persons, and to administer,

when needful, ecclesiastical censures, even to excommunication. This proposition was variously received,—by many of the Ministers with doubt,—by many of the laity with dislike; but, as they must needs have the aid of Calvin's influence, the instructions of his wisdom, and the *prestige* of his name, they were obliged to consent, and they bound themselves by oath once more. In the year 1541, however, these twice-sworn men assailed the discipline again. They granted, by common consent of the whole Senate, (which was the civil representation of the people,) and under the town-seal, a dispensation or release to one Bertelier, whom the Eldership had excommunicated; further, also, absurdly decreeing that it should belong to the same Senate to give final judgment in matter of excommunication, and to absolve whom it pleased them.

When this Decree was brought to Calvin, he is reported to have said, "Before this Decree takes place, my blood or my banishment shall sign it;" and, again, two days before the communion, something to this effect: "Let me die if ever this hand shall reach forth holy things to them whom the Church hath judged despisers." Bertelier wisely declined to appear; and, after a quiet and orderly discharge of his duty on the sacrament-day, Calvin again announced his purpose to withdraw. This threw the citizens again into a tumult of inconstancy: they suspended the operation of their own Decree, until they had heard the judgment of four Helvetian cities on the case. That judgment was given in Calvin's favour; for, although they did not themselves adopt the Genevan discipline, and did not give absolute

acquiescence to it, yet, they said, it was a drawing towards the prescript of God's word; and they justified Calvin in the position which he had taken.

The Genevan regimen thus became established, but not without opposition. Its claim of territorial jurisdiction, where no one could voluntarily withdraw himself from its control, was openly and reasonably disputed: in the Church of Heidelberg, which followed Gualter's discipline, the seeds were thus sown of the controversy between Beza and Erastus; and it was only when the lay Elders were made perpetual, and, in consequence, became a kind of retired Ministers or superior Deacons, as in the Church of Scotland, that the ultra-Presbyterian system worked well for the religious interests of those who held it. Thus, minor matters apart, in a case even where the theory of Church and State united was fully held, the distinct obligation of the Pastor in relation to Christ was distinctly vindicated.

§ XII. But to return nearer home. Sinners against Christ's law of peace often begin their sin by some innovation in doctrine, by departing from, distorting, or opposing, the TRUTH; and a plea on their behalf will often be set up by companions who have not much opportunity of examining into the bearing or final issues of the heresy. "These," say they, "are good men, they have great zeal and piety;" and by their suffrages such advocates would fain retain them in the body, however there might be wanting the faintest expression of a purpose of amendment, and whatever the probability might be of their subsequent convulsing and leading others astray. In the Wesleyan Connexion this might easily be, and has been:

and no wonder ; for does not St. Peter warn us that when “damnable heresies” are brought in, they are brought in “PRIVILY;” (2 Peter ii. 1;) and Jude, that when deceivers *creep* in, they creep in “UN-AWARES?” (Jude 4.) A Leaders’-Meeting, which is only a portion of a church, and not necessarily or always including its most thoughtful members,—most impartial, most learned in the Scriptures,—might often be led by considerations of friendship, or local tie, to urge such a plea as we have just mentioned, and act upon it, so as to produce fatal disorder and division, before a competent authority could be brought to heal them ; and perhaps so as in the end to cripple that authority itself. Whatever may be the knowledge and wisdom in holy Scripture of some Leaders’-Meetings, and some other bodies of laity, laymen are not, as their Pastors are, bound by solemn and conscientious engagement to a standard, and by legal, as well as by divinely-imposed, responsibility to maintain the TRUTH ; and therefore may sometimes regard these distinctions, out of which momentous heresies are founded, as mere hair-splitting, and in consequence be disposed to justify or excuse the excesses which recusants run into, on the ground that they have been too straitly tied.

Allowing the very best intentions to actuate the laity, while they desire to make the question of an expulsion—that is, in a case where the proved offence arises out of a perversion of the truth—depend absolutely upon their sentence ; yet it is, in fact, to open the teaching of a church to all the philosophical, fanatical, or superstitious theories and speculations, and all the shifting moods of thinking, which prevail in a

restless and self-sufficient age. I say, *their* sentence; for every man of sense knows that, where you have one or two Ministers to ten or twenty lay persons, and equal and absolute suffrage amongst them all, and the vote of the majority decides, *it is* the sentence of the laity,—there cannot be even the form of ministerial concurrence. The mischief in such a case would, in some instances, be slow and insidious; but generally, when hurried on by the disaffection, and mutual alienation of heart, and disorders, which connivance at error would produce, truth and unity would be lost together, and the ruined and disrupted community would sigh, when it was too late, over its suicidal folly.

If the Pastor cannot act without obtaining from others a verdict of guilt respecting an offending member, or an acknowledgment of that guilt on the part of the offending member himself, then how can he be absolute? and if that Pastor be unduly harsh in his rule, and severe in his sentence, the scriptural course, like that with St. John in the case of Diotrephes,—a worse one,—is to control and overrule the sentence by a council of his equals, and put the member in his right position. This is the Wesleyan practice; and the scriptural order tells far more effectually upon the unity and true Christian dignity of a church, than by first laying down a politically republican platform, and then trying to correct the disorders which arise out of it, when they have arisen, spread, and taken effect, by a feeble appeal through those who have no administrative power in favour of the sovereign rights of the Lord Jesus, and the harmony and subordination of His household. As to

members who trample upon all law, and in their divisive schemes resolutely follow their own will and passion, whether they are individuals or parties, I know of no age in which the church of God has not regarded them as excommunicating themselves.

Thus we are brought with deepened force of conviction to our conclusion, that it is according to the will and word of the great Head of the church, that Pastors should have the administration of sanctions and censures in His church, however it is incumbent on them to carry with them the judgments of the wisest and best in their flocks to the utmost degree possible. No men have more natural incentives to this, than the Wesleyan Ministers, who are dependent on the voluntary support of their people, and none have more practically acknowledged them : and though many churches of the Reformation have in reality departed from the principles here illustrated, especially those which have little or no discipline at all, none, except our own opponents, that I am aware of, have ventured directly to oppose them in theory.

§ XIII. On this point, too, let an unprejudiced Christian adopt the course which I have ventured to recommend in reference to others : let him consult the tenor of his Bible as to the more abstract form of the doctrine, without now touching its application : let him ascertain whether the prevailing tone of sympathy from one end to the other is in favour of the multitude under authority, their jealousies, strifes, discontents, or with the administrator of authority, his heart-sinking, his fears, his sense of loneliness, and longing for rest. Let him read of the career of Moses, the meekest man, how he was beset and brow-beaten,

and yet comforted from above; how Saul was driven from his royal seat, because he yielded to a popular wish and sentiment, which was opposed to a decision of the Divine word: let him read the pathetic plaint of David in the Psalms, who cried continually to God for help against the disaffected over whom he was prophetic Pastor as well as King, and mark how help came from the Holy Spirit in distinct answer: let him read how the Prophet Isaiah threatens the disobedient nation with the loss of its wise and good men, as being its direst punishment; and says, "The people shall be oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour; the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable:" (Isaiah iii. 5 :) let him ponder Christ's exhortations to His disciples; and, last of all, the sorrows and struggles of St. Paul, often standing alone amid opposers and defaulters, yet always praying for and receiving the spirit of power. Surely, at the end of such a lesson as this, our reader would give no doubtful verdict.

At a time when the hail threatens to sweep away "the refuge of lies," and the waters to "overflow the hiding-place," how inexpressibly precious is the tried Corner-stone which God has laid in Zion for a foundation! The wise will say, "At all costs we will stand here, whatever becomes of other interests; for what other interests are valuable in the advancing gloom of desolating judgment?"

Our Lord has said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the

winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock:" (Matt. vii. 24, 25 :) and very remarkable it is, that both in the discourse of the Prophet Isaiah, (xxviii.,) where the evangelical foundation, tried by a subsequent storm, is predicted, and in the Sermon on the Mount, the precepts immediately preceding refer to false teachers,—their shifting, false, untenable theories. How shall we account for this conjunction? Does it not point to the fact that the individual builder, and the master church-builder, are both warned against the loose and shrinking sand? that pastoral fidelity stands intimately connected with maintaining the evangelical foundation? that however in an unique and adorable manner Christ is the foundation, we all had need take care how we build thereon?

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 383.

BAXTER ON ORDINATION.

"THE power of ordaining belongeth not, 1. To magistrates; 2. Or to private men, either single, or as the body of a church; but, 3. To the senior Pastors of the church (whether Bishops or Presbyters of a distinct order, the reader must not expect that I here determine):—

"For, 1. The power is given by Christ to them, as is before proved; and in Titus i. 5.

"2. None else are ordinarily able to discern aright the abilities of a man for the sacred Ministry. The people may discern a profitable, moving Preacher; but whether he understand the Scripture, or the substance of religion, or be sound in the faith, and not heretical, and delude them not with a form of well-uttered words, they are not able to judge.

"3. None else are fit to attend to this work, but Pastors who are

separated to the sacred office. It requireth more time to get fitness for it, and then to perform it faithfully, than either magistrates or people can ordinarily bestow.

“4. The power is nowhere given by Christ to magistrates or people.

“5. It hath been exercised by Pastors or church-officers only, both in and ever since the Apostles’ days, in all the churches of the world. And we have no reason to think that the church hath been gathered, from the beginning till now, by so great an error as a wrong conveyance of the ministerial power.”—“Christian Ecclesiastics,” part iii., question xix.

Note (B), page 394.

BAXTER ON RECEIVING MEMBERS.

“1. It is the Pastor’s office to bear and exercise the keys of Christ’s church : therefore, by office, he is to receive those that come in ; and, consequently, to be the judge and trier of their fitness.

“2. It belongeth to the same office which is to baptize, to judge who is to be baptized ; otherwise Ministers should not be rational judges of their own actions, but the executioners of other men’s judgment. It is more the judging who is to be baptized, which the Minister’s office consisteth in, than in the bare doing of the outward act of baptizing.

“3. He that must be the ordinary judge in church admissions, is supposed to have both ability and leisure to make him fit, and authority and obligation to do the work.

“4. The ordinary body of the laity have none of all these four qualifications, much less all.....

“5. It is therefore as great a crime for the laity to usurp the Pastor’s office in this matter as in preaching, baptizing, or other parts of it.

“6. And though pride often blind men, (both people and Pastors,) so as to make them overlook the burden, and look only at the authority and honour, yet it is indeed an intolerable injury to the laity, if any would lay such a burden on them which they cannot bear, and, consequently, would make them responsible for the omissions or misdoing of it to Christ their Judge.....It is not in the power of the laity to keep out of their own particular church-communion whom the Pastor receiveth, because, as is said, it is his office to judge and bear the keys,” &c., &c.—Question lxii.

Also, as to EXCOMMUNICATION :—

“1. As it is the Pastor’s office to judge who is to be received, so also to judge who is to be excluded.

“2. But the execution of his sentence belongeth to the people as well as to himself. It is they that either hold communion with the person or avoid him.

“3. Therefore, though ordinarily they must acquiesce in the Pastor’s judgment, yet if he grossly offend against the law of God, and would bring them, for example, to communion with heretics and openly impious, and excommunicate the orthodox and godly, they may seek their remedy as before” (that is, from other Pastors).
—Question lxiii.

More particularly, as to REMEDY AGAINST MISRULE :—

“1. It must be supposed that all church disorders and mal-administrations cannot be expected to be remedied ; but many, while we are sinners and imperfect, must be borne.

“2. The first remedy is to speak submissively to the Pastor of his faults, and say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received ;’ and if he hear not more privately, for the people more openly to warn and entreat him ; not as his governors, but as Christians that have reason to regard Christ’s interests and their own, and have charity to desire his reformation. The next remedy is to consult with the neighbour Pastors of other churches, that they may admonish him ; not as his governors, but neighbour Pastors.

“3. The next remedy is, to seek redress from those governors that have power to correct or cast out the intolerable.

“4. The last remedy is, that of Cyprian, to desert such intolerable Pastors. But in all this the people must be sure that they proceed not proudly, ignorantly, erroneously, passionately, factiously, disorderly, or rashly.”—Question lxiv.

Note (C), page 406.

PROTESTANT TESTIMONIES.

BOHEMIAN CONFESSION.

“OF *the keys* of Christ” (as now understood). “The fourteenth chapter of Ecclesiastical Doctrine is of the Lord’s keys ; of which He saith to Peter, ‘I will give, &c. And these keys are the peculiar function or ministry and administration of the power of Christ and

His Holy Spirit, which power is committed to the church of Christ and to the Ministers thereof unto the end of the world, that they may not only by preaching publish the holy Gospel, (although they should do this especially, that is, should show forth the word of true comfort, and the joyful message of peace, and new tidings of the favour that God offereth,) but also that to the believing and unbelieving they may publicly or privately denounce or declare,—to wit, to these his favour, to those his wrath ; and that to all in general, or to every one in particular : that they may wisely receive some into the house of God, to the communion of saints, and drive others out from thence ; and may so, through the performance of their ministry, hold in their hand the sceptre of Christ His kingdom, and use the same to the government of Christ His sheep.

“Therefore the condition and proper office of the keys is first to open and loose ; that is, in Christ to appease and still the conscience of the faithful ones, and of those that turn again by repentance ; to make it known unto them that their sins be forgiven, and to strengthen them in a sure hope of salvation ; and by this means to open the kingdom of heaven unto them, to give them courage against all temptations, and to stir up steadfastness and cheerfulness in them : and all these things are done by the faithful shepherds of souls in the Lord’s stead ; not doing this of themselves, but upon Christ His commandment ; not by their own and proper virtue, but by Christ’s, and the efficacy of His word and sacraments, as those that are stewards and dispensers of the mysteries of God, and Ministers only. (1 Cor. iv. 1 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6 ; v. 20.) In the administration of which things they may use some seemly and indifferent ceremonies, (that is, which are no way necessary,) such as are to lay hands, or to reach out the right hand ; or else they may omit them.

“On the other side, the office and proper work of the keys of Christ is to shut and bind ; that is, by the commandment of Christ ; and the authority of this office, given by Him to the church, (which is His power and sceptre,) to denounce against all stubborn, impenitent, unbelieving, and other such like sinners, God’s horrible judgment, and His intolerable wrath, which no nature can abide, and His own sentence ; and so by the word of Christ, according to the quality of the offence, to reprove their sin, to sever them from the fellowship of Christ our Saviour, and from the fruit and participation of the sacraments, and to cast them out of the Christian church ; and, in a word, to shut the kingdom of heaven upon them ; and at the length to deliver them to Satan. This power of His sceptre and Spirit hath the Lord granted and delivered to the holy Apostles, and, in them, to all Ministers of

churches, lawfully ordained, that they might exercise it in His stead," &c., &c.—*Corpus et Syntagma Confessionum Fidei*, 1612. *Aurel. Allobr.*; or, "Harmony of Protestant Confessions. By REV. P. HALL. 1842," pp. 261, 262.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION, PRESENTED TO CHARLES V. IN 1530.

"THEREFORE whereas the question is touching the jurisdiction of Bishops, civil dominion must be distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again: by the Gospel, (or, as they term it, by Divine right,) Bishops, as they be Bishops, (that is, such as have the administration of the word and sacraments committed unto them,) have no jurisdiction at all, but only to forgive sin; also to know what is true doctrine, and to reject such doctrine as will not stand with the Gospel, and to debar from the communion of the church such as are notoriously wicked, not by human force and violence, but by the word of God." (*Note by the Editor.*) "To wit, by the judgment and verdict of the Presbytery, lawfully gathered together, and not by the will and determination of any one man; as was noted before in the Third Observation upon the English Confession."—*Ibid.*, p. 272.

The "Westminster Confession," in like manner, regards the keys as committed into the hands of church officers, veiling, under the convenient term "officers," the ill success of the Assembly in its attempt to establish the doctrine of ruling Elders.—HALL'S "Harmony of Protestant Confessions."

LATTER CONFESSION OF HELVETIA.

"THEREFORE, the first beginning, institution, and office of the Ministers is a most ancient ordinance of God Himself, not a new device," *non nova ordinatio*, "appointed by men." (Chap. xviii., p. 243.)..... "Furthermore, there is another power,—the power of office, or ministerial power,—limited by Him who hath full and absolute authority; and this is more like a service than a dominion. For we see that a master doth give unto the steward of his house authority and power over his house; and for that cause delivereth him the keys, that he may admit or exclude such as his master will have admitted or excluded."—*Ibid.*, p. 249.

CONFESSION OF ENGLAND.

"WE say, also, that the Minister doth execute the authority of binding and shutting, as often as he closeth up the gate of the king-

dom of heaven against unbelieving and stubborn persons, denouncing unto them God's vengeance, and everlasting punishment; or else when he doth quite shut them from the bosom of the church by open excommunication," &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 267.

"It is an erroneous conceit that some maintain, that the power of sacred order and the keys is given by God immediately to the body of the congregation, and that they depute him who is the Minister to execute the power which is originally in them. That power is confined by God immediately to those who are Bishops and Pastors, and by and through them belongs to the whole body, and not otherwise."—The learned JOSEPH MEDE'S "Works," 1664, vol. i., p. 92.

Baxter, enumerating in his controversy with the prelatical party of his day the charges against the established system, says:—

"The unlawfulness they show in these particulars:—in that the Judges of the Courts, as well as the rest, are mere laymen, (the Bishop's Chancellors,) who ordinarily admonish, excommunicate, and absolve: for though the King's declaration concerning ecclesiastical affairs did speak against this, yet that was dead before it took place, and the old course is now taken in all their Courts: and what the tongue of man can rationally say for laymen's exercising the power of the keys, most essential to the sacred pastoral office, it is beyond my reach to know. The common answer is, that lay Elders are as bad: as if one man's sin would justify another's, and warrant all men to subscribe to it. But yet they know: 1. That church Elders are not accounted laymen, but sacred officers, by those that are for them. 2. That they meddle but with one parish, and that but as assistants to the Pastors; whereas the Chancellors meddle with many hundred parishes, and that as the sole Judges in the Court (when the Bishop is not there, which is the ordinary case): indeed, I hear that, *pro formâ*, they use to get some Priest or other to pass the sentence in Court when the lay Chancellor hath determined it. But this is a mere juggling mockery: and if they were serious, it would confute themselves, who say, that a Presbyter hath not the power of excommunication: and they justify the cause of the Presbyterians who claim it (as is aforesaid)."

In the papers presented to the King, which included and recognised Archbishop Usher's model, combining Presbyterianism with Episcopacy, are these proposed provisions:—

"1. The incumbent Pastor, with the Churchwarden and Sidemen, to take notice of such as live scandalously, who are to be reprov'd: if

they cannot be reclaimed, to be presented at the next monthly synod, meantime debarred access to the Lord's table.

"2. The Suffragan to assemble every month all the Rectors of the rural deanery, and conclude all matters by their suffrage, and, particularly, excommunication of the incorrigible.

"3. Diocesan synod twice a year.

"4. Provincial synod once in three years," &c., &c.—SYLVESTER'S "Life of Baxter," book i., part ii., p. 240.

The circumstance to which Baxter alludes in the place above, will, no doubt, have its foundation in the Articles set forth, under royal authority, by a Synod of the Clergy of the province of Canterbury in London, Nov. 24th, 1584, where, on the subject of excommunication, are these directing words: "*Sententia ipsa vel per Archiepiscopum, Episcopum, Decanum, Archidiaconum, vel Præbendarium, modò sacris ordinibus et ecclesiasticâ jurisdictione præditus fuerit, in propriâ personâ pronuntiabitur, unâ cum ejusmodi frequentia et assistentia, quæ ad majorem rei auctoritatem conciliandam conducere videbitur.*" And the Article goes on to state that, as every Vicar-General, Official, or Commissary, has not taken orders, such persons shall call to, and associate with, themselves, any learned Presbyter, who has authority from the Bishop or Archdeacon, that he may announce the sentence of excommunication. The form of excommunication, too, set forth in 1571, plainly makes the authority which cuts off the dead member to be that of the Bishop.—BISHOP SPARROW'S "Canons and Constitutions," &c.

Thus, however, even in the Church of England, which is united to the State, the theory of the Queen's supremacy may bring in lay Doctors and Chancellors into the practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts, the provision above mentioned amounts to a declaration of the Scripture doctrine on the subject; besides which, in common parochial administration, where sin is not denied, or trial challenged, the Minister has authority to repel any open sinner from communicating at the Lord's table, which itself, *pro tempore*, is excommunication.—See "Communion Service."

So the University of Oxford, through one of its Professors: 'But the exercise of an authority so essentially spiritual should be committed, if possible, to those who bear spiritual functions; it becomes a mockery, when transferred from the assembled church into the world, when executed by the civil power, and conjoined with *temporal penalties*. And so, in proportion to its awfulness in its extreme form, should be the manifest guilt of the criminal, and the dangers of

impunity, the solemnities with which it is accompanied, and the caution that should be exercised, to insure the righteousness of the sentence, and remove the invidiousness inseparable from an individual exercise of such a discretion, by the association, as far as may be, of the church at large, with the judgment pronounced." [*Marginal heading*: "Not, however, that there should be no restraint on its exercise, by laical assessors or other securities, but the sentence at all events should proceed from the spiritual power."]
—GARBETT'S "Bampton Lecture," vol. ii., "Preliminary Remarks" to Lect. vii., p. 275.

Though somewhat different in application, the regulations of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America are the same in principle with our own. An accused member is brought before the Society, or a select number of the Society, to which he belongs, where the Minister of that Society is the exponent of law and Judge. If the accused member appeal from the decision, it must be to the Quarterly-Meeting Conference, composed of Preachers, Leaders, Exhorters, and Stewards, where a presiding Elder, who has the powers of a Suffragan Bishop, is exponent and Judge. Here again, if a question of law arises, it may be made the subject of appeal to the President of the Conference, who—likewise presiding Elder—is "a Bishop;" and from thence finally to the General Conference held every four years, when the exponents and Judges are the collective Episcopate. The appointment of Preachers, Elders, and important office-bearers, lies chiefly with the presiding Elders.—DR. DIXON'S "Methodism in America," pp. 214–227.

If, beside quoting Baxter, we seek for testimonies from any other learned Puritan of the seventeenth century, whose zeal against Popish principles is too well known to require proof or comment, we can hardly find a more impartial or competent witness than the Rev. David Clarkson, B.D., some time Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge. He was contemporary with Richard Baxter, and an opponent of Dean Stillingfleet on the subject of church-government. Obligated by his position to take part in the controversies of those days, he prepared himself for the task by laying in a store of erudition which, even in that age of patient and solid acquisitions, was not often equalled. Thus does he give the result of his vast historical reading on the subject before us:—

"Finally, the Presbyters are in the ancient church acknowledged to have the power of the keys, both as to the ministration of the

word and the sacraments, and the exercise of government and censures. This power they exercised either jointly, in conjunction with the Bishop and Senate of Presbyters, or distinctly, in the particular churches whereof they had the charge. The former power concerning the word and sacraments is not questioned; nor is there any ground to question the latter, if some were not swayed more by the practice of their own times, than the principles and declarations of the ancients. Chrysostom ascribes to Presbyters, not only *διδασκαλίαν*, 'the power of order,' but *προστασίαν*, 'the power of government,' giving this as the reason why the Apostle gives the same rules for the ordering both of Bishops and Presbyters: 'There is but little difference betwixt them,' says he; 'for they are ordained both to the teaching and ruling (*προστασίαν*) of the church.' Now that *προστασία* denotes 'jurisdiction,' or *præsentiam cum potestate*, 'presidency together with authority,' and is, as Hesychius renders it, *κυβέρνησις*, is plain in Chrysostom himself: he tells us, the Apostle Paul had *τῆς οἰκουμένης τὴν προστασίαν*, 'the presidency of the world,' which he elsewhere expresses by *τὴν οἰκουμένην ἅπασαν κυβερνῶν*."

"So Theodoret declares *προστασίαν*, 'jurisdiction,' to belong to every Presbyter: Against an Elder, especially, no less than two witnesses must be admitted, because, he having *ἐκκλησίας προστασίαν*, *the government of the church*, and in the exercise of it often grieving delinquents, they, being ill-affected to him, will be apt to bring false accusations.....The highest act of that external power of jurisdiction is excommunication; and if this was in the Presbyters' power of old, no other act of that power will or can in reason be denied them: but this the ancients ascribe to them.....Chrysostom threatened some of his auditory, while he was a Presbyter, to excommunicate them. To waive all of like nature insisted on by others, Justinian, in the sixth age, signifies plainly that not only Bishops but Presbyters might excommunicate offenders," &c. &c.—Works, Wycliffe Society. London, 1846, pp. 141–2.

In the endeavours of this writer to show that the ancient episcopacy was rather parochial than diocesan, we have no further concern than mainly to acquiesce in the reasonings adduced, and to observe that, in either case, so numerous were the members of the largest ancient churches, the principle of Connexionalism is affirmed; namely, that Presbyters, having separate or several charges and congregations, are directed and held to account, as well as the whole church, by a superintending Presbyter or *Bishop*.

The venerable Bengelius, one of the fathers of biblical criticism, thus speaks respecting the Lutheran Churches in his day :—

“Our Consistories and Synods are not insensible of existing evils, though they would rather not adopt coercive measures; but, in their consciences, they think those Ministers right, who desire a more strict church discipline. Whether the former ought not to have the heart to put their own hand to the work, is another question. Now, if these gentlemen wish to show that they are convened, not only according to the laws of the country, but also in the Holy Ghost, they ought to speak out at once to the civil authorities, and to say, ‘Your own assumption of the power of the keys, and your converting it to a mere temporal and jurisdictional right or prerogative of your own, is the very occasion of those abominations which prevail throughout the land, in the desecration of the Lord’s Supper, cursing and profane swearing, lewdness, &c.; and the plunder you have thus assumed, we awfully regard as resting with your responsibility, till you choose to restore to the Ministers of Christ Himself the prerogative with which He has invested them, and them only.’ Were this done in the power of the Holy Ghost, it would certainly work to some good effect. But were the question, ‘Who shall be admitted to the Lord’s Supper?’ decided, as it ought to be, *at the vestibule*, so to speak, rather than *within* the church, then would it be found necessary to begin deciding it, first, with respect to the Ministers themselves. The reason, however, why God permits so much corruption to take its course, is surely because His own authority and influence have ceased to be acknowledged amongst us, as if there were no more for Him to do. Nevertheless, He will soon come and melt down all such things into another mould, by the refiner’s fire. Far from tying up the hands of pious Ministers, they should address them thus: ‘You have now a church committed to your charge: deal with it as you expect to answer for yourself concerning it before God.’ To the churches of such Ministers, they ought likewise to say, ‘If your Pastor refuse any of you admission to the Lord’s Supper, remember you cannot demand of him what is against his conscience; but you are at liberty to apply to any Clergyman elsewhere, that may be willing to admit you.’”—BENGEIUS’S *Life and Writings*, pp. 198, 199. By DR. J. C. F. BURK. London, 1842.

WALDENSIAN.

THOSE who lay stress on the testimony of the Waldenses, will do well likewise to mark the views which their persecuted Church held

on the subject of ministerial obligation. In their most ancient document, "The Noble Lesson," written, as Mr. Faber and Mr. Elliott show, soon after the close of the eleventh century, we have this passage:—

*"Predicar devon lo poble e istar en oracion,
E paizer li sovent de divina doctrina,
E castigar li peccant, donant a lor disciplina."*

"They [the Pastors] ought to preach to the people, and be much in prayer, and often feed them with divine doctrine, and chastise the sinful, administering to them discipline."—"La Nobla Leyçon," 417. Text from Genevan MS., as it is printed in Raynouard's "*Choir des Poésies des Troubadours*," vol. ii., pp. 73–103.

CHAPTER XII.

MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATION.

“ I CAN do all things through Christ strengthening me.”—ST. PAUL.

§ I. TIMES are come upon us when, whatever may be the commandment of God upon the subject, office will no longer be respected for its own sake, but only because of the character of those who fulfil it.

In the sphere of that kind of Christianity which dispenses with the insignia of the civil ruler, and all the appliances of outward show, good men may afford to rest content that so it should be,—content that even staff and crozier, apart from wisdom and piety, should only provoke a smile.

On this subject of personal godliness on the part of the Minister, the best discourse would be a serious, searching, and faithful commentary on all the words of Christ, and all the places bearing on the subject in the apostolical writings. For such a task we have no space, even if we had gifts ; and must, therefore, content ourselves with a brief endeavour to appreciate the spirit of the whole Scripture record, as it stands in harmony with historical connexions. That regeneration and holiness must form the substratum of spiritual qualification, no one concerned in this subject will deny. Without these there is no part in Christ,—no

place in the kingdom of heaven, the mysteries of which have to be revealed unto men. In this case, too, it must be a holiness inclusive of all the graces and attainments which Christians are required to seek, in order that example may give a double weight to precept. It must be a life in Christ, and a temper and practice founded upon it, which shall be adequate to meet all the necessities of the believer's militant state; adequate to repel all temptations to sins of flesh and spirit, to fortify for the public and private reproof of iniquity, for the declaration of the whole counsel of God, and for prompt attendance on the sudden emergencies of individuals and families, especially when they are visited with sorrow and calamity; as also for grappling with the moral distractions of society, and the solemnities of death; which shall find its solace in delighting in God, and maintaining a comfortable walk with Him, in the absence of human applause, and amid the changes and chances of this mortal life. The full lustre of this ministerial piety, like that of the Sun of Righteousness, its Source and Author, is opened out in Scripture very gradually, as if ray by ray. Let us endeavour to catch a few of these as they arise.

§ II. Our Lord, in His Sermon on the Mount, first said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever *shall do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 19.) This saying, in its conclusion, points to that faithful servant who is affected by the gentlest intimations of the Divine Master's will; who is utterly free

from any disposition to search whether this or that commandment be not relaxed, or whether any sacred yoke may not possibly be intended for the shoulders of another. It represents the sanctified human nature as looking upward, in a listening attitude, for the slightest breath of a commandment; and not turning away in intellectual pride to find learned excuses for a sinister compliance, or no compliance at all, but rather longing and loving to obey. Thus Christ puts a jealous concern to do the whole will of God by the side of the opposite temper, which is Antinomianism; and adjudges the possessor and teacher of the grace in question to the highest place in the kingdom of heaven on earth,—the true Pastor's place; leaving, by a veiled phrase, the matter in doubt, whether one who trifles with Christ's least commandments,—that is, with the smallest particulars and applications of the evangelically illuminated law,—can abide in the kingdom at all. Here is CHILD-LIKE OBEDIENCE.

§ III. In Matt. viii. 19, and Luke ix. 57, we have another weighty precept: "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. And He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the

plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Now, however these words may really bear upon all Christians, the point at issue between Christ and two of his accompanying wayfarers,—and, as the first was a Scribe, perhaps all of them,—was, whether they would follow Him in the character of teaching and evangelizing disciples. The plough had to pass over the hardened soil of the world; that is, the Gospel of the kingdom had to be preached. The first man was perhaps an eager candidate for fellowship with Christ in His Gospel victories; but he knew little of the cost of toil, unrest, and strife, with which they would have to be won. The second was not indisposed to obey the Saviour's summons; yet still he entertained the idea of a prior claim: he would fain wait to close his aged father's eyes in death, and commit his body to the tomb. The third professed his willingness to serve, but under a stipulation that earthly affections should have their due meed and homage. This was a serious journey:—to our Lord Himself, for He had "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" to suffer and to die; and to the three persons appealed to, for they had listened to the momentous conditions on which alone the Gospel offer, to men and Ministers, could be availing. Christ's kingdom was now being founded by the emptying of Himself,—by the giving of His all; and the carrying on of the redeeming and sanctifying operations of this kingdom in the world, demanded that all His servants, the Ministers of His church, should be under His absolute control; not, indeed, compelled to a continual denial of all the feelings of humanity, but prepared at any special and solemn call to sacrifice them for

His sake. Such an occasion was the present ; and in His prescience He knew that similar occasions would continually occur in the progress of His church, when the claims of the Gospel would be called into conflict with all other claims whatever ; and therefore He gave forth His lessons here in a form most brief, prompt, and unqualified. He told the first, that the Son of Man had no rest on earth ; that earthly rest in His cause must not be looked for. He knew how His mystic body, like Himself, would fare in after-ages from the unfaithful, the fallen, and the ungodly ; and would never be suffered to repose till its militant was exchanged for its triumphant estate ; and therefore He cautioned the eager aspirant to consider well what following Him would involve. He required the second to put himself into such a relation with secular concerns as that in which a living man stands to the dead. He, the called one of God, must attend to the concerns of life ; death must regulate its own domain. The dead in soul, while the world remains unregenerate, are competent to attend to the dead in body, at least, so long as dead souls and dead bodies are the two classes of objects between which decision wavers. Christ's servant is no longer under the power of a former master. And the third is admonished that the innocent yearning of nature, when the question lies between a subordinate and a paramount claim, must itself give way, and be offered up to Him whose infinite and unutterable love, providing all the heights and depths of salvation to the submissive offerer and to others, demanded the sacrifice. Our Lord saw that the first man might soon be discouraged with toil ; that the second might find it too

hard to leave a sorrowing and widowed mother ; that the third might be enervated, and turned from his purpose, by the indulgence of gushes of tenderness ; and, therefore, at this time, when He Himself was keeping back nothing, but giving up all, in wisdom and love, as well as righteousness, He gave forth His unalterable law. O let me, and let every Minister of His church, read it with serious solicitude, and learn its main import, which is negatively thus : No release because of social claims, or natural affections, or popular custom ; and positively thus : DEVOTION UNTO DEATH !*

§ IV. Passing to Christ's charge to the twelve Apostles in Matt. x., we may infer additional particulars as to ministerial qualification. They are to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, that is, to IMBIBE THE SPIRIT OF THEIR MASTER : they are to refrain from anxious contrivances to obtain temporal support, and trust in His providential arrangements in the sphere of the living word, by which the workman is sustained in his heaven-appointed labour, by those who derive benefit from his labours. He enjoins them, as travellers, to utter words of peace to the households they visit ; as liable to persecution, not to provoke it unnecessarily, yet to meet it with invincible fortitude when it comes, being assured that there is nothing covered, that is, veiled by calumny and malice, affecting their character, but what shall be revealed,—

* See, on this subject, a beautiful paper, entitled, "The Three Lessons," (Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine, January, 1852,) by the REV. W. B. POPE ; which has suggested some of the above thoughts.

brought out into its beauty and light of rectitude. They are to bear an unceasing testimony for the truth ; to exercise faith in the promise of Divine aid in testifying and preaching ; to act under the constant conviction that every step and every struggle is under the omniscient oversight of Him whose they were, and whom they served. They are not to give way to impatient longings for peace here, but to remember that to sacrifice life itself in His cause, would only be to resume it with immense reward in life eternal.

§ V The parable of the Good Shepherd, as connected with the casting of the healed man out of the synagogue, likewise yields its instruction. (John x. 1-16.) Christ did not deny the right of the Jewish Pastorate to inflict excommunication, nor did He incite the people to resist its exercise ; but He rebuked the bigotry and selfishness with which, in this instance, it was administered. He denied the fitness and qualification of the Rulers for the Shepherd's office, and contrasted them with Himself, the supreme and true Shepherd, with His pity for human souls. He showed that the only DOOR of access to God's household, and to influence therein, was the doctrine of His MEDIATORSHIP,—a doctrine which they spurned ; that all who ever aimed to come otherwise, were thieves and robbers, between whom and the members of the flock there was no sympathy ; that He Himself was the Good Shepherd, giving His life even for the sheep : and we cannot fail to see that, as the hireling with whom he stands contrasted must be the false under-shepherd, so the true one must necessarily stand revealed to us in the opposite characteristics. “ He that is an hireling, and not the

shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth : and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” Then there must be spiritual relationship between the under-shepherd and the flock at large, analogous to that which subsists between them all and the Chief Shepherd. When this is the case, there will be no fleeing from threatened danger,—no mean shifts to obtain personal quiet at the hazard of the spiritual welfare of the whole fold,—no evasion of difficulties, and leaving the weak and irresolute to the ravages of the wolf of heresy and unbelief, which will not spare the flock. Paul the Apostle foresaw that grievous wolves would enter the church at Ephesus ; but neither in the case which he adduces, nor in this brought forward by our Lord, are the sheep to be left to defend themselves : the shepherd is to guard and defend them. Here is HOLY COURAGE AND CONSTANCY.

And yet, beside this, there is another feature in the parable,—that of quenchless concern and love for the souls of men. O, if there be a heart that can understand these words, “ I lay down my life for the sheep,” and, “ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd : ”—if there be a heart that can look into this ocean-depth of pity, and not loathe itself for its own faint and feeble yearning over dying men ; or if it can regard apathy on this subject as being anything else than broad and palpable sin ; then it has yet to learn the first lesson of the Gospel.

Then, while the impressions of the parable delivered in the last year of His ministry are still resting in the minds of the disciples, Christ, being raised from the dead, gave to the contrite Peter a direct charge to feed His lambs and sheep; grounding it on the well-known and thrice-obtained assurance from the Apostle as to his love for his Lord and Master. Thus, LOVE TO CHRIST is the paramount affection, without which the notion of a call to the ministry is an impious vanity.

§ VI. Again, if we turn to apostolic instruction, we find it first in the general outline of the characters of the Apostles. They walked by faith, not by sight. They did not in thought or recollection dwell so much on Christ's sacred form, the fashion of His countenance, the expression of His eye, or of His gesture, as it was when He dwelt formerly among them; they were rather occupied with that vast world of truth and love which was opened unto them by His redeeming work,—His moral glory as revealed by the Spirit to the soul, the invisible realities of spiritual fellowship with Him, the immunities of an inward kingdom which, in every heart, was the image of the kingdom which He was setting up in the world, and the glorious hope of eternal life. They were so thoroughly actuated by these, that they could afford, from the happiness and elevation of their personal Christianity, to repay, even to professors, coldness with love, bitterness with a meek reply, anger with forbearance, injustice with long-suffering; and on the world they only breathed an unutterable charity, in return for its multiform hatred and scorn. They learned their lessons at the Cross. They brought with them to their toil the shrinking sensibilities,

yea, the infirmities, of human nature,—quivered under mental and bodily pain; they keenly felt the ingratitude of some, and the apathy of others, their children in Christ; they often recoiled in feeling, not in purpose, from adverse contact with wicked and unreasonable men, trembled under the terrors of temptation, and bowed under the weight of physical and spiritual depression. They had to resist natural appetencies, and were often the subjects of anxiety in reference to final salvation. All this produced a self-distrust so complete, and a reliance on their invisible but present Lord for grace to abide in, and testify and act for, Him, so entire, that a mingled seriousness and simplicity of character, never to be described, is thrown around their actions. It is not the overawing grandeur of supernatural credentials which makes its impression upon us, so much as the straightforward repose of guileless, suffering, and insufficient men upon that fulness of grace which living faith brought within their reach. Moses, lifting his weak hands unto God, with Aaron and Hur by his side, is a sublimer object than Joshua clothed in the panoply of war. Such sublimity is that of the apostolical character, and all their pastoral and evangelistic virtues proceed from this source: and thus—while their heart is much larger with general philanthropy, and much more sensitive in throbbing to natural sympathies, than without the Christian spirit it would be—at the same time, when the law of their Lord is in question, no transgressor however exalted is spared, no community however powerful is yielded to, no danger is feared, and death itself, in its most terrible forms, is humbly and yet triumphantly braved.

With all this their precepts are in full accordance. St. Paul warns Elders to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood,—that treasure illimitable bought at such a price, and which many can ravage and rend as though it were their own, or treat as an object for their scheming ambition. He enjoins them to watch against wolves; admonishes Archippus to fulfil his ministry; Timothy to be an example of the believers in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith, purity; to read, meditate, neglect no gift, but absorb himself wholly with the Gospel care; to flee the pursuit of lucre, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; to be faithful in fight, faithful in maintaining doctrine; to endure hardness, and shun vain babblings, which tend to the increase of ungodliness. The servant of the Lord he beseeches not to strive, but to be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: he must be constant in the study of the Holy Scriptures, as the man of God, and thereby be furnished for every good word and work. And Peter, who had learned his lesson of humility so dearly, puts on record his earnest admonition, that the servants of the Chief Shepherd exercise no other authority over the flock than what their obligation to feed and guide it, and keep off the wolf, may give them; employing no secular constraint, and affecting no magisterial pomp or sway, but walking in humility, and looking for a crown of glory as their reward.

Such are some of the traces of ministerial character as registered in Holy Scripture. Here is the standard of attainment,—one of which we all, in various degrees,

alas ! fall short. None can find fault with this beauty of holiness, or say that the wants of the world are such that these qualities can be dispensed with. Christ's cause requires the aid of men who are fraught with aims and tempers, and an absorbed attention, like those specified above ; and if we have interpreted the word of God with the merest every-day honesty, the absolute absence of these qualifications is the absence equally absolute of a ministerial call.

§ VII. The wonder is, that, with all this warning, serious young men can be found who are willing to enter upon the care of souls at all. Were it not that in early youth this subject presents to us rather its exciting or spirit-stirring side,—its opening out an arena of hallowed labour,—than that of its awe and responsibility ; were it not that reason and introspection are then comparatively dormant ; or, whether dormant or not, that an inward sacred impulse, stronger than reasoning, overbears them entirely ; it could hardly be that the failing ranks of God's servants could be recruited. However gladly we may adhere to the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, and own that God will fulfil His purposes on the earth, by methods which are far above, and often opposed to, human thought ; however we confess that He may have chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, and the foolish to confound the wise ; yet always, by ordinary or extraordinary operation, He has made His real servants to stand before the world with the clearest consciences, the strongest understandings, the noblest aims, the greatest suasive power, the firmest principles, of all men. The teaching of Christ, and the day of Pentecost, made the

Galilean fishermen such ; and sanctified learning, combined with the unction of the Holy One, has furnished similar, in a lower degree, ever since.

With hirelings and worldlings we have nothing here to do. Christianity must ever have a treasure of thought and wisdom at hand, which shall be available to shame the wisdom of this world, and convict it of narrowness and folly. It must ever be in a position to impart unto human society in general some spiritual gift : else the authority of its representatives and witnesses will be lowered ; and careless men will think that the feeblest minds, and the scantiest attainments, are quite sufficient to promulgate and to exhaust all it has to say. To guard and maintain this treasure of ever-expanding truth, from which man draws his best knowledge and all his joy, must be a stated business, and an earnest one, too, of life. However a Christian laity may pursue a higher culture in all discipline and knowledge, especially that which is sacred, still the application of that knowledge, in their case, is not directly to the maintenance and extension of Christ's cause in the world, but rather to the adorning of personal character, and so mediately is made to act upon its end. Moreover, the instances of this higher culture are not so general amongst us, as to furnish sufficient ground for making permanent arrangements in reference to it ; and if they were, the necessity would be all the more urgent, that our Preachers and Pastors should be the subjects of a culture still higher ; that a laity, even intelligent as we are describing, should be able to look up to them with deference and respect, if not with gratitude, because of the light that they shed, as well as

because of the affections that they stir. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that educated and tasteful hearers alone require a well-trained and qualified Ministry. Who needs a soul so thoroughly conversant with the whole region of truth,—so alive to the importance of putting it in its various aspects,—so able to strip away from it all perplexing encumbrances,—so ready to seize on its more salient and spirit-stirring bearings,—as the Preacher to the unlearned? the unlearned, I say, who are not necessarily the torpid, the unconcerned, or the incapable. Many a soul in our ordinary congregations, devoid of learning, sits quivering with life and mental craving, and is thankful and happy in no ordinary degree to have the understanding irradiated and the conscience conquered by overwhelming simple truth, never seen to be so great and so simple before. The fine gold of pastoral knowledge is needed, if it be only to produce a scorn of the glittering leaf of base metal; for where this last is in vogue, all are paupers together. The word of God, and human experience, are at one in this matter. The parables of Christ, the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, the various charges of St. Paul, all point to a cultured Pastorate; and would it not be a palpable contradiction to say, that there was ever a great light in Christ's church who was devoid of culture? The special study of the faithful servant of Christ,—the study ever inviting, ever unfinished, ever new,—the study in which the aspiring spirit gathers strength in its progress, is that of the inspired word; that is, first, holy Scripture, as containing the positive decisions of the all-wise God, comprehending both *doctrine* and *precept*, both and

equally being unalterable *law*, not to be refined away by any philosophy, or altered by the spirit of any age, but rather bringing all philosophy and the spirit of every age to the test of its decisions, in their mutual harmony and reciprocal interpretation,—the great staple truths, by the bearing of which on the conscience men are awakened and saved. Secondly, holy Scripture, as illustrated and commented on by the momentous history of the past; nations, families, and individuals, willing and unwilling, silent and vocal, in enmity and amity, in anger and in love, furnishing their thousand echoes to the voice that speaketh from heaven. And, thirdly, holy Scripture, as intimating those vast outlines of truth, within the sphere of which the humble and sanctified soul is permitted to indulge its explorations, until the hour shall come when faith is changed to sight,—such as the mystic aspects of providence and of prophecy, the analogies of the moral universe, the glorified humanity of Christ, the innumerable company of angels, and eternal life.

§ VIII. The Christian scholar, too, in the pastoral position, will every way be a steadier and better witness for Christ; better in heart, better at watching and keeping off aggression, as well as better at feeding and ruling. The Holy Spirit will have a clearer sphere in which to pour the streams of His own grace: the removal of mental error must ever prove favourable to the work of the Spirit of truth; and, in all the hearts of those we are contemplating, who are truly regenerate, the sense of want is usually deeper, and the inward groaning after the unction of the Holy One, proportionably greater.

Large acquisitions will foster a steady faith in

Christ's remedial government, amid all the perturbations and exigences of the Christian cause. A man will build on the sure foundation which is laid in Zion : he will believe and not make haste ; that is, he will be preserved from precipitancy and discomposure, and not suffer himself to be prompted either to rash acts or guilty neglects, by fear or unbelief ; but will look through all clouds and dark appearances to the certain final issue. He will see, as the wisest once of men saw, that the things which are now are the things which have been ; that there is no heresy which now threatens the truth but it has had its ancient type ; no schism which rends the church but its promoters have had their former representatives, actuated by the same motives, working out the same drama, consigned to disappointment with the same confusion. No one who has looked at the billowy fluctuations of the Gnostic philosophy, or at the Aristotelian analysis of the Middle Ages, will wonder greatly at our modern spiritualism : none who have considered the strifes of Thebulis at Jerusalem, of Paul of Samosata at Antioch, Novatus and Felicissimus at Carthage, and the like, will be overwhelmed with amazement at perceiving some Ministers prove unfaithful, and, through disappointment of their hope of elevation, rending the church with schisms, and gathering the blood of souls in their skirts : none who have studied the history of Cyprian, Augustine, and Athanasius, will be revolted at seeing men who undauntedly maintain the truth followed by opprobrium and scorn : none who have marked how in North Africa people fell away and departed from the church by thousands, will be stumbled at an occasional loss of numbers. Those

who on the page of history have frequently seen the Christian cause go down like a darkened setting sun, and then rise again with new splendour, will not be liable to extreme depression from transient discouragements. He who dwells upon a very narrow island-rock, so as to be reached by the spray of the storm that rages around him, may be seriously apprehensive for the result, and may think that the sea will burst its ancient bounds, and spread universal ruin; but he who from a mountain-height takes in its larger expanse, and has his fear of a single billow corrected by observing over what a vast surface billows have been wont harmlessly to roll, and what counteracting influences are at work,—earth with ocean; both with the atmosphere, sun, and moon; disturbance with rest; life with death; motion with *inertia*;—will take a more just view, and repose in the wisdom of the great Artificer, who built all things. He will hail the bow of promise, as it spans the heavens, with intenser delight, chiefly because it is God's sign, but hardly less because it has been ten thousand times verified as such. Such assurance has he who has been favoured to look abroad by Christian learning into that day now partly past, which shall be “one day known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.” (Zech. xiv. 7.)

§ IX. In this subject the Wesleyan has a deep and stirring interest. Ignorance has often left a Society open to the wiles of any heresiarch or religious adventurer who was passing by: it has often left a not ungenerous-hearted youth, or senior, to become, under similar influence, instead of the valuable and

influential lay coadjutor, the pragmatistical church politician and debater, as void of modesty as of wisdom, and eventually the schismatic. And, often it has left the Pastor, too,—who, so far as its sway extended, was disqualified in heart,—to wither, and be palsied in hand, at the gibes and sarcasms of the more favoured ; and has prejudiced, to this extent, his claim to be the man of God, ready for every good word and work. This is an evil to be done away. The Wesleyan Conference may well brace itself to meet all its difficulties, if in patience and in prayer it can raise and foster from year to year a succession of intelligent and powerful Preachers of the Gospel, men of devout spirit and holy life, such as are called for by the needs of this nation and the world. With all its toils, conflicts, and discouragements, it will realise in this effort an abundant reward, an object than which in the world there is no higher.

Meanwhile there is a hum and stir universally of men setting to work all the means and instruments of conveying knowledge, whether it be of good or of evil. All come under the impulse and influence of this movement,—young parents in their homes, teachers in the Sunday-schools, children in the sanctuary. Instructors need instructing, and agents need acting upon ; and the time has come, when a Christianity victorious must carry the understanding and the heart together ; must fulfil its high purpose and promise of meeting all the wants of human nature, or else be prepared to cede to the enemy a portion of what it has won. Rome has its training-schools in every high place, and in many a corner : godless science does not want for similar institutions, wherever

scholars can be gathered : and shall not that form of religion which its adherents believe to be the purest type of Christianity, be sustained by worthy and diffusive culture, and culture that has a pastoral fountain-head ? In other words, to keep our Saviour's simile in view, Christian Ministers must either find broad rich pastures and still and refreshing waters, amid which to lead the sheep and lambs of God's fold, or else they must expect them to wander in search of a visionary common of their own, wherever ignorance, or taste, or pride, or passion may direct. "The Priest's lips," and surely the Pastor's, "should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the law at his mouth."

§ X. In recording a few words of advice and admonition to men, of whom many are wiser and better than myself, it might seem that an apology was needful ; that is, for doing an act which, at first sight, appears to savour of presumption : but he who has been bold enough to write so far with respect to the exterior relations of the Christian Ministry, can hardly shrink with consistency from this remaining task. The kindness and candour of ministerial readers are, therefore, humbly solicited in favour of the whole. The writer assumes no other office than that of remembrancer, and feels assured that none more than he needs to be quickened and excited by the memories thus awakened. In a regularly established ministerial fellowship, perhaps, there is no sin against which a more diligent guard should be set up, than against that of SELFISHNESS. It is difficult to conceive of a sin more opposed to the mind of Christ, or, which is a direct consequence, more hurtful to the cause of Christianity

in the world. But tainted and damaged as human nature is, we are prone to feed on public estimation, and to draw too large a portion of our comfort from the applause of our fellow-creatures; and often when that applause—by our brethren in the Ministry especially—is lessened or withheld, perhaps unintentionally, we are apt to deem ourselves the most injured and insulted of men. The grand relief of this malady is to adopt the same course in our ministerial life, which we do with regard to our individual salvation,—the course so vividly described in Heb. xii.: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (1–3.) Every word in this passage seems to burn and glow against ministerial selfishness.

Here is the arena where the race has to be run; here are the surrounding myriads of spectators who may give or withhold their acclamations, and all the exciting circumstances of the conflict; and here is the expectant of the prize, not indifferent to the estimation in which he may be held,—patiently pressing on, whether esteemed or not, keeping his eye averted from every sinister object, that all his energy of vision may be absorbed by the course; and thus, being fired to exertion rather by the goal

than by the crowd, he so runs as to obtain, and wins at last.

And turning from the Grecian racer to the servant of the Gospel, let us ask what is that all-engrossing object which fills his spiritual eye? *Jesus* who Himself saw a joy that was set before Him, a joy of rescuing souls from hell and raising them to heaven, who endured the cross, *καταφρονήσας*, despising the shame, and enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself. Surely there can be little comfort in looking amid the conflicts of our sphere to a self-renouncing Saviour, in order to obtain fortitude, we at the same time seeking self-aggrandisement: in such a case it is looking to be startled, to be appalled, to be confounded. And if we use the Antinomian argument, that Christ's self-denial is to stand in the stead of our own, we turn the profound lesson of the Apostle into drivelling absurdity. To what end, then, is fortitude to be sought? or how is faith to be finished?

Amongst us, some brethren may draw attention to themselves by the peculiarity and rarity of their gifts, leading off that attention in the same proportion from others whose gifts are less rare, though, tried by the Gospel standard, not less valuable. The eminent brother is in danger of thinking the homage rendered to him too scanty; the one who is passed by, of kindling at the slight. One accomplishes some really hard task, and it is not acknowledged and appreciated; another sends aloft some brilliant thing to excite and illumine, while thousands clap their hands for a moment in ecstasy, and then forget. The first mourns as though his labour were lost; the second is disgusted that the

reward which belongs to labour does not fall to his share : and thus, in various ways, this master evil, this epitome of all sin, finds entrance into our soul. The object of adoration is no longer the crucified Christ, but our own restless and self-excruciated nature, which, in "its blind idolatry," makes its own dearest affections to pass through the fire. When this is the case, that is, when the shrine of our self is slighted, the countenance falls, and everything around grows dark ; every brother's gesture is deemed a sneer, every whisper an innuendo, every word an insult, every act an oppression, every combined transaction a plot ; and amid these looming evils the soul of the selfish rages till the Holy Spirit is gone ; and then, unless he struggle into penitence, and obtain a renewed life, he must, Saul-like, proudly fall into despair and die. Alas ! if Christ, His favour, presence, and peace, are not enough for us, what is our estimate of the whole work of Christianity ? Because we are not elevated by office, or dignified by titles, or sought after by multitudes, or placed amid great central communities, are we to deem that our very existence is down-trodden, that our Bible-class lessons, our sermons, our admonitions in private, our spiritual counsels in private fellowship, our walk before men, and our groanings in the closet, are all unmeaning nullities, and working out nothing for eternity ? O shame on such walking by sight and not by faith, if walking it may be called ! Shame rather on such grovelling under a spirit of infirmity, which, in the highest and holiest work on earth, can only look down and see nothing but "man that shall die, and the son of man which shall be made as grass ; and forgets the Lord

our Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens ;” (Isai. li. 12 ;) and forgets as well the greatness of the sanctified issues of what are called “little things !” Is all lost because the breath of praise does not float around us, or because we are not the impellent force of some *visible* movement ? The greatest movements are invisible ; the greatest men are the humblest.

That individuals united with others in close fellowship should sometimes have their merits overlooked and unrewarded, is a condition from which no earthly society can be exempt : it results from human infirmity, and is made subsidiary to a great scheme of moral trial. How else could appeal be made to Him, as the most just Judge ? He alone can render absolutely and without mistake to every man according as his work shall be.

Moreover, the possibility of suffering occasional neglect is the inconvenience and trial to which every one in a community must submit, who would share in the advantages of communion. A soldier who would win in battle must be content to put forth many earnest struggles, without being greatly concerned at the time whether they are appreciated or not, if he would share in the liberty, comfort, and prosperity which are realised by the victory : and so a servant of Christ must be content to fight the good fight of faith, from an assurance that if he shall get no chaplet here, yet “the Lord the *righteous* Judge shall give him a crown of life in that day ;” and that his share in the conquest over the world and sin shall be as broad and rich as that of any who have obtained the conqueror’s lot. As the warrior might gain a momentary notoriety, not fame, by leaving the ranks,

and coruscating as a lone skirmisher, until overswept by the enemy; so the selfish Minister who, weary of blending his efforts with those of others as far as to merge their distinctive splendour, breaks away from his brethren to signalise his sense of offended worth, runs into a waste of wild and pointless warfare, where worth and gifts and graces go for little or nothing against such compact and miscellaneous hostility. As there is often seen a false humility manifesting itself in a plastic yielding to the opinions of others, which leads its possessor to sin against conscience and truth; so there is an opposite evil, quite as perilous to the interests both of truth and goodness,—the parade of mental independency, the loud manifesto of restless minds. There was not a more noble and unfettered human soul in existence than was that of the Apostle who exhorted and said, “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” A low Christianity says unto men, “You may all think as you like:” a true Christianity says, “Strive after oneness of judgment; be at pains by mutual giving way a little to get at the same point; just as you strive to get near God.”

§ XI. Of what priceless value among fellow-labourers in the Gospel is holy and mutual love, the charity so vividly depicted by the man just named, who exemplified it,—the Apostle Paul! It is not to be gained by sitting down, with grammar and lexicon, to sift the text and construction of the inimitably beautiful thirteenth chapter of the Second Epistle

to the Corinthians, any more than the process of analysing medicine will heal a disordered constitution. Love is of God; and its infusion into the heart tends more directly to the production of righteousness between brother and brother, in word, look, and work, between the Pastors and the flock, and between all and the Head, than all the canons and constitutions that were ever published. And if, as the Apostle John intimates, there is a connexion of preparation between perfect love and boldness in the day of judgment,—the day when eternal righteousness shall run like fire through all the dark and veiled things of past ages, reducing them to its own standard, when “the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble,”—shall not that very love, in proportion as it now draws toward perfection, impel every person and principle it has to do with in the way of righteousness, working light in the understanding, tenderness in the conscience, rectitude in the will, and harmony in all relations? Christ’s charge to the Angel of the church of Laodicea is founded on the fact, that this watchman and overseer had lost for the time the glow of his charity; and in losing this he lost all his distinction and value as a Christian. He lost his bond of attachment to those around him in the church, while his position there made him an alien from the world. The other results were,—he had become an object of loathing to HIM who is ESSENTIAL LOVE: he was blind and deluded as to his own condition, thinking himself rich, but being poor even to nakedness and destitution. O that all who are verging towards this state, would seek for and accept the remedy offered by Infinite Mercy,

lest their disease should, by personal influence and contagion, be transferred to ten thousand others! *It* is “gold,”—the gold of the truth in which *love* rejoices,—tried in the fire of affliction and persecution and heresy, and yet to be tried in the fire of the last day. Having this, we are made rich, and capable of communion and interchange of spiritual wealth with all raised and royal souls. It is “white raiment,”—the robe of the pardoned, which images the removal of guilt and the remission of punishment; that grace which fosters the distaste of seeking out the defilement of others, while he who has it is all the more startled and distressed when such defilement appears: not by any means forgetting the “eye-salve,” or the Holy Spirit’s unction and grace, to make the very perceptions clear, and cause the subject of it to see all things as God sees them.

What is a Christian Pastor’s lot in this world, supposing him to have his charity lowered down to its least possible degree, but that of being forced to move amid an endless series of disagreements and repulsions? A lamp without a light, a blaze without heat, a link with no attachment to the chain, a sound without music, a loadstone which never draws, are but faint images of this fearful contrariety and defection. It is not negation merely, it is positive evil; for who would say that lamps gone out, or lurid flames amid a flood of radiance, a chaos of Babel dissonance drowning heavenly harmonies, a weight of shattered links hindering the movements of the chain, and repelling masses perturbing the attraction of the magnet, are not evils? None like ourselves are made to feel by position, or by study,

and by communicating with others, the need of holy love ; but such are the devices of the great adversary, that none have temptations to suspend or weaken its exercise, or to starve it down, more numerous and formidable. I may be hooted and pelted by the wicked, hissed by the ignorant, condemned by the bigoted and proud, and robbed by the dishonest, and yet be rich after all, if permitted to live in the joys and sorrows of those for whom Christ died, who, like me, have been forgiven, on whom He has impressed His image, and who seek the things above ; and especially to be united in fellow-feeling with those who have entered into the deeper fellowship of His sufferings, by being made under-shepherds of His flock. Before all such there is a spiritual kingdom opening, of vast immunities, in sympathy, hope, and joy ; inasmuch that those who enter can afford to look with pity upon people who rage without, as much excluded by their own will from this domain of contrite souls, as evil angels are shut out of heaven by the sentence of the Almighty.

The thief and robber of my soul is that which takes from me the gold tried in the fire, or the white garment which is washed in the blood of the Lamb, and with it my love of soul-whiteness ; and he is the jailer and oppressor of my soul, who cuts off, by his ambition, by his slander, by his blood-guiltiness, my living and loving fellowship with human beings who could once think, pray, rejoice, grieve, and work with me ; who by their strength made me feel that I was strong, who by their company assured me that I was not alone. He it is who hinders me from going abroad to breathe the mingled influences of a

longing earth and a willing Heaven, and pens up my diminished being in a corner of defence, where I must draw my curtain and shut my door.

Why did Christ send forth his disciples by two and two, but that their mutual graces might seem to merge into each other, and that each might be saved from the sin and curse of selfishness? And why did the Apostles ordain Elders rather than a single Elder in every church, but that they might keep that ideal of their Lord before their mind? Paul and Barnabas were both adored by the people of Lystra, and both of them rent their clothes and exclaimed against the wickedness. Men united in the same toil, having the same passions, subject to the same Lord, and anticipating the same rest, can, as far as they are spiritual, have no varying—much less, contrary—interests. If they revolve around each other like double orbs, they will mutually keep their course around their common Sun. O holy love, whither art thou fled? Thou who art the Author and Fountain of holy love, show by the depth of Thy fathomless ocean that there is yet stream enough for our poor river!

Let me record one word concerning another grace, and I have done; and that is—patience. If times arrive when former adherents drop off, when friends become few and enemies many, when the love of many waxes cold, when discouragements are multiplied and much profession is merely formal, still the cause of Christianity is not lost. Vain man in the domain of the church has too much the spirit of the merchant in his trade. If gain does not immediately roll in proportionately to the capital embarked, he

must change his speculations, and re-adjust his commercial theories. Here all is different; for the great Proprietor is above. His course is settled, His final kingdom and possession secure. We are employed in using His gifts, but under an administration and arrangement far too vast and complicated for us even to conceive of: therefore our immediate concern is to be faithful to the truth, to hold it, live by it, and promulgate it, till the end shall come. Or, regarding ours as field-toil, "we shall reap, if we faint not:" the danger, therefore, of fainting is to be guarded against. This involves patience with the slow learner, with the headstrong and ignorant recusant,—who may perhaps be recovered by kindness,—with prejudice, and even with passion itself, for a season; and patience with the slow but all-wise movements of Providence, in "the times and seasons which the Father hath reserved in His own power." Elijah at Mount Horeb, and James and John in Samaria, gave at one time examples of the contrary: they were all reproved, though in the end they were all assured and comforted. The words of Christ to the Angel of the church at Philadelphia are, doubtless, addressed to us and all fainting brethren in the work of the Ministry in times of trial: "BECAUSE THOU HAST KEPT THE WORDS OF MY PATIENCE, I ALSO WILL KEEP THEE FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION, WHICH SHALL COME UPON ALL THE WORLD, TO TRY THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY: HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN." (Rev. iii. 10, 11.)

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