

THE
VALIDITY OF
PRESBYTERIAN ORDINATION,

ASSERTED IN A LETTER

TO THE AUTHOR OF A PAMPHLET,

~
ENTITLED

“ PRESBYTERIAN ORDINATION
DOUBTFUL.”

—
“ To the law and to the testimony.”—*Holy Writ.*

 NEW-HAVEN :

PRINTED BY A. H. MALTBY & CO. CHAPEL-STREET.
1819.

ADVERTISEMENT

IT will doubtless be recollected that within a year and a half past, a doctrinal Tract, under the title of "Plain Reasons for relying on Presbyterian Ordination," has been printed and extensively circulated. This, as might have been expected, drew from an Episcopal clergyman in this state, a reply, entitled "Presbyterian ordination doubtful, in two parts." The first relating to scriptural testimony, the second to historical. The former only has been noticed in the subsequent pages, as it would be impossible to exhibit in a publication like the present, any thing like a just view of the testimony of the Fathers. The reader therefore, who wishes to see this part of the subject managed with ability, is referred to Dr. Chauncey's "Complete View of Episcopacy," and to Dr. Miller's "Letters on the Constitution and order of the Christian Ministry.

After all, however, we cannot forbear to express our decided opinion, that the question in controversy, is one which the scriptures alone ought to decide; for we firmly believe, with the 6th Article of the Episcopal church, that "Holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith."

THE VALIDITY, &c.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE perused with no small degree of attention your "Reply to Plain Reasons for relying on Presbyterian ordination," and would remark, that whatever may be its merits in your own judgment, or in that of your friends, in my humble opinion it falls very far short of accomplishing the object intended. I not only remain unconvinced by it, that "Presbyterian ordination is doubtful," but on the contrary, every step I take in the investigation of the subject, convinces me more and more of the weakness of your cause and of the Apostolic character of the Presbyterian church. I have deemed an apology unnecessary, for addressing you on this subject, as you have repeatedly intimated a willingness to attend to any evidence which might be thought to favor the Presbyterian cause. Having made these remarks, I shall proceed to examine without further preface, the most material parts of your reply.

The principal points which you have endeavored to establish, are the following :

I. That there were three orders of Clergy instituted in the Apostolic Church, by divine authority.

II. That the Apostles were constituted Diocesan Bishops by the last commission.

III. That the superiority of this order was designed to be perpetual throughout all ages of the Church.

The second proposition is the most important, and forms, (if I mistake not) the hinge of the controversy, so that if this point can be once settled, the dispute must of course terminate.

Let us inquire then in the first place, whether the Apostles were constituted diocesan Bishops by the last and highest commission of their Lord? If they were, the controversy is at an end, and the Presbyterian cause is hopeless; but on the other hand, if they were not constituted to this office, then plainly they never sustained this character, for, the commission was given

in the last words which our Lord spake upon earth. (See Matt. 28th chap. 17—20 and Mark 16th chap. 14—20) —And to whatever office or authority the Apostles were constituted by it, that office or authority must of necessity remain the highest to the end of time. This proposition, if true, completely demolishes the scheme of those who acknowledge that Christ did not institute the order of diocesan Bishops; but maintain that it was afterwards instituted by the Apostles. Indeed, this scheme is inconsistent with itself; for how can an inferior order authorize a superior; or in other words, how can one man convey authority to another, which he himself does not possess? Suppose that ten Presbyters in the Episcopal Church should proceed to ordain one of the same grade to the office of Bishop, would any Episcopalian in his senses believe that this ordination really constituted him a Bishop? Certainly not. The Apostles then, unless they were constituted diocesan Bishops by Christ himself, never did institute this office, for this obvious reason, they had no authority to do it.

It is, (if I mistake not,) universally agreed by parties in this controversy, that the Apostles sustained a two-fold character, viz. ordinary and extraordinary; one by virtue of their commission, the other on account of the unsettled state of the Church and of the incompleteness of the sacred Canon.* The extraordinary character of the Apostles is agreed on all hands, ceased with their lives; of course it matters nothing to us in what it consisted, their ordinary character or office, was alone transmitted to successors and designed to be retained in the Church throughout all generations, and whether this was the same with that of a modern diocesan Bishop, is the question now before us: let us compare them and see? The Apostolic commission we have in the following words: "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, go ye and teach all nations baptising them in the name of the Father 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." (Matt. 28 chap. 18. 19 and 20 verses.) Now where is the warrant to exercise supreme authority over a diocese of ministers and people, to consecrate churches, or to administer the rite of confirmation, is it to be found in the commission? It certainly is, if the Apostles were constituted diocesan Bishops by it; for you will not deny that those powers according to your principles, belong exclusively to them; in fact, they constitute among you the very superiority which you attach to this order. But does the commission authorize the holders of it, to exercise these powers which you say belong to Bishops? Sir you have not in direct terms asserted it, nor do I believe you will, for it will require

* I know it is said that Mark and Luke who were not Apostles, were concerned in the completion of the Scriptures; but there is sufficient evidence that these Evangelists wrote, the one with the approbation of Peter, the other of Paul. (See Scott's preface to Mark and Luke.)

no ordinary share of ingenuity to make it appear. "That this commission embraces the highest and fullest ecclesiastical power that has been, is, or can be possessed by any of the ministers of Christ, all Protestants allow." And it is a remarkable fact, that preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments and ordination, comprises the whole authority: every church officer then, by whatever name he may be called, who performs these duties, belongs to the highest order of clergy. But Presbyterian ministers perform them, therefore clearly, Presbyterian ministers are the highest officers in the church, by divine right. To this conclusion Sir, I feel myself driven, after having examined the Apostolic commission, and the arguments on both sides of this controversy, with all the candour I possess.—Indeed, Dr. Bowden, who has long been considered a champion of Episcopacy, inadvertently comes to the same conclusion.

Speaking of the commission, he says, "the church of Christ, cannot exist without it; accordingly you (Presbyterians) ascribe to the Presbyters the whole authority implied in this commission, we ascribe but a part to Presbyters, and the whole to Bishops. This (he adds) is the turning point; and when this shall be once settled the controversy must come to an end."* Let us meet then on this point, if the dispute can be so easily settled; and now if Presbyterians ascribe the whole authority of the commission to their Presbyters, how are they chargeable with a want of the highest order of ministers? Besides, if Episcopalians ascribe the same authority and nothing more to their Bishops, (which Dr. B. says is the fact) I beg to know wherein consists the difference between Presbyterian ministers, and diocesan Bishops? Again, among Episcopalians, the Bishops are the highest order; among Presbyterians, the pastors of single congregations are the highest, and if both derive their authority from the same commission, how can they differ in grade? In fact Sir, the Dr. has completely conceded the whole point in dispute, by deciding that Presbyterian ministers and diocesan Bishops stand as to grade on a perfect level. Is the Dr. or his friends willing to end the dispute thus? At any rate, it is (to me at least) a plain case, that preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments and ordination, was all the authority, (certainly the highest) with which our Lord invested his Apostles by the commission; and every one knows that this is done by Presbyterian ministers. Therefore they are the highest order of clergy. "It is remarkable that in this commission, dispensing the word of life, and administering sacraments, are held forth as the most prominent, important, and solemn duties of Christian ministers. The power of ordaining others is not mentioned at all; and we only infer that it is included because the commission recognizes the continuance of the office and duties of ministers to the end of the world. Must we not infer then, that all who have a right to preach and baptize, have a right of course to ordain? Does it

comport with the spirit of this commission to represent the former functions which are mentioned with so much distinctness and solemnity, as pertaining to the lowest order in the church ; and the latter which is only included by inference as reserved for a higher order? Those who are confessed to have the most important and distinguished powers conveyed by a commission, must be considered as possessing the whole. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." (Miller 31.)

I am aware that Dr. Bowden has written several volumes in reply to Dr. Miller ; but in no case does he more clearly betray the weakness of his cause, than when attempting to answer the reasoning of his opponent on the Apostolic commission. The very point on which his arguments should be sound, and which he should be able to fortify with scripture proof clear and unequivocal, he is evidently baffled and obscure. Let any one examine the controversy between these gentlemen, with impartiality and candour, and they will, I think, be convinced of the correctness of these remarks.

You have filled the last 12 or 14 pages of your Book with remarks on the Apostolic commission ; many of which appear to me to be foreign to the point : we readily grant that this commission was given immediately to the eleven only, your antagonist never denied it, and all your reasoning on this point, is, I think, wholly irrelevant. It matters nothing at all, whether the eleven only, or others with them, were concerned in the commission. This is not the question. But what was the authority conveyed ? The answer to this question must forever settle the point between us. Now Sir, (as has already been observed) if the diocesan Bishop's peculiar office is distinctly recognisable in it, we must surrender our cause at once ; but is this the fact? If it be, it surely can be easily evinced ; at any rate, you are challenged to do it.

You say that you " perfectly agree (with your antagonist) that all those have authority to ordain, to whom the commission was designed to extend. Is there (you ask) any evidence that it was designed to extend to any other than the eleven and their successors?" To this question Sir, I freely answer no, there is none, and what then ? Has this any thing to do with the question before us ? Who are the successors of the Apostles ? Plainly those who perform the whole duty of the Apostolic commission. But we have before proved that this duty consists in preaching the gospel, administering sacraments and ordination. And are these the peculiar, or in other words, the highest functions of a diocesan Bishop ? Every body knows they are not. This officer then, cannot in his superior character, be a true and only successor of the Apostles ; because their commission (which is the only one that was transmitted to successors) knows nothing at all about the superior powers which make up the character of a diocesan Bishop. All the authority, as has been clearly shown, which the commission re-

cognizes, is precisely that which Presbyterian ministers exercise and nothing more. These then are the true successors of the Apostles, and it is because diocesan Bishops possess this authority; that we (viewing them in this character, i. e. of Presbyters) consider them vested with proper authority. I know that Episcopalians strenuously contend, that their Bishops are the only successors of the Apostles; but I also know that they have never yet been able to prove it. In order to be successors of the Apostles, their peculiar business must be the same as theirs—but what sort of a diocesan Bishop would that man be, who was authorised not to rule a diocese, not to administer the rite of confirmation, not to exercise supreme power in the church, but only to preach the gospel, administer sacraments and ordain? Whatever might be his title, he would not be a whit above Presbyterian ministers.

But sir, let us view the subject in another point of light. If Bishops, as you maintain, are an order of clergy superior to all other ministers, then the duties which pertain to them exclusively, must be of course the most dignified and important. But are you ready to say, that ruling a diocese, administering confirmation and ordination are higher and more important duties than dispensing the word of eternal life and the seals of the everlasting covenant? What, the word and sacraments inferior to mere rites and ceremonies? Surely, no protestant will admit this; besides, where is your proof, what passage of holy writ will you summon to your aid? Can you point me to one? I am fully persuaded you cannot. “Preaching and administering the sacraments then are the highest acts of ministerial authority: they are far above ordination and government, as the end is more excellent than the means; as the substance is more important than the form: and if presbyters be authorized, as all agree, to perform these functions, it follows that they are the highest order of gospel ministers; those who are empowered to execute the most dignified and the most useful duties pertaining to the ministerial office, can have no superiors in that office.”* To this may be added the opinion of bishop Burnett. “Since (says he) I look upon the sacramental actions as the highest of sacred performances, I cannot but acknowledge those who are empowered for them, must be of the highest office in the church.”†

Having thus clearly ascertained the authority conveyed in the commission, let us inquire in the next place, what was considered by the Apostles as the highest and most important duties which they had to perform.

St. Paul, who was “not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles,” evidently considered the preaching of the gospel and extending the kingdom of the Redeemer, as the most important of all duties. “Christ (says he) sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:” Again, “I determined not to know any

* Miller, v. 1st p. 43. † Vindication of the Church of Scotland, p. 236.

thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Not a word here about supreme authority over other ministers; or the least hint given that he considered ruling a diocese to be superior to preaching the gospel; nay, the contrary is clearly intimated from the whole strain of his writings, and even baptism compared with this was of little importance; and comparatively speaking, he was not sent to baptize. Indeed, let any one look into the lives of the Apostles, as delineated in the Acts and their epistles, and persuade himself if he can, that they acted in the capacity of diocesan Bishops; and that this was the great business of their lives. Where was the diocese of Paul, of Peter, of Matthew, or of John? To intimate as you have done, (p. 30) that they were diocesan Bishops, without being placed over particular dioceses, is a plain contradiction; for how can a Bishop rule over a diocese to which he sustains no relation? Do you say he exercises the supreme power in the church? But what is this supreme power? Is it authority over other ministers, who preach and administer the sacraments? Then I demand his warrant (for the Apostolic commission, from which he pretends to derive his authority, gives none,) or is it the supreme power of preaching, administering sacraments and ordination? But our ministers possess this power, by virtue, as we have seen of the Apostolic commission. Indeed, the Apostles were constituted by the commission, precisely to the same office which our ministers now hold; and if this does not establish their identity of order, I know not what can. Then unless you can prove that the Apostles sustained a fixed relation to particular dioceses, and this not in consequence of an extraordinary, but of an ordinary power, you can never show that they possessed any higher authority than Presbyterian ministers do at the present day. You seem to be aware that there were no dioceses formed very early in the church; this you have acknowledged, as did Bishop Hoadly before you, in regard to Timothy and Titus; and this acknowledgment in my view, amounts to a surrender of the whole argument.

The truth is, that the Apostles acting in the capacity of itinerant Missionaries or Evangelists, "went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.) This was the business to which they were appointed by their Lord, and to which they devoted their lives.

There is one circumstance on which you seem to place great reliance, i. e. the mention which the scriptures make of Apostles in distinction from all other ministers. You say, (to the author of Plain Reasons) "the position which you have taken, is that the eleven were commissioned as Presbyters, the position which I shall take is that they were commissioned as Apostles." Again, "Those who received this commission, were constituted Apostles by this solemn act of their Master." But what is this to the point? There is nothing in the mere name.

Apostle, which proves him to be superior to a Presbyter, and the eleven might have been termed either Apostles or Presbyters, without at all effecting their real character or grade. The question is not, by what name or names were they called, but with what powers were they invested? And whether they were commissioned or constituted Apostles or Presbyters, or Prophets or Evangelists, one thing is certain, viz. they were commissioned and empowered to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, and ordain; but nothing more. It is really amusing to see you labour as you have done, to prove that the use of different names furnishes no clear evidence for either side; and afterwards to see you rest your most valuable argument on the bare word Apostle.

The author of Plain Reasons had argued the identity of the ministerial office, from the fact, that a single commission was given to a single order of ministers. This fact you admit, but contend that "it was given to them (the Apostles) to authorize as many inferior grades, as they being inspired men, should think proper." This you have asserted, without noticing at all the very forcible reasoning of your antagonist on this point, (page 8.) Besides, "Where is the evidence of this pretended division of powers? When was it made? By whom? In what manner was it done? The commission itself gives no hint of such a division. No subsequent passage of scripture suggests any thing of the kind. Nothing that so much as seems to warrant such a supposition, is to be found in all the book of God." On the contrary, it "virtually forbids such distinctions; and while it specifies no division of powers, it is addressed to all the ministers of Christ." Your assertion then was made without proof, and "rests entirely on your bare declaration." But admitting that there is sufficient evidence for the supposed division of powers, even then sir, you will gain nothing; for it has been proved, that the highest authority which Christ gave to the Apostles, was to preach, administer the sacraments and ordain. This comprised the whole power of the commission; and even allowing that it was afterwards divided among different orders of ministers, affects not the subject at all, so long as the whole authority was retained.

As to your subterfuge respecting deacons, I would observe that it is entirely foreign to the point. Deacons, properly speaking, are not an order of clergy at all, any more than ruling elders or vestrymen; and how any man with the bible in his hands can call them such, is to me truly surprising. The sole reason of the appointment of deacons was because some of "the widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." This is abundantly evinced by the history of their institution in the 6th chap. of the Acts, 1—6. I know it is said that Philip, who was one of the number, is mentioned as preaching and baptising. But this single fact is sufficient proof (for me at least) that he sustained an higher office than that of deacon. Indeed, he is

expressly styled an Evangelist, the leading and essential duty of which is preaching the gospel.

Another thing which in your own view, affords great help to your cause, and on which you seem to rely with the utmost confidence, is, that Christ "sent out other seventy also." But it is perfectly clear to my mind, that the seventy were in no sense at all, officers of the christian church. It is certain, as every one who reads his bible must know, that the christian church was not organized until long after the seventy were "sent out;" and how they could have been officers in a community which had no existence, is to me wholly inexplicable. Indeed, Dr. Bowden, (if I understand him) views the subject in the same point of light. He says, (writing to Miller) "I will not enter into any dispute with you concerning the nature of the commission given to the seventy disciples before our Saviour's crucifixion. Every thing on that point is involved in much uncertainty; and to assert what cannot be proved, is no mark of a judicious controvertist. Granting every thing that some Episcopalians have contended for, still it remains true, that the church of Christ in its explicit permanent form, was not established till after our Lord's resurrection."*. But admitting them to have been ordinary officers, and that their office was designed to be perpetual, still the argument is good for nothing, for it has been abundantly proved that the highest office in the church is to preach and administer the sacraments; and whether the seventy sustained this office or not, effects not the point at all. You say, "they were not authorised to ordain." Then their office was not the same with that of our ministers, for they have this power.

You also place considerable reliance on the following passage of scripture: "God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily, Prophets, thirdly, Teachers." On this passage you observe, that, "by Apostles, is to be understood the first, by Prophets the second, and by teachers, the third grade in the ministry." But sir, where did you learn this? You have given us no proof at all for this assertion; "it rests then entirely on your bare declaration." Besides, you seem to have forgotten another text of a similar construction: I will therefore quote it for you; "and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting the saints, &c.† Now sir, according to your system of interpretation, we have in this text a warrant for four grades instead of three. Here is a difficulty; how will you escape from it? Will you say that some of them were extraordinary officers, and that these four names do not necessarily imply as many orders of ministers? Very true, but the moment you take this ground, you surrender your argument; for if you say that the last text furnishes no warrant for four orders, then I have the

same right to say, that the first one furnishes none for three. The truth is, that just before the ascension of our Lord, he commissioned one order of ministers, which were to be continued to the end of the world. This commission was one and the same, and all the authority which was conveyed in it, was to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments and ordain ; and notwithstanding the different titles of Apostle, Evangelist, Bishop, Presbyter, Elder, Prophet, Pastor and Teacher is often used, this implies no diversity of rank ; and they might still have been on a perfect equality. I also take for granted, that when your antagonist spake of Apostles, as distinguished from Presbyters, he referred not to their ordinary, but to their extraordinary character. This is clear from the fact, that he appealed to the Apostolic commission to prove, that no higher officer was constituted by that commission, than a Presbyter ; and sir, if you had noticed this distinction, you would probably have spared yourself the trouble of pronouncing a particular assertion of his, " an imprudent one."

In another case, you have attempted to show, that the statements of your antagonist were grossly inconsistent and absurd ; and as such, to load them with contempt and ridicule. " When, (says Dr. Miller) a man does not comprehend the subject, which he attempts to ridicule, he is extremely apt to draw on himself, the laughter which he thought to turn against others." Whether this is your situation or not, as respects the case under consideration, I shall not attempt to decide ; the reader can do it for himself, after examining both sides. Is it possible that you have yet to learn, that while we allow of several classes of church officers, we admit of but one order of ministers ? Elders and deacons, we consider as two classes of church officers ; yet elders alone are an order of ministers, they only being constituted to the ministerial office ; while deacons have nothing at all to do with this office, and of course are not an order of ministers. This, I think, is sufficient to prove, that it may be proper to say, that " the bible is entirely silent as to the qualifications for more than one order of ministers ;" while at the same time we maintain that " the qualifications which elders and deacons are to possess, are distinctly and repeatedly detailed."

I confess I am utterly at a loss to understand you, when you assert that " Presbyterian deacons act without an ordination," unless you suppose that the validity of an ordination depends upon the mere form of imposing hands. That this form is scriptural and highly proper, I do not deny ; but I certainly should never dream of questioning the authority of a deacon, or even of a minister, provided he was regularly inducted into office, even without this ceremony (which every one knows, is the case with our deacons generally, though in some instances they are ordained by the imposition of hands.) Are you prepared to assert that the governor of the state has no authority, because hands were not imposed at his election ? We see then how in-

file this objection is, which is so often, and so confidently urged against our deacons.

We have now to examine what I suppose you consider an argument, which is founded on these words of Paul to Timothy : " I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine," &c. " Here, (you say) St. Paul, in the words of inspiration, besought Timothy, as it was proper for one Apostle to beseech another." And this you consider as proof that Timothy was a diocesan Bishop. But recollect that Peter, in his first epistle, uses almost exactly the same phraseology, towards an order of ministers whom you constantly represent as inferior in grade to him. " The elders, (says he) who are among you I exhort," (or beseech, for the words are synonymous) " feed the flock of God," &c. But if the fact that Paul besought Timothy, proves that Timothy was equal to Paul, then the fact that Peter exhorted the elders, proves as clearly that the elders were equal to Peter. But will you admit this ? I know you will not, for you say, (page 7) " the Apostle is as different from an elder, as an elder is from a deacon." Your whole argument then drawn from " these words of inspiration," falls to the ground. Indeed, it has always appeared wonderful to me, that men of sense should pretend to found an argument on these two words : " I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus," " Who (says the learned Daille a French protestant divine) who without the help of some extraordinary passion, could ever have made so charming and so rare a discovery, and imagine that to beseech a man to stay in a city, means to establish him bishop of that city ; arch-bishop of the province, and primate of all the country ? In very deed the cause of these gentlemen of the hierarchy must be reduced to an evil plight, since they are constrained to resort to such pitiful proofs." But you say, " he did not beseech him to beseech some, but to charge them," &c. Here again you forget that Paul says to Timothy, (2d Epis. iv. 1.) " I charge thee," &c. But if Timothy's charging the elders, proves him to be superior to them, then Paul's charging Timothy proves him superior to Timothy ; and of course we have four orders instead of three. Now sir, how will you escape these consequences ? " Do you not perceive, that every step of your reasoning on this subject is embarrassed with difficulties ?" What can be plainer than that Paul makes no more distinction between Timothy and the elders, than he does between himself and Timothy ? " I charge thee (says he) preach the word, be instant in season, out of season," &c. Again, speaking to Timothy, " charge some that they teach no other doctrine." &c. Further, Paul besought Timothy, and Peter exhorted the elders. Can any thing be more evident, than that nothing can be gained from these expressions favorable to your cause ? But it seems that Paul says further to Timothy, " against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses," and " them that sin

rebuke before all ;” and does not this imply superiority ? Answer. Is it impossible for one minister to receive an accusation against another, unless he be of a superior grade ? Are not Presbyterian ministers, sometimes accused before their brethren of the same grade, met in synod or association, and does this imply a superiority in the members ? Certainly not ; besides you contend that Paul and Timothy were of the same grade. Yet if Timothy had been guilty of any thing worthy of rebuke, would Paul have hesitated a moment to rebuke him ? We know that he actually did rebuke Peter pretty sharply for his misconduct ; this we have in Galatians ii. 11. in these words : “ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” Again, verse 14, “ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly,” &c. “ I said to Peter before them all, if thou being a Jew liveth after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews ; why compellest thou the Gentiles, to live as do the Jews ?” Now sir, are you ready to say that this rebuke of Paul implied superiority ? If not, then how can the rebuke of Timothy imply superiority ? Another of your proofs for the superiority of Timothy, is that he was directed to ordain. Your argument, if it amounts to any thing is this, viz : Timothy was directed to ordain, therefore he was a diocesan Bishop. Now in the name of common sense, I beg to know what connection there is between the premises and the conclusion ? What if a man is directed to ordain, does that constitute him a diocesan Bishop ? Really to propose such a question, is little short of an insult to the understanding of the reader. But you ask, “ did the Apostle Paul, when he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, give them any directions concerning the government of elders, or the laying on of their hands ?” No sir, he did not, and what then ? Did he any where charge them to be in subjection to their Bishop ? Besides, when “ he sent from Miletus and called the elders of the church,” where was the Bishop that he was neither sent for, or even mentioned by name ? And when the Apostle informed the elders “ that they should never see his face more, and that dissensions and difficulties were about to arise among them, why did he not exhort them to cleave to their Bishop, and submit to him as the best means of unity and peace ? And supposing their Bishop to have been dead and the office vacant, why did not the Apostle when about to take leave of a flock so much endeared to him, select a Bishop for them, ordain him with his own hands, and commit the church to his care ? But not a word of all this appears. No hint is given of the existence of such a superior. On the contrary, the Apostle declares to these elders, that the Holy Ghost had made them Bishops over the church at Ephesus ; he exhorts them to rule that church ; and when about to depart never to see them more, he leaves them in possession of this high trust.”*

I will only add, that if the silence which the Apostle observed towards these elders, concerning ordination is proof that they did not possess the power; then the silence respecting their Bishop, proves as clearly that such an order did not exist. You have also endeavoured to show, that the word Presbytery, as applied to the ordainers of Timothy, denotes not an assemblage of Presbyters, but of Apostles. But if I have proved (as I flatter myself I have) that the Apostolic commission conveys no higher authority than what Presbyterian ministers possess; it amounts to the same thing whether applied to Apostles or Presbyters; but if on the other hand, the commission instituted the order of diocesan Bishops, then surely no reasoning founded upon the ordination of Timothy, can disprove the fact. You observe (page 30) that "much labour has been bestowed to prove that Timothy and Titus were not diocesan Bishops limited to particular districts;" but if I understand you in what immediately follows; this labour is wholly unnecessary, for you say "I know of no Episcopalian who pretends that in the first promulgation of the gospel, the Apostles, or, as their successors were called Bishops, were located in particular districts as matters of course." Now what is this but explicitly acknowledging that the order of diocesan Bishops did not exist in the first promulgation of the gospel?" Do you object to this? But why? An essential characteristic of a diocesan Bishop is to rule a diocese; but this could not be done if there were none in existence. But you say, "a man sent with authority to send others, held the first grade in the ministry, whether located in a particular district, or travelling about organizing and establishing churches." To this Sir, I cordially subscribe; this was the whole business (in their ordinary capacity) of the Apostles, and it is precisely the business of presbyterian ministers, whether settled or travelling in the capacity of missionaries; and if this is the highest grade among you, our controversy has been altogether in vain. "Every Apostle (you say) exercised his apostleship, when, and where he could." To this I also agree; and it has been shown, I trust conclusively, that the Apostleship, consisted, in preaching the gospel, administering sacraments and ordination. You observe further that "Paul was the same for two years in his own hired house, as in journeyings and perils. And now if we can ascertain what he was, in the former situation, we shall according to your decision settle his whole character—the 28th chapter of Acts, 30th and 31st verses, will give us the desired information. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." I would just ask if this is the peculiar business of a diocesan Bishop, or was the Apostle continually performing the duties of an inferior grade? You have introduced (page 15 to 19) some very singular remarks, on the transaction at Antioch, (see Acts 13')

which, it may not be improper to notice. The Author of "Plain Reasons" asserted, that the Prophets and teachers at Antioch, were directed to ordain Paul and Barnabas." This you entirely deny, but admit that "directions were undoubtedly given by the Holy Ghost, but to what persons? is a question." Really Sir, you are the first writer that I ever met with, who made it a question, and I think the honour of the discovery is truly yours. But let us see if this question cannot be settled. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain Prophets and teachers, as Barnabas and Simeon, Lucius and Manaen and Saul; as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Now is not this a plain passage? Is it not clear that the directions were given to the same persons who fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them, and sent them away? And is it not also clear that these persons were the Prophets and teachers named above? If not, then no dependence is to be placed in language. Indeed Sir, your embarrassment on this subject, must, I think be so apparent, as to render a formal refutation unnecessary. But not content with attempting to make a plain case appear obscure, you have endeavoured to turn the whole affair into ridicule. You say according to the arguments of your opponent, "there were in the church at Antioch, a number of Presbyterian ministers, among whom were Barnabas and Saul; and the Holy Ghost directed some of them to make Barnabas and Saul Presbyterian ministers, i. e. to make Presbyterian ministers of Presbyterian ministers." Well Sir, you cannot be ignorant that licensed preachers among us are styled Presbyterian ministers, as well as those who are ordained and settled. To illustrate the idea, take the "parallel case," with which you have furnished us. 'suppose D.F.S.M. and 'T. so many Presbyterian ministers, assembled together at New-Haven.' The first three are ordained and settled in different places; the others are only licensed preachers; yet they are all styled Presbyterian ministers. Suppose also that while together here, they are requested to ordain M. and 'T. ministers of New-Haven, or, if you please, to perform a missionary tour. They fast, and pray, and lay their hands on them; now where is the "sad dilemma," or "farcical exhibition" of this transaction? Would any one doubt that this was an ordination? No less singular are your remarks on the right hand of fellowship given to Paul and Barnabas, by James, Cephas and John; and which you would persuade us was their real ordination. You say that '(dexas,) the right hand, is often used to express an honourable promotion; and that (koinonias,) fellowship, may denote official as well as sacramental communion.' Now granting this to be perfectly correct, to what does it amount? why simply to this, and nothing more, viz. the right hand of fellowship may mean in this case an honourable promotion. and

official communion," or, in other words, an ordination. But this is no proof that it actually does mean an ordination; and for aught that appears to the contrary, I have quite as much reason to deny, as you have to assert it. It is amusing to see how an argument will sometimes grow under proper culture, from a perhaps to a probability, and a certainty. We have an example of this kind in your reasoning on this subject page 19: You begin with simply saying that the right hand of fellowship "may" denote an ordination; but before you finish the page, this may be, has become a positive fact, stated in the following decisive language: "The phrase *dexias koinonias*, (right hand of fellowship) denotes an ordination, and in this place an ordination to the Apostolic office." Now what can be more "fanciful" than this? The whole point in dispute is taken for granted, and the vast fabric of diocesan Episcopacy, rises before our astonished sight; having for its basis, these two little words, "right hand of fellowship." Who doubts that "the foundation thereof standeth sure?" A few words more on this subject, and I have done.

The transaction at Antioch, "must mean something or nothing;" that it means nothing, you will not assert, and that it was an ordination you strenuously deny; but call it what you please, either an ordination or any thing else; still it remains true that it was a solemn separation to the work to which "the Holy Ghost had called them." This cannot be controverted, for they are the words of the inspired writer; and that this work consisted in preaching the gospel, and "ordaining elders in every church," is fully evinced by the context compared with the 14th chapter; and now if a separation to such a work is not substantially an ordination, I confess myself ignorant of the meaning of the word. Indeed Sir, I must be allowed to express my full conviction that if these prophets and teachers had only been termed Apostles by the sacred writer, there never would have been a word of controversy on the subject,

In page 27 you have introduced the church of Philippi as governed by a diocesan Bishop. For proof of this we are referred "as usual" to Paul's epistle to that church, 2d chapter 25 verse, "yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, but your messenger." On this text you observe, that "Epaphroditus the Apostle (i. e. diocesan Bishop) of the church of Philippi, having Presbyters and deacons under his government, had been to visit Paul and had been sick, and now returned to his charge at Philippi." Truly Sir, "this is too much for me, I must lay down my pen and breathe a little." Pray Sir, who informed you that Epaphroditus was the diocesan of Philippi? The text which we have quoted says nothing like it; neither is there a single passage in the epistle to the Philippians, or any where else, which in the least favours the supposition. Indeed, all your dependence seems to be placed on the bare word "messenger." And it is really wonderful that after

having repeatedly and explicitly declared that no dependance is to be placed in names ; you should build the whole Bishopric of Philippi on this single word, which to say the most that can be said in your favour, is far from being clear. What the Apostle meant by this expression we may gather from the 18th verse of the 4th chapter in these words, “ but I have (says he) all and abound ; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleassng to God.” Here we see in what sense Epaphroditus was called a “ messenger ;” and little did Paul dream, that this word would be considered in after times as favouring the cause of diocesan Episcopacy. I will dismiss this point, with requesting the candid reader to examine the whole of the epistle to the Phillippians, and then say whether he can honestly think there is the least reason to believe that Epaphroditus was the diocesan Bishop of Phillippi ?

In page 28th, you have introduced the 1st and 2d verses of the 6th of Hebrews in support of your practice of confirmation. The apostle in these verses enumerates the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, as repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, &c. You observe that “ the laying on of hands is the same that is termed confirmation and like the other principles mentioned by the Apostle, general in its nature and of universal obligation.” But Sir, who told you so ? These texts, speak no such language ; and really I do think that of all the writers whom I have ever read, you have assumed the most, and proved the least, in the same limits. But you ask “ what more consistently can be understood by the expression than the almost universal practice of confirmation ?” I answer the quite, universal practice of ordination, may be as consistently understood by it, and this is amply sufficient to destroy all your proof from this passage in favour of confirmation. I think Sir, that in a number of instances you have greatly mistaken and consequently misrepresented the real sentiments of your antagonist. To prove this, let two or three examples suffice. He had said (speaking of the extraordinary character of the apostles) among other things, “ and under the guidance of inspiration to organize churches.” In remarking on these words, you leave out entirely the first clause, “ under the guidance of inspiration,” and represent him as maintaining that “ the capacity of organizing churches was extraordinary.” Now what can be more unfair ! This is not the sentiment conveyed in the passage, which is abundantly evinced from a bare inspection of it. You also represent him as maintaining that the power of ordination was extraordinary ; but where has he done this ? I have not found it in his book ; on the contrary, I have found (page 28) a positive assertion that he considered it an ordinary power. “ From all this (says he,) it undeniably follows that even the Apostles had no authority to ordain except

as it was vested in them, in the character of ordinary ministers."

You have introduced in a note at the bottom of page 4, some remarks on forms of prayer; but for what reason I cannot conceive for certainly your antagonist never questioned the lawfulness of forms, all that his quotations went to prove was, that in the days of Justin martyr, the President of the assembly offered prayers "according to his ability, and therefore not out of a book."

One thing more demands our attention before we conclude. You have acknowledged repeatedly that the terms Bishop and Presbyter were used in the Apostles days, to denote one and the same office; and Ireneus, (a father of the second century) in the quotation which you have given us says, "we can reckon those Bishops who have been constituted by the Apostles and their successors, all the way to our time." Again, "obey those Presbyters in the church, who have the succession as we have shown from the Apostles; who with the succession of the Episcopate, received the gift of truth," &c. Again, "true knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles, according to the succession of Bishops, to whom they delivered the church in every place." Again, "We ought therefore to adhere to those Presbyters, who keep the Apostles doctrine, and together with the Presbyterial succession, do shew forth sound speech, such Presbyters the church nourishes, and of such the prophet says, 'I will give them princes in peace and bishops in righteousness.'" Now sir, we both agree that Bishop and Presbyter were used in the Apostles days, as convertible titles for the same office; and it is plain from the above extracts, that Ireneus, who lived until the beginning of the third century, not only used them in the same manner, but also declared that "the church was delivered unto them in every place;" and that they received "the succession of the Episcopate;" which certainly implies that they were the highest officers in the church in his days. Indeed, the coincidence of these extracts with the address of Paul to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, is remarkable, and consistent only with the doctrine of Presbyterians.

I have now sir, completed my examination of your first pamphlet, and can truly say, that it has been my constant aim to represent the subject in a fair and correct point of light. How far I have succeeded in this respect, I shall leave for the impartial reader to decide. I agree with you sir, that the subject is one of great practical importance; for if it be true that Presbyterian ministers are usurpers of the sacred office, and that all their ministrations are (of consequence) null, and of no real benefit, then it is surely a question of the deepest interest, to all who attend on their ministrations. Should you feel disposed for a farther discussion of this question, we shall certainly not be re-

* Vide Miller's Letters, vol. 1st, p. 159-1.

luctant to meet your wishes if it can be done with candor and fairness. We are perfectly willing to meet you on your strongest ground. This we think we have done. With what success, our readers must judge for themselves.

With sentiments of esteem and christian affection, I subscribe
myself yours, Z. Y.