

THE  
COVENANTER.

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MARCH, 1849.

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TERMS OF ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

(BY REV. J. B. JOHNSTON.)

Certain questions have recently been raised from a phrase or two found in our "Terms of Communion," and in the "Formula of Queries" put to all officers in the church at their ordination. These phrases have become familiar and endeared to all Covenanters from their long-established and sanctioned use in connexion with the administration of sealing ordinances. These phrases are, "*as received by the Church of Scotland,*" and, "*For substance.*" It is presumed no child is ever baptized, but the parents are bound to the Westminster formularies "as they were received by the church of Scotland;" and that the Lord's supper is always dispensed on the ground of the same publicly expressed terms. In this the Reformed Presbyterian Church prides herself, as being thereby distinguished from all other branches of the Presbyterian family, who, without exception, bind to these symbols of faith as received (and modified) by their respective churches in these United States.

We talk—our church has talked and written much of the period between 1638 and 1649—of acts of assemblies passed betwixt those years, and of the compilations of doctrine and order adopted during the same memorable period of the church's glorious covenanted attainments. We should know what we mean.

It is asked, Does the phrase "*as received by the Church of Scotland,*" refer *us now*, in our sacramental vows, to the *acts* of the Church of Scotland *adopting* each part of the Westminster creed, as the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Form of Church Government and Directory for Worship?—Or, does it refer to the *practice*, since 1649, of the present covenanted churches in Scotland, Ireland, and America? From the fact that this question is made *now* to have practical bearing, it assumes a grave aspect, and is worthy of grave consideration. In looking at it, it appears strange that such could arise among Covenanters—because, *first*, they have told the world, in their Testimony, p. 76, that "the protestant churches have, since the middle of the seventeenth century, been declining in purity." Strange, indeed, that the sons of Knox, Melville, Henderson, Cargill, Cameron, Renwick, M'Millan, Thorburn—should take a declining period and declining practice for the standard rule of the interpretation of their creed! A rule ever varying with the varying fashions and changes of a changing age! A rule which will ever make it impossible that the church can know how her creed binds her, till she establish a practice; whether that be under

the influence of reformation—of holding fast attainments, or of declining from them, it alters not the case: enactments in ecclesiastical legislation committed to the enduring page of her authentic records—oaths sworn again and again, to the contrary notwithstanding. *Second*, We identify ourselves with the Church of Scotland, as she stood in her organization, Confession of Faith, covenant obligations and acts of assemblies, between those years, and no otherwise. This is *the* distinctive feature—the “distinctive principle” of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. And farther—that identity cannot be preserved but on the continued occupancy of the ground occupied by the Church of Scotland, settled and bounded by the acts adopting the Westminster formularies. Are not the following, denominational truisms with every Covenanter?—That he is bound to the Confession of Faith as the Church of Scotland was?—That the Church of Scotland having *formally* adopted the Confession, our church has never made any other *formal* adoption of it?—That in all the subsequent legislation of the covenanted church, she has said on this subject only, “as received by the Church of Scotland?”—That in all this she sends us to the deed of the church by which she first made the Westminster Confession her own? In short, that *we are the* Reformed Presbyterian Covenanted Church of Scotland, which swore the Solemn League, and adopted the Westminster formularies between 1643 and 1648? These distinguish us as a church, from all other Presbyterians in America. And whenever we recede from them we are ready for a union with “Protestant Reformed Churches.”

Will the reader follow us patiently while we endeavour to trace the landmarks defining the boundaries of our covenanted inheritance—while we trace the line of our sworn obligations to “all the attainments of the Reformation?” Perhaps, before setting out, we may gain a little by settling a small incidental matter, namely, the *object or objects* of the Church of Scotland in her co-operation with the Assembly at Westminster, which resulted in the production and adoption of the time-honoured documents under consideration. These objects will embrace the following:—1. The preservation, unimpaired, of her own reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, as then (1643) established. 2. The reformation of the Church of England. 3. A union with the Church of England on the basis of the Solemn League and Covenant, when she should become reformed according to the best model, which was, confessedly, the Church of Scotland. The evidence will appear in the following:—

“We—for the preservation of our religion—with our hands lifted up to the Most High God, do swear, 1. That we shall sincerely, really and *constantly*, through the grace of God, endeavour, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government—the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches; and shall endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms, to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion.”\*

Two days after, the Assembly passed the following:—

“The General Assembly—to the effect underwritten; therefore gives full power—to propose, &c.—in all matters which may farther the *union* of this island in one Form of Kirk-government,” &c.†

\* Solemn League and Covenant, passed and sworn by the General Assembly, Aug. 17, 1643.

† Conf., p. 17, edit. of 1838.

The object, in the incipient state of this great enterprise, is distinctly stated—the “preservation” of the doctrine, and discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland. No intimation of “*receding* from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one,” which would have been *defection*, not a *reformation*.\* “On the contrary, our reformers,” to use the language of the Scottish Testimony, p. 138, “in *all* the different renovations of the covenants, included *all that was formerly attained* to, binding themselves in strict adherence to all the articles *priorly* in the oath.” To guard against any, even the least, declining from the position attained, they secure the stakes by giving them all the stability to be derived from the oath of God—they swore the Solemn League before conventional co-operation with England. And let it be well remembered, in that oath they bind themselves to all, and every part of the attainments of the reformation, and to yield or alter nothing. They thought of no change; but to the *very opposite* did they covenant with God and one another. With this cord upon their souls, their commissioners were sent down to London to treat of “union,” and labour for “covenanted uniformity.” Can any intelligent man mistake the spirit and design of the Solemn League and Covenant? If so, let him only refer to the fact, that when the Church of Scotland found the least item in the Form of Government differing from the government sworn to in the Covenant, she would not adopt it. The Westminster document asserts the power of the Doctor in the administration of the sacraments. The standards of the church sworn to, denied the power. She, *consequently*, would not adopt †—for, pursuant to the oath of her Covenant, she had said, one week before the adoption of the Westminster formularies,—

“Provided, that this shall be no prejudice to the order and practice of this Kirk, in such particulars as are appointed by the Books of Discipline.”—Conf. p. 523.

Thus showing, that she kept steadily before her *the object* of her League, in the adoption of every part of the Westminster Confession—the “preservation” of her *then* established doctrine, discipline and government.

What does the phrase “as received by the Church of Scotland,” mean? In 1645, Feb. 3, Sess. 10, in the adoption of the Directory for Public Worship, the first part of the Westminster platform adopted, it meant, “that this shall be no prejudice to the order and practice of this Kirk.” In Feb. 10, 1645, Sess. 16, in the adoption of the “Form,” it meant, that “The General Assembly being most desirous and solicitous not only of the establishment and preservation of the Form of Kirk government in this kingdom according to the word of God, Books of Discipline, acts of General Assembly and National Covenant, but also of a uniformity,” &c. To what form of government “in *that* kingdom,” did she bind herself “*according* to the word of God, Books of Discipline,” &c., “without prejudice” to either? And in *so* binding herself to that “Form,” did she *mean* the *repeal* of the reforming acts of General Assemblies—the *repeal* of her National Covenant—the *repeal* of her Book of Discipline, or the *repeal* of (!) the word of God? These are all in the same category. Or did she mean the repeal of the Book of Discipline only, by adopting the “Form of Government” in its place? If she meant so, she really expressed that meaning most

\* Ref. Prin., 129—130.

† Nor is this the only instance. See especially chap. 23 and 31, Conf.

strangely, in the first article of her oath in the Solemn League and Covenant, and in her adopting Acts. Were her adopting Acts and her Solemn League written in cypher, not to be decyphered till under the blaze of the nineteenth century?

August 27, 1647, eighteen months after the adoption of the "Form," the Assembly, in adopting the Confession, was careful to maintain the position occupied in 1643. See adopting Act, p. 20.

"And the said Confession being, upon due examination thereof, found by the Assembly to be—in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk,"

Now, we ask, Why refer at all here to the *discipline* and *government* of the Kirk, as in former adopting acts, if the second Book of Discipline was exchanged for the "Directory and Form," in 1645? Why, if they do not mean the same thing, do they use still the same adopting language used in reference to the "Discipline and Government" sworn to in the Solemn League, in 1643? *But they do* refer in *all* the adopting acts to the *same* "Discipline and Government" referred to in the Solemn League; and *did* in Aug. 27, 1647, renew their solemn pledge to the *very* "doctrine, worship, discipline and government," in the League and Covenant made before the existence of any of the Westminster documents.

By passing on some ten months to the time of adopting the Larger Catechism, we find the church still careful to secure her attainments, and to throw around herself and *posterity*, another cord binding to the discipline and government sworn to, and in so many forms recognised as her *constitutional* law. In her adopting Act, July 2, 1648, she said,

"That the said Catechism—is in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk—and therefore the Assembly—so approve."

Can we conceive why the Assembly gave *agreement* with one document the *formal reason* of adopting another, if the *former* is *thereby* to be *repealed*, and no longer to be received and reputed as a public and binding standard equally with the latter? Such seems not to be the usual way of repealing old law. A new enactment made expressly in accordance with long-established law—law *constitutional*, long sanctioned by uniform practice, *a repeal!* *This*, in the age of the Solemn League and Alex. Henderson, is unaccountable! Hear this Assembly once more on the subject of *repeal*. Twenty-six days after, on the 28th July, 1648, adopting the Shorter Catechism, they say,—

"The Assembly do find the said Catechism *in nothing contrary* to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk: and therefore approve."

In these five adopting Acts, and in the Solemn League, we see how the Church of Scotland received the Westminster standards. *So we receive them*. As applied to these can the following be a sound view of the covenant obligations of the Reformed Church, professing, in her terms of communion, to receive them "*as they were received by the Church of Scotland?*"

"By the adoption of them, all others were virtually relinquished—by constituting them the law of the house, all others were virtually repealed. And this act of repeal is sufficient. All that was so relinquished ceased to have any place in the acknowledged and distinctive testimony of the church—all that was so repealed ceased to have any farther, even if it had before, the obligation of law.—They want, and as long as they occupy the place in which they have been left, they must continue to want, official and legal obligation and authority. The documents named in the terms

of ecclesiastical communion, are the legitimate records to which appeal can be made—the others can never; for such ends they are unknown, as though they had never existed.”

We rather think that, so long as this *index* (F) “as they were received by the Church of Scotland,” meets the eye of the traveller where *two ways* meet, it will call to mind, and direct in the plain old way, to things known, and among things that *are*.

Neither in 1638 to 1649, nor when adopting the Scottish Testimony—the American Testimony—Terms of Communion, was the design to revise or repeal the code of laws in the Covenanted Church, nor to annul her old constitution and frame a new one. Our church never was a revolution church—a secession church—a schism or a receding church, unless in practice and in her individual members. And it is of her public profession *only*, as on the face of her adopted standards, we are speaking. Thus far the truth is irresistible. It is not—That, “by the adoption of the Westminster forms all others were formally relinquished,—by constituting them the law of the house, all others were virtually repealed.” *It is not*—That “They were to be esteemed thereafter works of reference or examination, for individual or social improvement.” But the truth *is*, That by the Solemn League and adopting Acts of the Church of Scotland, she has placed in “official and legal obligation and authority,” her Discipline *next* to the Bible, and *before* the subsequently adopted “Form.”\* Indeed, the truth is, the Church of Scotland never designed to repudiate her discipline in receiving the Westminster “Form,” or to give it an inferior place; but *next* to the Bible, to make it the *rule ruling* the more recent document. Such is, unequivocally, the plain, common-sense acceptance of her adopting language throughout. Men could never have said otherwise, but to frame a plea for their unbelief of the government and *discipline* of the Covenanted Church of Scotland, as sworn to and practised between 1638 and 1649: judging from the Book of Discipline, her Covenants, her Acts of Assemblies, and authentic history of those times.

[To be continued.]

### Foreign Correspondence.

#### Loanhead—Rullion Green—Roslin Chapel, &c.

Rullion Green is that part of the Pentland Hills where the Covenanters, under Col. Wallace, were defeated, November 28th, 1666, by the royal army, under Gen. Dalziel. It lies south-west of Edinburgh, distant, by the most direct route, about seven miles. I went by Loanhead, a village five miles south of Edinburgh, that I might form the acquaintance, and enjoy the society and guidance of Rev. Mr. Anderson, pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of that place and vicinity.

I left Edinburgh, Sept. 20th, taking, not the direct road, by omnibus, which passes, as I afterwards found, through a very beautiful, and mostly level district, but the more circuitous one, by railway, to Dalkeith—nine miles south-east of the metropolis, and then, by omnibus, to Loanhead, across the elevated ground in the neighbourhood of the Esk, and through Lasswade, a thriving little town upon the banks of that river; I had thus an opportunity of seeing a portion of one of the

\* See Act adopting “Form of Government.” Conf., p. 561.

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APRIL, 1849.

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## TERMS OF ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

(BY REV. J. B. JOHNSTON.)

(Continued from p. 229.)

Whether the present *form* of "finishing the testimony of the witnesses," is the *happiest* we here say not. We refer to the fact that the churches in Scotland and Ireland have a common Testimony, while the American church has a separate one; as also, to the present contemplated form of renewing the Covenants separately. Why not one common Confession, Testimony, Terms of Communion, and common bond for the renovation of the Covenants? Perhaps we have to reap the fruits of an error in the end, when "the power of the holy people shall be scattered." Of one thing, however, we are sure in this connexion—we can appeal to the Scottish Testimony for something more than "reference or examination, for individual or social improvement." Else, how dispose of the pledge solemnly given by every officer of the Reformed Church in North America, in affirming to the following:—"*Do you approve of the Testimony of the Reformed Covenanted Church in Britain?*" Can it be that all our ministers, elders and deacons are bound to approve what the whole church may *disapprove*? In how ludicrous a position before the Christian world does such an admission place a church, above all others, prominent for her "pride of consistency." We feel otherwise of *our* vows, and of the *Testimony* to which we have vowed approbation. A few quotations from it will show that Covenanters pledged to it, whether in Britain or America, are bound to the Westminster standards, "as they were received by the Church of Scotland," in her adopting Acts, between 1638 and 1649. As also, in being *so* bound to them, they are bound to the Discipline sworn to (1643) in the Solemn League. In testifying against the Revolution Settlement of 1688, (p. 57, edit. 1832,) we read, "Because it was a settlement which, instead of homologating and reviving the covenant reformation between 1638 and 1650," &c. Again, p. 59, "They read, voted and approved of the Confession of Faith without ever referring to, or regarding the Act of General Assembly, 1647, *whereby that Confession was formally made ours.*" Again, p. 66, in making charge of Erastianism,—"*That as the Revolution Parliament, when ratifying the Confession of Faith, entirely left out the Act of Assembly, 1647, approving and partly explaining the same, namely, as being inconsistent with the Erastian impositions of the magistrate.*" Now if the revolution church is Erastian *because* she receives the Confession *not* "as received by the Church of Scotland," in 1647, are we free from the

charge if we receive it otherwise than "*as partly explained,*" in the Act adopting, 1647? If we recede from the adoption of the period under consideration, and read and take the Confession as it is—how long till we shall feel, like the "Conventions of Reformed Churches," *need of alteration to free from the charge of Erastianism?* In testifying against Seceders, p. 138,—“On the contrary, our reformers, in all the different renovations of the Covenants, not only included all that was formerly attained to, binding themselves in strict adherence to all the articles *priorly* in the oath.” From this, the first article in the oath of the Solemn League binds to the discipline, &c., sworn to in 1643. In the doctrinal part of the Testimony, we find the following, pp. 162, 163, “They likewise affirm and declare, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath therein (his church) warranted, instituted and appointed certain office-bearers, who derive their mission and authority from him alone, according to Acts vi. 6, 1 Tim. iii. 10, Form of Government;—Books of Discipline;” “and farther, they assert the church’s intrinsic power, derived from Christ, to assemble, constitute and adjourn these several courts—Second Book of Discipline.” This *intrinsic power* of church courts is not stated in the Westminster Form of Government. Hence Covenanters quote and hold to the Second Book of Discipline, as Scotland’s charter against Erastianism. “And they farther assert, that ministers of the gospel and *all other church officers* must enter into the exercise of their office, at the door of Christ’s appointment, by the call and choice of the Christian people—Acts vi. 2—6; Books of Discipline,” &c. Now, the right of “choice of the Christian people” not being found in the Westminster Form, hence it could not be quoted in the same category with Acts vi. 2—6, nor even at all. But, next to the Bible, the Discipline is quoted for the proof of precious rights of “the Christian people.” Finally, from this Testimony, p. 174, “The Presbytery hereby testify and declare their approbation of, and adherence to, all the different steps of reformation that ever, in any period, were attained unto in this church—particularly, the Westminster Confession of Faith, *as* it was approved by the Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, anno 1647; and the Books of Discipline, as agreeable to, and extracted from, the sacred oracles.” Enough to settle the question in relation to the meaning of the phrase “as received by the Church of Scotland.” The recently coined American meaning has so much alloy that it may be condemned as counterfeit. Sure, its currency would have been impossible in the days of the Informatory Vindication and of the Society Folk.

But we are Americans. Our initiation and our views of our relation to transatlantic standards may be favourable to the currency of more liberal views. Let us hear ourselves on the subject—American Tes., p. 64, “The Church of Scotland, between the years 1638 and 1649, appeared at the very zenith of the reformation.” Speaking of the Solemn League and Covenant sworn to, 1643, p. 76, “This Covenant binds these nations to the preservation of the worship, discipline and government of the Church of Scotland.” What discipline? We suppose that which then (1643) existed. Does that League, binding those nations, (Scotland, &c.) bind us Covenanters in America?—and to the same Discipline—the Discipline of 1643? But that was the Second Book. So we say in our American Testimony, when we speak of the zenith period of the Covenanted Church. But we have spoken, too, of

a different period, p. 76, "The protestant churches have, since the middle of the seventeenth century, been declining in purity." Finally, we testify, "That the church may not recede from a more clear and particular testimony, to a more general and evasive one." P. 129.

These references will aid in fixing certain first principles, for recurrence, in arriving at sound conclusions. To decline from the zenith of the reformation, and from reformation purity, is pronounced an error, and witnessed against. Even to model a creed so as to be more general and evasive, is condemned. But the Second Book of Discipline is neither general nor evasive—it is clear, particular, and pointed—too much so for some. Compared with it, in these features, the "Form," said to be its *successor* in reformation, is by no means its equal. If it—the Form—be a substitute; and if its adoption be the repeal of its honoured predecessor, then it was, if our Testimony be true, ushered into the world under the ban of proscription—it is condemned already—condemned as "*loose, general, evasive.*" There is no evading this conclusion; unless the Testimony be untrue, or the "Form" be *not* the repeal of the Discipline.

In confirmation of the position now taken, we offer a few considerations, which will, at the same time, aid in settling the meaning of the other phrase in the terms of communion, referred to in the outset—"*For substance.*" This phrase means, that the Westminster Form of Church Government is a mere abstract—not detail; but at first designed for a basis of union between "reformed churches"—Scotland and England. The Discipline sworn to in 1643 contains detail—hence the propriety of the provision in the oath—"constantly endeavour the *preservation* of the Discipline." Any abstract or general principle subsequently introduced, under peculiar circumstances, could not annul the oath, or repeal the specific provisions of the Discipline. And when the circumstances did occur—the consideration of the Form as a basis of union upon general principles—its adoption settles the question. "Being in nothing contrary to the Discipline—being according to the Discipline—*therefore* approved." The adopting Acts are final. The Form is an *abstract*—occupying its own place, it never took the place of any other. This is the meaning of the phrase in our Terms. A few facts, of many, will suffice for sound Presbyterian Covenanters.

1. The Westminster Form fails to assert in "clear, pointed, and particular" language, the right of the people to elect their pastors. The Second Book of Discipline asserts this right to be divine. We even read, somewhere, of "a very important affair reckoned among the interests of a congregation—the calling of a minister." We read, too, in the same connexion, a question propounded, as of very grave import, to this effect, "Whether the officers of a congregation or the people are to transact this *affair*?" Now, as to the settlement of this difficulty, regarding deep interests and high privileges, there is little in the Westminster Form to aid in settling it favourably to the people's claims. This is all we find there, "No man is to be ordained a minister for a particular congregation, if they of that congregation can show just cause of exception against him." Now how much in all this to correct the claims of patronage—or of the officers of a congregation—or of the presbytery, in settling a minister?—reserving to the people the one privilege only, of objecting against the intrusion, *if they can prove* the candidate destitute of the qualifications required, 1 Tim. iii. 2, and Titus i. 7, quoted in the Form.

2. The Form makes no statement at all in reference to the right of the people to elect their ruling elders. The Discipline is clear and pointed.

3. Not one word in the Form about the right of the people to elect their deacons. The Discipline says, chap. viii., "Deacons ought to be *elect*ed, as the rest of the spiritual officers, of which election was spoken before." Though we have more in the Form concerning the deacon than the elder, yet some argue from the language of the "Form," that the deacon may not be in congregations at all. Remarkable, too, that the argument is drawn from a clause that refers to elders equally with deacons—yea, and ministers, also. "The number of each of which (*officers*) is to be proportioned according to the condition of the congregation." Now if from this clause it can be argued, that it is not the duty of each "*particular* congregation" to have deacons, *more* can it be argued that they are not in duty bound to have elders. I say *more*, for more is said of having deacons than of having elders. The deacons' office is said to be "*distinct*" and "*perpetual*." But of the elder *only*, he is instituted—beside the minister of the word, "and commissioned to execute government *when* called thereunto." If the people do not choose to *call* the elder to rule, *how* shall we argue their obligation to *call* from the Form?—*how*, in relation to those who argue from the Form against their duty to *call* the deacon? We know not *how*, if confined to the record—to the Form.

But, seriously, is it really true, in relation to the electing of *all* the officers of a congregation that, "Covenanters being bound by this document, as so received, have never claimed any more power than that which is therein assigned them?" That is—is the Form received *as* "defining and settling" the rights of the people and powers of their officers?—Have the people ever submitted to the *defining* and the *restrictions*? No! They never submitted to the "*repeal*" of the "*clear*, and *pointed*, and *particular*" Discipline of the Church of Scotland, which secured for ever their elective franchise rights; and in the place thereof submitted to abstractions and restrictions of a "*loose*, and *general*, and *evasive*" Form, having, and professing to have, no more than "*the substance*."

4. The Form fails to state what constitutes the lawful call either of minister, elder or deacon—elder and deacon, especially. This is clearly stated in the Discipline. How shall the omission of so important a branch of church government be accounted for? Only upon the *non-repeal* principle, and the principle of the Testimony, "no receding from *plain* to *evasive* things."

5. There is no distinct statement of the qualifications for the different offices in the church. Not so of the Discipline, chap. iii.

6. Nothing is said in the Form about the ordination of elders or deacons. The Discipline is plain and pointed. States *how* and by *whom*. Then is it so that, in the Covenanted Presbyterian Church, since the adoption of the Form, in 1645, the ordination of elders and deacons is repealed—*virtually*? Or, since the adoption of the American Testimony, ordination of elders and deacons is "*virtually relinquished*," at least so far as the Form goes? The old law is, "The ceremonies of ordination and fasting, earnest prayer and the imposition of hands of the eldership."

7. The "Form" leaves the *duties* and *extent* of the *power* of the

ruling elder entirely unsettled. Read the "Form," and then ask—What means this extreme *leanness* on the head of the elder? Is this the whole form, law and doctrine of presbyterianism on this important subject? Is this now, or was it ever, since 1645, the whole faith and testimony of the church on the ruling elder? Is it true, as we have read somewhere, of the adopting of the "Form" by the General Assembly, that "a very valuable *attainment was made*. For they, seeing that the officers of the church had been formerly lording it over the people—are careful to confine *every* officer within the proper limits of his office, and by that means, secure to the people the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges conferred upon them by the church's glorious Head." Now, really, by this *confining* repeal, the elder is confined to narrow powers. Let us see what has been taken from him, as shown in the Second Book of Discipline, repealed! (1.) It says, "Their office is ordinary;" (2.) "so it is perpetual," (3.) "and always necessary in the Kirk of God." (4.) "The eldership is a spiritual function." (5.) "Elders once lawfully called—may not leave it again." (6.) "Their office is—to watch diligently over the flock publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein." (7.) "Elders should be careful in seeking after the fruit of the same (teaching) in the people." (8.) "It is their duty to assist in visiting the sick." (9.) "To cause acts of Assembly to be put in execution carefully." (10.) "To be diligent of admonishing all men of their duty according to the rule of the Evangelist." (11.) "Things that they cannot correct by private admonitions they should bring to the eldership,"—the session. This is the detail of the Discipline of the Church of Scotland. The "Form" is an abstract—"for substance"—very compressed indeed.

8. The Form is limited in stating the powers of church courts. This is the sum of the "*abstract*,"—to convene, call before them, hear and determine causes and dispense censures. Beyond them, the Discipline (1.) "Grants power to appoint their own meetings and adjournments. (2.) To choose their own moderators. (3.) To have no meddling with things pertaining to civil jurisdiction. (4.) To send forth visiters of their own number to see how *all* things be ruled in the bounds of their judicatories. (5.) To keep religion and doctrine in purity, and to keep comeliness and good order in the Kirk."

9. In the "Form" the power of a presbytery is not distinctly stated at all—only incidentally, under the head, "Power of Ordination." In the Discipline we have a full and detailed view given, worthy of presbyterianism.

10. The jurisdiction of superior courts, original and appellate, can scarcely be inferred from the Form. The Discipline presents the whole power in detail.

11. Presbyterian visitations of congregations not recognised in the Form. Clearly stated in the Discipline, and an old practice of the Church of Scotland.

12. The Form gives the substance only, on the head of the deacon. The Discipline, Acts of Assembly, and practice of the Church of Scotland, between 1638 and 1649, give the detail, "*clear, pointed and particular*." These specimens, from many such, show, that by repealing the Discipline, too much is abandoned. This view, therefore, cannot be entertained by the church identifying with the reformation Church of Scotland. She *certainly* made attainments in adopting the Confes-

sion and Catechisms in 1647 and 1648. But if we view the Form alone, and adopted in 1645, as repealing the whole Discipline sworn to in the Solemn League, in 1643, then the church declined from a pointed Testimony to an evasive one—an error condemned and testified against. “The old wine is better.” The old paths secure rest and peace to the church in covenant with a covenant-keeping God.

## REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CATECHISM.

### SECTION SECOND.

#### *Christ's exclusive Headship over the Church.*

[Continued from page 242.]

Q. 23. Has Christ instituted a form of government in his church?

A. Yes; He has not left his church in a state of anarchy or confusion, or to be modelled according to the fancies of men, as may best serve their political views and designs. Every piece of the Old Testament tabernacle was to be placed according to the pattern shown in the holy mount; much more the New Testament church, which is called “the true tabernacle of David.” Compare Acts xv. 16, with Amos ix. 11.

Q. 24. What texts demonstrate an established government in the New Testament church?

A. Many; as examples, 1 Thess. v. 12, “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.” 1 Tim. v. 17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour.” And, Hebrews xiii. 17, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.”

Q. 25. How many forms are there of church government, for which their advocates claim a scriptural warrant?

A. Four: the papal, or spiritual monarchy; the episcopal, or spiritual prelacy; independency, or spiritual democracy; and presbyterianism, or spiritual republicanism.

Q. 26. What is the distinctive characteristic of each?

A. The *first*, maintains the necessity of one supreme, universal, infallible *head* of the whole Christian body, and throughout the world, who is the authorized vicar of Christ. The *second*, contends for an order of clerical prelates, above the rank of ordinary ministers of the gospel, who are, alone, in their view, empowered to ordain, and without whose presiding agency there can be no regular church. The *third*, holds that all ecclesiastical power resides in the mass of the church members, and that all acts of ecclesiastical authority are to be performed immediately by them. The *fourth* maintains that Christ has made all ministers who are authorized to dispense the word and sacraments, equal in official rank and power; that in every church the immediate exercise of ecclesiastical power is deposited, not with the whole mass of the people, but with a body of their representatives styled elders; and that the whole visible church catholic, as far as their denomination is concerned, is not only one in name, but so united by a series of assemblies of these representatives, acting in the name and by the authority of the whole, as to bind the whole body together as one church, walking by the same principles of faith and order, and voluntarily, yet authoritatively, governed by the same system of rules and regulations.

Q. 27. What are the arguments in proof of the absolute *parity* of the ministers of the word?

THE  
COVENANTER.

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MAY, 1849.

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“TERMS OF COMMUNION.”—EXTENT OF THEIR OBLIGATION.

(BY REV. J. B. JOHNSTON.)

(Continued from p. 262.)

That the Westminster “form of church government” is no more than an outline for basis of union, will appear from other considerations in addition to those referred to in a former communication. A few fundamental principles are stated and argued logically and at length, in that venerable document. These, it will be well to notice, were those most fiercely debated in the Westminster Assembly against the Presbyterians by the Episcopal and Independent parties, including the Erastians. They had, indeed, been long settled, and fully and fairly incorporated with the policy of the kirk of Scotland. The argument in the “form” was neither needed nor designed for the church of Scotland—it was for the benefit of England, as yet (1643,) unskilled in the Presbyterian armory. And it is something remarkable, that more than the half of the whole “form of Government” is taken up about one single item—“*ordination of ministers;*” little more than the fiftieth part of that great subject—yet here it occupies two hundred and eighty lines of a document of a little over five hundred—add about sixty lines of argument for the divine right of a Presbytery, making three hundred and forty, then there remains only about one hundred and eighty lines of the whole “form of Government.” This extraordinary disproportion shows at once startling violation of symmetry, and can be accounted for only by the fact of the circumstances of its origin, as also of its design. It was not designed for a full and symmetrical draft of the beautiful system of Presbyterian church government, but an outline for the benefit of England and Ireland, and hence, some of the lines in the delineation are disproportionately marked, while others are slightly pencilled.

This document, consisting of fifteen heads or chapters, presents, after all, rather a desideratum suited to the very crisis which gave it birth. It presents a general outline of Scotland’s church polity, with a bulwark argument in defence of some points so fiercely attacked by the enemies of Presbytery. These few points being well defined and guarded; in regard to the others presenting ground held in common, very little was required to maintain Presbytery and gain over prelacy and independency. Farther, a part of this “form” never was applied, nor even applicable to the church of Scotland, or to any well organized Presbyterian church as she was in 1645, but refers to a state of things then existing in England. We refer to the last part of the “form” providing for an extraordinary way of ordaining ministers; that is, ordination where there is no Presbytery to ordain, and which, by the way,—to ordain without a

Presbytery—is not Presbyterianism. Could this have been admitted in Scotland, where her “*kirks were settled and constituted in point of government?*” No more than “*some parts of the second article of the thirty-first chapter*” of the Confession of Faith. She needed no extraordinary rules, she had all her church courts complete. The spirit of old established Presbyterianism would have risen against such an intrusion with a firmness not to be resisted. The plan contemplated the gradual reform of England by the gradual introduction of Presbyterianism in this way: and had England been faithful to the “league,” she would, in due time, have reaped the salutary fruit of the *reform* contemplated for her by her *well reformed* sister, the church of Scotland.

The church of Scotland, in receiving the “Westminster form,” designed neither to reconstruct her established order, nor to reform it by introducing any new element, or by throwing out any thing in principle or practice incorporated with it as established in 1643. She neither repealed, revised, nor remodelled her “discipline” and government in 1645, but received the Westminster “form” so far as agreeing therewith, rejecting all contrary thereto—“*as in nothing contrary*” is her own emphatic and oft-repeated language.

After thus far premising, as we have the right, we may raise the question—In receiving the Westminster form “*as received by the church of Scotland,*” are we bound, by our profession, to the deacon? We answer—the footsteps of the flock, the plain letter of the standards, and the Bible, bind us to hold to and have the deacon in all our congregations, and not the trustees, to manage temporal things devoted to sacred or ecclesiastical purposes. The dispassionate discussion of this question may tend to throw light on a subject on which mistaken views are entertained by many who, we are persuaded, do not wish either to be in error or to foster discrepancy of views among brethren.

In inquiring after the footsteps of the flock, we shall trace briefly the history of the church during the following periods: 1. The apostolic age till the rise of Antichrist. 2. The Waldenses. 3. The Geneva and continental churches. 4. The church of Scotland till James Renwick. 5. The Reformed Presbyterian church since the revolution of 1688.

From the *universal* history of the *first* period, the footsteps of the flock are distinctly marked by the deacon till the rise of Antichrist. Antideaconism is popish in its origin. This is capable of historic demonstration. No counter history, without palpable wrenching, can be adduced. To argue that because the testimony of the Fathers differs, even contradicts, on some subjects, therefore it has no weight in a matter on which they remarkably agree, is to deceive. Here there is harmony defying challenge. Mosheim has the following—“The church was, *undoubtedly*, provided from the beginning with inferior ministers or deacons.” Cent. I., vol. I., p. 89. “All the other Christian churches followed the example of that of Jerusalem in whatever related to the choice and office of the deacon.” p. 90. “The face of things began now to change in the Christian church, for the bishops (pastors) aspired to higher degrees of power and authority than they formerly possessed. The example of the bishops was ambitiously imitated by the presbyters, (elders.) The deacons, beholding the presbyters diverting thus their functions, boldly usurped their rights and privileges. But when the honours and the privileges of the bishops and presbyters were augmented, the *deacons* also began to extend their ambitious views, and to despise those lower

functions and employments which they had hitherto exercised with so much humility and zeal. The *sub-deacons* were designed to ease the deacons of the meanest part of their work." Cent. III., pp. 209, 210. Thus, by every Apostolic Presbyterian officer aspiring to something *above* his office, (for we never but *once* read of ambitious officers aspiring downwards, viz.: elders aspiring to be deacons!!) the papacy was gradually introduced, and the temporal deacon finally merged into an inferior order of the clergy.

Dr. Miller, of Princeton, an historian of established reputation, has, in his "History of Presbyterianism," the following :

"The truth is, for the first two hundred years after Christ, it is *certain* that neither prelacy nor independency was known in the church of Christ. There is not a single record within that period which either asserts or implies it; but every thing of a contrary aspect. Every flock of professing Christians had its pastor or bishop, with its bench of elders, by whom the government and discipline were conducted, and its body of deacons, by whom the funds collected for the relief of the poor were received and disbursed. In the third century after Christ, the aspect of things began to change. The clergy became ambitious and voluptuous, and, as a natural consequence, full of intrigue and contention. Towards the close of the third century, prelacy was gradually and insidiously introduced. All orders of ecclesiastical men partook of the spirit of ambitious encroachment. The deacons, whom the apostles had appointed to be guardians of the poor, and of the temporalities of the church, became too proud to discharge the appropriate duties of their office, employed 'sub-deacons' to perform their official work, and, after awhile, claimed, and had conceded to them the power of preaching and baptizing. The presbyters or elders partook of the same spirit, and although the greater part of them had been chosen and set apart for ruling only, yet the discipline of the church became relaxed and unpopular, and finally, in a great measure abandoned: they *all aspired* to be public teachers, and turned away from their original work to what they deemed a more honourable employment. This statement is confirmed by early Christian writers of the highest character, and who were nearly contemporary with the criminal innovation of which they speak." pp. 14, 15.

"Ignatius speaks expressly of a bishop, elders, and deacons existing in *every worshiping assembly* which he addressed. Is this the language of prelacy? So far from it, nothing can be plainer than that this language can be reconciled with the Presbyterian system *alone*. Presbyterians are the only denomination who have in every worshiping assembly a bishop, presbyters or elders, and deacons." p. 54. "But while our Episcopal brethren depart from the primitive and apostolic model in regard to bishops, so they equally depart from that model in respect to the deacon's office. They contend that deacons are one of the orders of clergy, and are authorized, by Divine appointment, to preach and baptize." p. 57.

Now, let it be borne in mind, Dr. Miller is not writing on the deacon question, but writing a history of Presbyterianism.

John Calvin, in his "Institutes," gives the history of the rise of the papacy in relation to the corruption of the apostolic Presbyterian form of church government and the introduction of the Romish hierarchy. This is the caption of the *third chapter of book fourth*—"The teachers and ministers of the church, their election and office." After stating what was the apostolic order of government, and what were the congregational officers, viz.: pastors, elders, and deacons, he states—section sixteenth—"There remains the form of ordination, which is the last point that we have mentioned relative to the call of ministers. Now, it appears that when the apostles introduced any one into the ministry, they used no other ceremony than imposition of hands. Thus they ordained pastors and teachers, and thus they ordained deacons." The *fourth chapter* has this caption, "*The state of the ancient church, and the mode of government practised before the papacy.*" Under this caption we find the following: "As we have stated that there are three kinds of ministers recommended to us in the Scriptures, *so the ancient church*

divided *all the ministers* it had into three orders. For from the order of presbyters they chose some for pastors and teachers, the others presided over the discipline and corrections. To the deacons was committed the care of the poor and the distribution of alms." *Section I.* Speaking of the Nicene period as advancing towards a *hierarchy*, though yet in an incipient state, he says:

*Section V.* "Nor was the state of the deacons, at that time, at all different from what it had been under the apostles. For they received the daily contributions of believers, and the annual revenues of the church, to apply them to their proper uses, that is, to distribute part to ministers, and part for the support of the poor, subject, however, to the authority of the bishop, to whom they also rendered an account of their administration every year. But it is unnecessary to argue this point any farther, since it is evident from many epistles of Gregory, that *even in his time*, when the administration of the church in *other respects become very corrupt*, yet this custom was *still retained*, that the deacons were the stewards for the relief of the poor under the authority of the bishop. It is probable *sub-deacons* were at first attached to the deacons to assist them in transacting the business of the poor; but this distinction was soon lost. *Arch-deacons* were first erected when the extent of property required a new and more accurate mode of administration; though Jerome states that there were such officers even in his time. Their appointment to read the gospel, and to exhort the people to pray, and their admission to the administration of the cup in the sacred supper, were intended to dignify their office, that they might discharge it with more piety, in consequence of being admonished by such ceremonies that they were not executing some profane stewardship, but that their function was spiritual and dedicated to God."

This account of the deacon, *sub-deacon*, and *arch-deacon*, Calvin never "*seemed*" even "to approve." But he gives this account of the *sub-deacon* and *arch-deacon* to show the rise of the papacy by the gradual corruption of the deacon by changing it to a "*spiritual function*." Following Calvin's history of the rise of the papacy, we quote from chap. v. of *book fourth*. The chapter has this caption, "*The ancient form of government entirely subverted by the papal tyranny*." *Section I.* he says:

"Now, it is proper to exhibit the system of ecclesiastical government at present maintained by the See of Rome." *Section II.* "All the right of the people to choose has been entirely taken away." *Section IV.* "The power of creating presbyters, they say, belongs exclusively to them. But this is a gross corruption of the ancient institution, for by their ordination they create, not presbyters to rule and feed the people, but priests to offer sacrifice. So, when they consecrate deacons, they have nothing to do with their true and proper office, but only ordain them to certain ceremonies about the chalice and the patins." *Section XIV.* At the end. "Now, let all who fight under the standards and auspices of the Roman See, go and boast of their sacerdotal order." *Section XV.* "Now, let the deacons come forward with that most sacred distribution which they have of the property of the church. They do not, at present, however, create their deacons for any such purpose, for they enjoy them nothing but to serve at the altar, to say or chant the gospel, and do, I know not what trifles. Nothing of the alms, nothing of the care of the poor, nothing of the whole function which they executed in primitive times. I speak of the institution itself. For if we advert to the fact, it is now become no office at all, but only a step toward the priesthood. The deacon, who was steward for the poor, received what was given, in order to distribute it. Of the alms given at present, no more reaches the poor than if they were thrown into the sea. This false appearance of deaconship, therefore, is a mockery of the church. It contains nothing resembling the apostolic institution or the ancient usage."

Instead of this being the "awful effects of deacons and consistory," said to be deplored by Calvin in his day, and what "may be called an abuse of the office," it is his description of the abominations of popery, denounced "*in toto*," yet substantially, the theory of antideaconism—"to ordain these seven men as evangelists, at once to supply their (the

apostles') place in preaching the gospel, and to assist in the distribution of the common stock"—"to say or chant the gospel" under the plea of appointing them "*over this need!*" Finally from Calvin, Sect. XIX.

"But it is not necessary to pursue them with any farther severity at present, as it was only my intention to show that the legitimate office of deacon has long been entirely *abolished* among them."

Is anti-deaconism popish? or does it "*abolish*" the deacon? Betwixt the mother and the daughter there are some points of resemblance.

The Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland may be worth consulting on this subject, for she wrote some history. Let us hear her testimony sworn to and recorded, her affidavit filed among the records to be employed in making out a judgment against Antichrist. Rev. xii. 11. "These collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms, as some suppose, but of other goods, moveable and immoveable, of lands and possessions, the price whereof was brought to the feet of the apostles. This office continued in the deacon's hands, who intromitted with the whole goods of the kirk, *and ay, until the estate thereof was corrupted by Antichrist*, as the ancient canons bear witness." 2 Book of Dis. chap. ix: Finally, on this period, let us hear our own Testimony, and we should believe ourselves if we would have the world believe us. Our church has published a history sanctioned by the authority of the highest judicatory. Under chap. III. caption, "The state of the church from the death of Christ until the rise of Antichrist," we find the following history :

"When a church was formed in Jerusalem, the apostles placed in every congregation presbyters of their own choice. Of these presbyters or elders, one was a teacher authorized to administer the word and sacraments, and the others were his counsel and aid in government and discipline. To the consistory or session of elders, the whole ecclesiastical power of the church was committed." Ref. Prin. p. 42. "The rulers of congregations disposed of its *collections*, (all) and when paupers were so numerous as to require particular attention, *distinct officers* were appointed to inspect their state, and to distribute *with the advice* (?) of the presbyters, the adequate relief *from the general fund*. (Acts vi. 3.) The officers who served the tables of the poor were called deacons, a word which signifies *servants*. They had no authority in ecclesiastical proceeding any farther than as they respected temporalities." Ref. Prin. p. 46.

They were not evangelists, for evangelists were preachers. They were appointed "*over this need.*" Popery afterwards corrupted them by changing their office into a spiritual "*business.*" "Before the latter end of the second century, the appearance of the Christian church, especially in the principal cities, had altered for the worse." Ref. Prin. p. 48. Were they beginning to introduce deacons, or were they beginning to "*abolish*" them as the church began to grow worse, to fall away to popery? Hear—"The deacon, who at first ministered by order of sessions to the wants of the poor, *begun to employ servants* under him, and in process of time the office was *entirely changed*, and rendered a *spiritual ministry.*" Ref. Prin. p. 50. Thus the rise of anti-deaconism, which changed the temporal deaconship to a "*spiritual ministry.*" But all the churches did not go into the popish corruptions. Some were faithful, some were "*witnesses.*" Hear again—"The most pure and faithful parts of the Christian church beheld with anguish the grand apostacy, but they still, though in a great measure unnoticed and unknown, retained the apostolic order. Their bishops were parish ministers, their elders were representatives of the congregations, and their deacons were the trustees of the poor." Ref. Prin. p. 52.

We now approach the *second* period, the history of the Waldenses. The period when "*the witnesses*" were found in a separate fellowship from the papacy. Had they or the papacy the temporal deacon as a third and distinct congregational officer? Let us now hear—*first*, the testimony of the church. "The Waldenses were in no connexion with the church of Rome or its clergy. They maintained a system of distinct ecclesiastical policy from "the apostolic age." Ref. Prin. p. 57. "These eminently pious churches, which so long maintained the primitive order," p. 58. "The creed of the church of the Waldenses, however, was truly evangelical, and the order of the church, in their terms of communion, forms of government, exercises of worship, and administration of discipline was strictly Presbyterian. Mosheim gives the following testimony:—"The government of the church was committed, by the Waldenses, to *bishops, presbyters, and deacons*, for they acknowledged that these three ecclesiastical orders were instituted by Christ himself." Vol. II. Cent. XII. p. 318. "The testimony of Perrin and others is supported by that of M. Gillis, another historian of the Waldenses, and also one of their pastors. In the Confession of Faith of that people, inserted at length in the "addition" to this work, and stated by the historian to have been the confession of the ancient, as well as of the modern Waldenses, it is declared, (p. 490, art. 31,) that "It is necessary for the church to have pastors to preach God's word, to administer the sacraments, and to watch over the sheep of Christ, and also elders and deacons, according to the rules of good and holy church discipline, and the practice of the primitive church."—Dr. Miller on Ruling Elders, p. 110.

In relation to the *third* period, we need say little. Those who oppose the deacon admit that the Presbyterian continental churches had deacons. But they had *consistory*, and we are given to know that this fact vitiates the probation. Hence, too, it is intimated, the "predilection of James Renwick for the Dutch forms of deacons and consistory." It would aid in directing the plain and unsuspecting reader in the truth, always in this connexion, to inform him that the consistory of the Dutch at Groningen was a Presbyterian *session*, another name for session. So of the primitive churches—their consistories were sessions. See Tes. Hist. p. 42. "To the *consistory or session* of elders, the whole ecclesiastical power of the church was committed." The Dutch churches, like the Reformed Covenanting churches of Scotland between 1638 and 1649, admitted their deacons to sit with their elders when considering temporalities. See quotations under the *fourth* period; also Calvin and others under the *first* period. We stay to notice farther, only one reference. M'Crie's Lives, Oxford Ed. p. 153. Speaking of A. Lasco's history, which says:—"The affairs of each congregation were managed by a minister, ruling elders, and deacons, and each of these offices was considered as of divine institution."

Of the *Fourth* period as little need be said, were it not that the attempt has been made to neutralize the *facts*, which cannot be denied, that the standards and practice of the Church of Scotland, between 1638 and 1649, unequivocally establish the deacon. We might quote extensively from two recent and very popular historians, M'Crie and Hetherington. To those who have strong distaste for the deacon, their pages will be almost loathsome—the odious thing is spread over many an otherwise fragrant page. Those authors were modern deacon men, and

wrote nearly two centuries after the reformation. They were Presbyterians, and wrote in defence of their own beloved Scotch Presbyterianism. Recommending the reader to their entire works, we refer him now to selections from some who wrote during the reformation, or shortly after. In Calderwood, p. 213, we find the following act of the Synod of Merse and Tweeddale, 1586: "Among us there is no difference nor diversity of opinions, touching the policy and government of the house of God; but we do fully agree, that the same is the right government of his house, agreeing with the blessed institution of his Son, the only Head of the same, which hath been exercised (practised,) in Scotland, by ministers, elders, and deacons, as was before May, 1584 years." From Dupin, vol. ii. p. 297, note, quoted by Neal, vol. ii. p. 42, referring to the object of Scotland in seeking uniformity with England, we have the following: "That the reader may form a judgment of what was intended to be established in England, it may not be improper to set before him, in one view, the discipline that was then (1643,) settled in the kirk of Scotland, and subsists at this time. In Scotland there are 890 parishes, each of which is divided, in proportion to its extent, into particular districts, and every district has its own ruling elders and deacons: the ruling elders are men of the principal quality and interest in the parish, and the deacons are persons of a good character for manners and understanding. A consistory of ministers, elders, and deacons is called a kirk session, the lowest ecclesiastical judicatory, which meets once a week to consider the affairs of the parish." Baillie, one of the Westminster divines from Scotland, in a work bearing this title, "Baillie's Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time," preface, p. 7 and 8, and quoted in the Religious Monitor, vol. viii. p. 734, speaking of the errors and corruptions in England, as the consequence of rejecting the Presbyterian government established in Scotland, says:

"Episcopal courts were never fitted for the reclaiming of minds; their prisons, their fines, their pillories, their nose-slittings, their ear-cuttings, their cheek-burnings, did but hold down the flame to break out in season with the greater rage. But, the Reformed Presbytery doth proceed in a spiritual method, evidently fitted for the gaining of hearts. It is not prophecy, but a rational prediction, bottomed upon reason and multiplied experience:—Let England once be countenanced by her superior powers to enjoy the just and necessary liberty of *consistories* (that is, of ministers, elders, and deacons,) for congregations, of presbyteries for counties, of synods for larger-shires, and national assemblies for the whole land, *as Scotland hath long possessed those* by the unanimous consent of king and parliament, without the least prejudice to the civil state, but to the evident and confessed benefit thereof."

John Brown, of Wamphray, in his "Apologetical Relation," written 1665, p. 34, 35, has the following:

"Now the prelates do reign, there being none who durst peep or move a wing against them. They proceed to do more wickedness, and draw up a book of canons. By this book, that which remained of Presbyterian government is taken away; parochial sessions and classical presbyteries are accounted conventicles; ruling elders and *deacons are cast out of the church*, and all ecclesiastical causes are brought only to the prelate's tribunal. The ministers being called to see what they would do, such as refused are presently *superseded*."

*Persecution* banished deacons from the covenanted church. How long till it will suffer them peaceably to return? The testimony of Brown is corroborated by Neal in his History of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 234. Speaking of the apostate Presbyterian ministers, Sharpe, Fairfoul, Leighton, and Hamilton, who submitted to re-ordination, and were made bishops, he says: "The English bishops insisted upon their re-

nouncing their Presbyterian orders, which they consented to, and were in one and the same day, ordained first deacons, (the lowest order of Episcopal clergy,) then priests, and last of all bishops, according to the rites of the Church of England." These apostates were not of those faithful, persecuted, suffering witnesses, who, rather than yield even the Presbyterian *temporal deacon*, which the Episcopal prelates "*cast out*," suffered themselves to be "*suspended*." In concluding this period, we need not quote the Informatory Vindication, nor the fifty-second letter of James Renwick, p. 184, who, had not persecution interfered, would have built upon the old foundation, by ordaining deacons among the society people. But prelate persecution completed its work of destruction, by razing Presbyterianism to its foundation.

We now come, finally, to the *Fifth* period—to the period of the "decline in purity of all the churches of the reformation." During this period, the covenanted church has, *in practice*, declined in many, many things. This we only notice here—in another connexion we shall give facts. Suffice it now to say, to this period alone is it remarkable, in the reformation church, to display a great deal of profession—mere dead letter. It was not so in former and better times. Whatever was the practice of the society people in the time of, and after James Renwick, we are sure they professed adherence to the deacon, though, by the prelates, "*ruling elders and deacons were cast out of the church*." Inf. Vind. p. 197. Their testimony in this document, published in 1687, is explicit. In their act, declaration, and testimony, published in 1761, they recognise the second book of discipline, as a part of their subordinate standards. Pp. 163 and 174, ed. 1832. In the new Scottish testimony, the language is unequivocal.

"Deacons are ordained, upon the choice of the congregation, and are *associated* with the *teaching and ruling elders* in distributing to the necessities of the poor, and managing other temporalities in the church."

Proved from 1 Tim. iii. 8; Phil. i. 1, Acts vi. 2, 3, where they profess to find the "modern temporal deacon," having power over the poor fund, and *other temporalities*. So they profess, in few but plain words, and bind all their members *so* to believe. Thus the covenanted church in the British Isles has carried down to the present time in her public testimony, the Presbyterian temporal deacon, with the extent of his power, as recognised in the reformation period. Whether we, in North America, are bound to approve "of their testimony," has recently become a question. Aside from this question, the history of the American church, in relation to the deacon, will be of some interest to those who regard creeds, confessions, terms of communion, synodical deeds, &c. That the American church, till 1806, was bound by the Scottish testimony, no one will deny. In the testimony of that date, the deacon is recognised as a "distinct ecclesiastical officer, having no power but about the temporalities of the church." The church did not design this to be no more than a dead letter, or a compliment to the venerated dead—our covenant fathers of the reforming and reformed period. The Synod in 1821 resolved, "That it accords with the principles and *practice* of this church to ordain congregational deacons, so soon as the fiscal concerns of any church render it necessary." Minutes of Synod, p. 115. Unless Synod designed profanely to mock the Head of the church, in whose name she thus passed—if she designed to carry out in good faith her own legislation, she stands bound to the Redeemer, and before the world,

to endeavour to have deacons in all her congregations. Her subsequent legislation shows, at least, her honest intention to that effect. In 1836, Synod passed and sent down in overture, by a unanimous vote, the following:

“The scriptures specify another class of office-bearers, whose office is not spiritual, like those of preaching and ruling elders, but relating only to temporal matters, namely, deacons. The office of the deacon is to attend to the temporal concerns of the congregation.” Compend of Eccl. Gov. and Order, p. 34.

In this document, the deacon is mentioned eight times in different connexions; showing, from the specific regulations for the election, ordination, installation, and for the exercise of the office, the design to attain uniformity in all our congregations in having deacons. In May, 1838, the Southern Presbytery of the Eastern sub-Synod, passed unanimously the following, which was never reversed by either the subordinate or General Synod:

“1st. That deacons being officers in the church, clearly sanctioned and prescribed by the scriptures, and acknowledged in the standards of the church, there can be nothing reprehensible in the appointment of such officers in a congregation. 2d. That in consideration of the documents before them, they find nothing in the procedure of election and ordination, repugnant to the scriptural order of the church and its usages, nor *any power* ascribed to the deacons inconsistent with that office.”

Yet it is well known that the deacons of the congregations, referred to in the resolutions, manage all the temporalities. In the General Synod, October of the same year, the following passed: “Deacons, who attend to the temporal concerns of the congregation, and administer to the wants of the poor.” Up to this date we never knew or heard of opposition, in our church courts, to the office of deacon, or to the extending of his power beyond the poor. *Why* it then sprung up, might be of some use to the wise observers of the signs of the times, to know. In 1840, the subject came up again. The action of Synod then was indecisive and evasive. It does not confine the power of the deacon to the poor, but by fair construction admits his power beyond; and makes exception *only* of “church property,” such as “meeting-houses, &c.” But to property *not such as*, and to *money, without limitation*, the power of the deacon may extend. (Minutes of Synod, p. 182.) And let it be remembered, that in that Synod there were *only* sixteen ministers, and nine of them from the bounds of the present Pittsburgh Presbytery, including D. Steele, who in a few hours after left the Synod; and, that there were fourteen elders *only*, and nine of them from the bounds of the present Presbytery of Pittsburgh. This action is not a fair representation of the church on this question, as *all subsequent* legislation will show.\* In the Minutes of 1841, p. 313, Ref. Pres., vol. v., we find the following, adopted by Synod: “And they farther agree that the congregation has the right of choice, whether or not their *other temporalities* shall be managed by the deacons—such being understood to have been the practice of the Philadelphia congregation.” On this act we remark: 1st. If a congregation may place “*their other temporalities*,” (beside the poor,) in the deacons’ hands, may it not, if it have no deacons, place them in the elders’ hand, for peace? 2d. The notion of “*Divine right*,” suggested by the above report of the commission, may be worth a second consideration.

\* We hope the brethren will mark this. There is no way to secure the church against party legislation, but by having a full representation from every part of the church.—(Ed. Cov.)

In August, 1843, just before the meeting of Synod of that year, an article appeared in the Reformed Presbyterian, vol. vii. p. 163, under the caption, "*The Standard lifted up,*" we find the following:

"On the other hand, the office of deacon, which embraces only *temporal matters* in the church, *episcopacy* has elevated to the rank of being a spiritual officer, by making the deacon a minister of the word; for which not even the shadow of a reason can be given from scripture. Thus prelacy *makes* and *unmakes*, at will, spiritual offices in the church of God; and in this way exalts itself "above all that is called God."

Has "a congregation the right of choice to *make* and *unmake*" any officer in Christ's church? We were taught that church government is *jus divinum*, and its form unalterable.

In the Synod of 1843, a member was censured for "the publication of sentiments and opinions on the subject of deacons, inconsistent with, and at variance with 'Reformation Principles,' and *other standards* of the Reformed Presbyterian church." Ref. Pres. vol. vii. p. 270. In 1845 Synod *unanimously adopted* the following:

"Whereas, it is the desire of this court that uniformity in *practice* be maintained in *all* our congregations; and, whereas some misunderstanding seems to exist in relation to the ground of our covenanted uniformity in *practice*, in respect to the subject of deacons as settled at (*not by*) the second reformation; and, whereas faithfulness to the church's Head requires the reassertion of *this* ground of *practical* uniformity as it *then* (1643, when the Solemn League was sworn,) obtained; therefore, resolved, &c."

Now, in all good faith, what "*practical* uniformity" did this *unanimous* action contemplate? That *all* our congregations should have trustees, and no deacons? No. For such was not the "*practical* uniformity," sworn in the Solemn League and Covenant, 1643. That *all* our congregations should have both deacons and trustees?—Deacons for the poor, and trustees for "other temporalities?" (For Synod has said, the "other temporalities" might, in Philadelphia, be managed by the deacons!) No. For such never was the "*practical* uniformity" to which we are sworn. That *some* of our congregations shall have one thing, *some* another, and *some* have neither deacons nor trustees? No. What then? The action of last Synod answers: "The business *ordinarily* transacted by congregational trustees, (such as was granted by Synod to the deacons of Philadelphia,) ought to be intrusted to deacons." Consequently, no trustees—and consequently, matters *ordinarily* left to the people, are still thus left: such as calling pastors, fixing salaries, building churches, settling their locations, dimensions, materials; reviewing and challenging all financial transactions, making untrammelled and *voluntarily* all transactions, contributions, subscriptions, alms, gifts, charities, whatsoever. All of which, and all such like, have never been *ordinarily* under the power of the congregational trustee. Any "invasion of the people's rights" in all this? If so, wherein? We have never been told, and we presume we never shall. But we shall, in concluding this essay, tell of one system of gross invasion of the people's rights, not maintained in the standards, in Synod's enactments, or by deaconism—but by anti-deaconism and the trustee system—yea, a *popish* "invasion of the people's rights." Holy Mother church "requires," by her spiritual assumptions, the people to give for they know not what, and she "distributes" without responsibility, to what purpose she pleases. She gives *direction* to the "money thrown by the people of God into a common fund, without *any direction as to its application.*" Now, for a session to "require those who are made partakers of spiritual things, to minister of their carnal things"—to require "money to be thrown

into a common fund, *without any direction as to its application*," till that direction is given by the session, after thrown out of the donor's hands, looks like a popish invasion of the people's rights. To require of the people to supply any secret fund, without any knowledge of its destination, and then assume the right of giving direction, or of *distribution*, is too high a claim for spiritual courts—it is popish anti-deaconism. See this modest claim, out of respect to the people's rights, presented, Reformed Presbyterian, vol. xi. No. xii. p. 359, second paragraph, and p. 360, second paragraph, "We thus sum up," &c.

We have traced the history of anti-deaconism down to February, 1848, and now we find him in the person of a trustee—"a *substitute for the civil magistrate*." Whether in filling the place of the magistrate, till the millenium shall come, he should furnish out of his own coffers, as in the *first* reformation, all supplies, (except for the poor, which belongs to the deacon,) "ordinarily" managed by trustees, we are not told. Perhaps, after all, it will be safest to say, by way of explanation, as little as can be helped about this *substitute*, till we shall have a millennial magistrate, and then, happy day! we shall have no need of him. Then, glorious era! the deacon and the magistrate shall supply all the wants of the church!! In the faith of the blessed time when we shall have done with all "substitutes," in the church of Christ, perfectly furnished by himself with all needed gifts and offices—we submit our historical ramble. In our next we shall look into the Bible.

### Foreign Correspondence.

#### *Clydesdale—Bothwell Bridge and Castle—Rutherglen, &c.*

The next place of great interest that I visited was Bothwell Bridge. Taking the coach early in the morning of Saturday, September 23d, at Bridge-end, where the road from Lanark to Glasgow crosses from the north to the south bank of the Clyde, by the old, narrow, winding bridge mentioned in my last. The distance to Bothwell from Bridge-end is about sixteen miles—the whole distance to Glasgow being about twenty-six miles. The day was clear and pleasant; and, seated upon the top of the coach, I had every opportunity, with the help of an intelligent coachman, of getting a satisfactory view of the beautiful scenery of Clydesdale, and of recognising the far-famed historical localities lying near or upon our route.

My principal object in selecting this route in preference to the railway from Lanark, was to get a sight of Bothwell Bridge and battle-field, through the centre of which this road passes. There are, however, other points of interest in this part of the valley of the Clyde. The scenery is very fine—indeed it would be difficult to find a more pleasant route, one more attractive, than the sixteen miles along the Clyde from Lanark to Bothwell Castle. The hills which for some miles down are in quite close proximity, with occasional recesses and ravines through which some small tributaries enter the Clyde, are generally cultivated to their summits—their more conspicuous angles being frequently crowned with "plantings," through whose interstices we could often discern the rising chimneys of the farm-house, or the more elevated pinnacles of the princely chateau. In the valley itself, and just upon its border, are some elegant mansions—one of them, Mauldslie Castle,

# THE COVENANTER.

JUNE, 1849.

[For the Covenanter.]  
TERMS OF COMMUNION.

(BY REV. J. B. JOHNSTON.)

[Continued from page 229.]

In our last we promised to look into the Bible for some light on subjects and principles embraced in our "Terms of Communion." One thing, now involving deep interest to the church, we think we discover in manifest dictates of the word—that the neglect of a divine ordinance does not abolish it. Nor, does it matter how long the neglect may continue, the duty remains binding, and its obligations unimpaired. Another thing we read in the Bible. Many divine institutions have been long neglected, and yet, when again observed, the neglect was neither offered nor received as an excuse for continuing in the neglect. The longer the neglect, the greater the sin, and the louder the call to reformation.

The following, some from the Bible and some from the history of the church in later times, will illustrate. 1. Circumcision, a "sealing ordinance," was neglected in the wilderness forty years. Josh. v. 2—7. 2. The feast of tabernacles seems to have been neglected for about nine hundred years. Neh. viii. 13—18. 3. The reading of the whole law publicly to all, men, women, children, and strangers, as a part of the divine arrangements connected with the feast of tabernacles, was consequently neglected. Deut. xxxi. 10—13; Neh. viii. 18. 4. Even the Passover seems to have been long neglected before the eighteenth year of King Josiah. 2 Kings xxii. 10—13. 5. Covenant-renovation has now been neglected for several generations, and sinfully neglected too. This long, sinful neglect is now painfully felt in the opposition manifested, and in the difficulties in the way of renewing the covenants in Scotland, Ireland, and America. 6. The church has long neglected the application of discipline to baptized non-communicants as members. Though the old law of the church on this head has been, in 1841, happily revived, still great opposition exists, and the discipline must, likely for years to come, remain a dead letter—a mere "*paper law*." 7. The ancient *manner* of keeping Sabbaths and fast-days, since the reformation, is neglected—yea, almost abandoned. There are hoary heads, yet in the church, that can tell the sad tale of falling away here. 8. "All the Protestant churches have for two hundred years been declining in purity." Testimony, p. 76. Should we continue on in the general declension, or retrace our steps and turn to the old paths? Jer. vi. 16; Ps. cii. 13. 9. Deacons have been neglected for about the same period of declension in all the Protestant churches! Remarkable coincidence! Should we hold on in this *particular* declension—live down and contradict our standards—hold up before the world a "*dead faith*"—swear to the deacon as one of the "*perpetual*" officers of the church in "*a particular congregation*,"

and yet oppose it in practice? Rather, would it not be better to cease opposing our profession and co-operate with those who have been for near half a century endeavouring to "show their faith by their practice?"

But we said we would look into the Bible. In opening this book, the Old Testament will, of course, come first in order. Here we are taught the doctrines of grace, moral duties, nearly every thing concerning civil government, the "*circa sacra*" powers, capital punishments, covenanting, the Sabbath, psalmody, church government, &c., &c. The ecclesiastical officers of the Old Testament, except the High Priest, answer to those of the New. This is not "*new light*," but the *old light* of Westminster times. Dr. Goodwin, in his "Moses and Aaron," says, "Priests and Levites may be paralleled with *ministers* and *deacons*." Book I., chap. v. Also, he says, "From this custom of *imposing hands* on the *Levites* hath flowed the like custom used by the *apostles*." Acts vi. 6. Wild "*new light*," good Dr.! The London divines in their "Divine Right," published 1645, say—"The pastor and deacon, under the New Testament, seem to answer the priests and Levites under the Old Testament," page 150, Ed. N. Y., 1844. The Form of Government says—"As there were in the Jewish church, *elders* of the people *joined with* the priests *and* Levites in the government of the church: so Christ who has instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the church." Proof, 2 Chron. xix. 8—10. The London divines wrote in vindication of the doctrines of "the Form." Much more "*light*" of this kind might be referred to, but we stop with *old Westminster light*. It is the old light of the Bible, and we shall follow it up a little. The Levitical functions are worthy our grave and candid consideration, from which two important facts, will, we think, appear to the impartial inquirer after truth. 1. That there were three distinct, ordinary, and perpetual officers ordained, and to whom were committed the whole governmental concerns of the church in spiritual and temporal affairs. 2. That those three answer to the pastor, elder, and deacon, to whom in like manner all the affairs of the church in spiritual and temporal concerns are, by divine authority, committed. In our illustrations we shall have occasion to refer to more texts than our limits will permit to transcribe. We ask the reader to open his Bible and read, in order, carefully and prayerfully the passages to which we refer him. Then let him judge of the truth of our positions. We take the following.

1. The tribe of Levi was divided into three classes of ecclesiastical officers, as, *First*, The priests, the sons of Aaron, distinguished from the Levites by their ordination, garments, anointing, mitre, bonnet, &c. Lev. viii. *Second*, The chief of the Fathers of the Levites, or *elders*, distinct from civil elders. 2 Chron. xix. 8—11. And, *Third*, Levites for *service only*, as distinct from both *rule* and spiritual ministrations. Num. viii. 6—26. These were ordained by the first class, the priests, and were distinct from them both in ordination and functions. Nor should it be overlooked that these all are sometimes indiscriminately called *Levites*, being all of the tribe of Levi. 2 Chron. xxx. 27; Deut. xviii. 1, 2; Deut. x. 8, 9. The latter is emphatically so, where priests are styled by the general designation, "tribe of Levi." 2. The priests were the regular and ordinary expounders, preachers, or teachers of the law. 2 Chron. xv. 3; Neh. viii. 2; Mal. ii. 1—7; Lev. x. 8—11. 3. The priests blessed the people, which answered to the apostolic benediction pronounced by New Testament ministers. Num. vi. 23—26. "Aaron

and his sons." Lev. ix. 22. "And Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people and blessed them." Deut. xxi. 5. "The priests, the sons of Levi, God hath chosen to bless in his name." 1 Chron. xxiii. 13. "Aaron was separated, to bless in his name for ever." Josh. viii. 33. 4. The priests, exclusively, offered sacrifices, burned incense, and ministered at the altar—though ministered *unto*, as ministers of the gospel are in dispensing sacraments, by inferior officers, in furnishing elements and having charge of vessels, the property of the congregation of the Lord's people. Lev. i. 5; 1 Chron. vi. 48, 49. Now, no Levite, not a priest, or son of Aaron, dared, on *pain of death*, offer offerings or incense, or minister in holy things typical of spiritual ministrations under the New Testament in the sanctuary or at the altar. Num. iv. 15—20; Num. xvi. 5—11, 35—40; Num. xviii. 1—8. To this it is objected that 1 Chron. xxiii. 27—32, intimates that the ordinary Levites did officiate in these services. We answer, (1.) The Levites only "*waited*" on the sons of Aaron, which is the analogy of faith on this head. (2.) This, after all, is the express bearing of the language of the text: read. "Because their office was to *wait* on (margin—station was at the hand of) the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord in the courts—in the work of service—for show bread—to offer all burnt sacrifices," &c. (3.) Parallel passages, where the language is stronger even, confirm this construction. 2 Chron. viii. 12; 1 Kings ix. 25. Now, did Solomon burn incense, &c.? Just as he built the temple. In one case by his priests—in the other by his workmen. He had no more right to burn incense than Uzziah. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. Again—Ezra viii. 35. "Also the children of those that had been carried away—offered burnt offerings." Now these children were neither all priests nor even Levites. The meaning is, the Levites offered by waiting on the priests while officiating at the altar. 5. The Levites, not priests, Aaron's sons, were ordained for "the *outward business* of the house of the Lord"—for temporalities. Weigh carefully the following portions. Num. i. 50—53; Num. iii. 6—10, 32—36; Num. iv. 15—20; Num. viii. 5—24; Num. xviii. 1—8; 1 Chron. ix. 26; 2 Chron. xxx. 16, 17; Neh. xi. 15, 16; Neh. xiii. 12, 13, and 29, 30. 6. Priests, elders, and Levites sometimes associated together in the management of temporalities; proving that priests had official power in spiritual ministration, in ecclesiastical rule, and in temporal ministrations—that elders, or chief of the fathers of the Levites, had only power to rule, and power in temporalities, and that all Levites had official power in temporal business. 1 Chron. xv. 2—15; 2 Chron. xix. 8—11. Here, "chief of the fathers of the Levites" means elders. Form, p. 21; 2 Chron. xxix. 3—8; Ezra viii. 25—30.

In closing our remarks upon the Levitical functions, we notice a few passages referring, by consent of all, to New Testament times, confirmatory of the positions taken. The vision of Ezekiel's city and temple, from the fortieth chapter to the end, gives one of the most sublime and graphic descriptions of the New Testament church, especially in the millennium, found in the Bible. So minute are the details—so delicate the lines and pencil shades, that the beholder gazes with astonishment and delight. And though the student of prophecy, on the very threshold, may stand with hesitancy, while he casts an eye over its labyrinth windings, yet he feels an assurance that while he gazes upon the architectural skill of the hand that projected the model city and significant temple, he stands before the city and temple of the New Testament

church. The prophet, giving the law of the house, points to the altar. (New Testament worship, Rev. xi. 2,) chap. xliii. verse 18. "These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it—and thou shalt give to the priests, the *Levites that be the sons of Zadok*, which approach unto me to minister unto me." In the next chapter, from the 10th verse we have a statement of functions performed by distinct functionaries. "And the Levites that are gone away from me when Israel went astray," (Antichristian apostacy which merged all the apostolical offices into a spiritual priesthood.) verse 11. "Yet they shall be ministers ('to serve in the dust') in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house, they shall slay the burnt offering and sacrifice for the people, and they (the Levites) shall stand before them (the people) to minister unto them, (as the divinely appointed 'agents of the people.') verse 13. And they shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near unto any of my holy things in the most holy place." verse 14. "But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein." In verse 15, the priests are again introduced by way of contrast, using a disjunctive—"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok—they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood—they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge." verse 23. "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause men to discern between the unclean and the clean." verse 24. "And in controversy they shall stand in judgment, (not civil, but as teaching elders in the New Testament church) and they shall judge it according to my judgments, and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies." Mal. ii. 7. So, "the priest's lips should keep knowledge," &c. Another portion involving the distinct official functions of New Testament priests and Levites. Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20. "Bless God, O Aaron's family." (Ministers of the gospel.) "O, bless the Lord of Levi's house." A distinct class; and both classes will answer to Phil. i. 1.

7. Our last position is—the tithe of the Old Testament was an ecclesiastical or a religious—not "a civil arrangement." The safe, though circuitous way of settling this question will be to examine each particular passage of the Bible in which tithe occurs, and put all together. We shall then see the character of the "arrangement." In Gen. xiv. 20, we have the first account of tithes: Abraham gave Melchizedek "tithes of all." This first instance of tithing involves, for substance, the whole subject—all the principles of the tithe system of the Old Testament. Was it "a civil arrangement?" Perhaps we cannot answer this question better than by giving the language of the learned Dr. Owen on Heb. vii., London Ed. 1840, vol. III., p. 427. And let it be remembered Dr. Owen lived and wrote about Westminster times, and in so far as the question of church *offices* and *officers* is concerned, he was a Westminster Presbyterian. He says:

"The second sacerdotal act or exercise of priestly power ascribed unto Melchizedek is, that he received tithes of all. For, 1. The tenth thus given was first given unto God; and he who received them, received them as God's officer in his name. When there was none in office to receive them, they were immediately to be offered to God in sacrifice according to their capacity. So Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 22; Gen. xxxv. 1—6. And, 2. Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 15. And I no way doubt but that these tenths that Abra-

ham gave, at least such of them as were meet for that service, were offered in sacrifice unto God by Melchizedek. For, whereas, he was a king, he stood in no need of any contribution from Abraham: nor was it honourable to receive any thing in way of compensation for his munificence in bringing forth bread and wine, which was to sell his kindness and spoil his bounty: nor would Abraham have despoiled the King of Sodom and others to give unto another. Wherefore, he received them as a priest, to offer what was meet in sacrifice to God whenever, no doubt, according to the customs of those times, there was a feast wherein they ate bread together, and were mutually refreshed. 3. This matter was afterwards *precisely* determined in the law, wherein *all tithes were appropriated unto the priests.*" Again he says, p. 431. "Wherefore, the giving of the tenth of the spoils was not from the obligation of any law, but was an act of free will and choice in the offerer. And as for the instance of Jacob, who vowed unto God the tenth of all, it is so far from proving that the tenth was due by any law, that it proves the contrary." We agree with Owen that the first instance of tithing presents no feature of "a civil arrangement," but of a religious, exclusively. The case of Jacob is of precisely the same character—nothing like "a civil arrangement."

The next instance is in Lev. xxvii. 30, "And *all* the tithe of the land—is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." Is this language ever applied in the Old Testament to "civil arrangements?" Never. All the tithe then under the law was the Lord's—sacred, not civil. Next, Num. xviii. 24—26, "But the tithes of the children of Israel which they offer *as a heave offering* unto the Lord, I have given to the *Levites* to inherit." Were the heave offerings a "civil arrangement?" Then, of course, were the tithes. This will not do. Again in order, Deut. xii. 5—7, 17. Instead of a "civil arrangement" here, we have as rich a vein of gospel grace as was ever "dug from Mount Sinai." Let the reader consult any pious commentator, say Dr. Scott, and he can have little doubt of its religious character. Then read again the passages, "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to *put his name there*, even unto *his habitation* shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come. And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings—sacrifices—*tithes*—heave offerings—vows—free-will-offerings—firstlings: And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God." Verse 17. "Thou mayest *not* eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn—wine—oil—firstlings—*but in the place,*" &c. These holy convocations, ceremonies, feasts, and offerings which brought the people before the Lord, where he had recorded his name, were no more civil than was the passover. We must turn over again. Deut. xiv. 22, 23. These refer, as in the last quoted, to the annual appearing before God to keep the *religious ceremony* of eating *before* the Lord in the place where he had promised to meet with his people and commune with them. Verse 28, 29 refer to triennial tithing, distinct from the annual referred to in the other passages. This common stock formed by triennial tithing was not laid up in the individual's *house*, to be distributed by himself or his agent, but laid up in the *walled cities*, for such had gates; and these were called "cities of tillage," in which the Levite tithes were laid up. Neh. x. 37. There were forty-eight cities of the Levites; and in all of them a common stock was laid up by tithing, for the ministers of religion and for the poor. To whom was this tithe given? To the Lord. Lev. xxvii. 30. Thrown into the Lord's store-house. Mal. iii. 10. Brought with the sacrifices. Amos iv. 4. As yet we have not come up with civil tithing. Is it in Deut. xxvi. 10—14? If not, we shall find the "civil arrangement" no where in the Bible.

Reader—will you read with us from the beginning of the chapter? We will paraphrase while you hold the Bible and read. God says to his people about to enter the promised land to this effect—"When you

go there, take the first fruits and go with them to the place where I shall choose to place my name. You shall go even unto the priest (not the king, or magistrate, or *trustee*)—yea, even unto the priest, and before him profess thy faith in thy God, and in his goodness in bringing thee out of the house of bondage—and while the priests shall take thy basket of thy tithes of thy hands and set it down before the Lord in the place of religious worship, even before God's altar; thou shalt then praise thy God, confessing thy sinful origin, a poor Syrian—thy father an Amorite, thy mother a Hittite, thank God for thy great deliverance, and all through thy Messiah to come, seen by faith in all thy offerings. And, moreover, thou shalt say, while thus before his altar, to thy God in these words—verse 10, “And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land (the *tithe* to thy priests before thine altar, in thy house of religious worship) which thou, O Lord, hast given me.” There too—“Thou shalt set it before the Lord, and *worship before the Lord thy God.*” Yea, moreover—verse 11. “Thou shalt rejoice”—in all the goodness of thy God, called to mind by these religious ceremonies. And then, towards the close of the religious exercises in which thou hast been engaged before God at his altar,—verse 12, Even “when thou hast made an end of tithing all thy tithes,” as thou hast just done to the priest who hath set thy basket down before the altar, just *thus* given through God's priest to the “Levite,” the ministry of religion, the stranger, fatherless, widow and poor, that they all may partake of this common stock brought in baskets, given to priests at the altar, and laid up in walled “cities of tillage,” that they may eat within thy gates (not *in thy private house of thy private bounty*) and be filled.” And now, in the very last act of a religious kind before the altar of thy God, thou shalt purge thyself of the sin of keeping back any of the tithe which thy God required to be brought to his altar in a basket, and laid at the feet of his priest; yea, thou shalt solemnly say—verse 13—“I have brought away the hallowed things (the tithe of the basket) out of mine house, (not kept back any part of dedicated things) and also, I have given them unto the Levite, &c., according to thy commandment which thou hast commanded me,” in verses 2—4 of this chapter. No, nor have I in any way, verse 14, “Eaten thereof,” in my own house, or “*distributed*” it by myself or by my agent in any way—thou knowest that in accordance with the government of thy house I gave all in my tithe basket to the priest, thy church officer, “according to all that thou hast commanded me.” In all this there is not the shadow of “a civil arrangement.

Perhaps, after all, this thing is to be found in the treasurers which Nehemiah made to “*distribute* unto their brethren.” Neh. xiii. 13. True—Nehemiah was the Tirshatha. So David, too, was the Chief Magistrate, and he “divided them into courses among the sons of Levi.” 1 Chron. xxiii. 6. And much more of the same did he do, as a reforming king. So Asa, 1 Kings xv. So Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxv. 1—16. “And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord.” Now, if the “charges of the priests in their service of the house of the Lord” was “a civil arrangement,” then were the “treasurers Nehemiah made” civil treasurers. And then too was the religious Psalm singing commanded by King Hezekiah, “a civil arrangement.” 2 Chron. xxix. 30; 2 Chron. xxxi. 2. Now, Nehemiah, the worthy pattern of the Parliament, in calling the Westminster Assembly, did no more than any reforming magistrate may do in endea-

vouring to purge the church of human inventions, and to restore the divinely established order and government of Christ's house—for this was just what he did. Neh. xiii. 13. "He made treasurers over the treasurers, Shelemiah the priest—and of the Levites—their office *was* (even before this restoration of the ancient order) to *distribute* unto their brethren." He says this was for the reformation of the house of God. Verse 14, "Remember me—that I have done for the house of my God, and for *the offices of the house of my God.*" In verses 29—31, he explains the whole matter, "They have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, *and* of the Levites. Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business." How came "strangers" to defile the covenant of the Levites? Had the multitude of the people placed their "agents," not of the tribe of Levi, over "*this business,*" over the treasures? If so, and how else shall we understand it? Did he not, under God, purge out those human corruptions and restore ordained officers to their places over all the business about God's house, spiritual and temporal, officers and treasurers? It seems, after all, these Levites of Nehemiah were the divinely appointed ecclesiastical "*distributors*" of the Old Testament, "answering to the New Testament deacons." Divine Right, p. 150.

In summing up the preceding, we conclude—the Old Testament tithe system was ecclesiastical or religious, and not civil. Because, 1. The tithes were "for the support of the ministry, the expenses of divine worship, and the relief of the poor;" objects *all* contemplated in the *divine* ecclesiastical organization. 2. They were in connexion with, and formed a part of the divinely appointed religious and devoted offerings to God, not to the king. 3. They went into the Lord's treasuries, never to the king's. 4. They were paid unto, or collected and distributed by ordained ecclesiastical officers appointed by the Head of the church. Hence, 5. The notion that a part of the tithe was "paid by the people"—that is, if we understand—not paid to the priests or Levites, but distributed by the people as their own almoners, and another part paid to the priests and Levites, which part, and which only they managed, is gratuitous and erroneous, void of even a shadow of proof. 6. That it is fallacious and illogical to infer from the assumption, even if it were true, that a part of the tithe was paid by individuals directly to objects of charity as private benevolence; that, therefore, trustees and not deacons may manage all the temporalities of a congregation, except the poor fund. The reasoning (?) is as puerile and absurd as to say—because the abolitionist, *as a man and individual*, is bound to admit the stranger slave under his roof, to his warm fire-side, to his well spread table, and to a share of his full purse, therefore a *congregation* may have trustees and not ordained deacons to manage their temporalities! Every Israelite was bound, as an abolitionist to all similar acts of benevolence. The question at issue is—how, and where was the Israelite, *as a church member*, to send up his tithe *dedicated and due to God for church purposes?* *This* is the question. The assertion that, "Now, beyond receiving and distributing whatever was put into their hands for that purpose, the priests and Levites did not interfere in these matters. The tithing was a civil arrangement, and was done by the people," Reformed Presbyterian, Vol. XI. No. XII., is irrelevant. It is even worse than irrelevant to say in this connexion, "The people may

in whole or in part be their own almoners, the dispensers of their own gifts. This is their civil right." What has private benevolence, the giving of a man's "own" to the poor, to do with things dedicated to the church, and no more "his own," but the Lord's and common church stock, the stock of the organic moral person?

We notice briefly an objection having some bearing upon the general question—"The Levites were supported by the tithe as the priests, and hence, could not answer to the New Testament deacons." We answer, *First*, The Levites were not so maintained, there was a difference. Num. xviii. 26—28; Neh. x. 37, 38. *Second*, The tithes were all the Lord's, were for the poor, and all religious purposes. Lev. xxvii. 30—32; Deut. xiv. 29. *Third*, The Levites did not depend upon the tithe entirely for sustenance, but had large inheritance. Num. xxxv. 1—8; 2 Chron. xi. 13—15; 2 Chron. xiii. 9, 10. *Fourth*, They were employed in various lucrative ways, just as any elder or deacon may be now. They were officers, elders, civil judges, overseers, workmen, &c. 1 Chron. xxiii. 1—32. *Fifth*, They were not, as ministers of religion, entirely and exclusively devoted to sacred things as were the priests, and as ministers of the gospel should be. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14; 1 Cor. x. 18; Num. xviii. 8—10, and 20.

A few concluding remarks before turning over to the New Testament. The first Christian converts, the materials for the first church organizations, were from among the Jews. Matt. x. 5, 6. They were remarkably tenacious of all their religious customs, as, (1.) Of their Psalms. (2.) Concerning blood and things strangled. Acts xv. 20. (3.) Circumcision. Acts xv. 1. (4.) Concerning unclean beasts. Acts x. 14. (5.) Eating with the uncircumcised. Acts xi. 3. (6.) Synagogue worship. (7.) Putting all moneys, devoted things (tithes?) into the hands (at the feet?) of officers of the church. For a time they had no Scriptures to direct them but the Old Testament in those matters. *Of course* they would at first bring all their religious offerings and "tithes" to church officers, which they did. Acts iv. 37; Acts v. 1—4. This, too, was their custom eight years after. Acts xi. 30. Yea, and after this about eighteen years, when churches were organized. 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4. Here, reader, for you, a few questions by the way. 1. By whom were Sabbath collections taken up in the primitive Christian churches? 2. By whom were their collections carried up to Jerusalem, when carried up to the elders? Acts xi. 30. 3. To whom delivered, or at whose feet laid up at Jerusalem? Acts iv. 37. 4. Who carried up the collection, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4; Paul, or some pastor or elder of that congregation going up to Synod at Jerusalem? 5. Who was sent by Paul the apostle and approved by letter (certificate) to carry up? a trustee of the congregation, or delegate to Synod, who, when up there, would sit among the elders in Synod? 6. Does our "form of government" apply these texts, Acts xi. 30; 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4, to trustees or to ordained officers of the church? pp. 17, 18. Which? 7. Are Covenanters bound to this said application and exposition of these texts? 8. As faith is shown by works, how do Covenanters apply these portions now, by sending all their contributions by trustees or by ordained officers going up thither, and at whose feet? We once heard a young minister say, "he did not know he was ordained over these things." We just then thought, had the young brother read the constitution before he swore it, he might not have taken the oath at all; he did not think that *that* slavery was in the con-

stitution! Perhaps, like too many, he made "reservation" of the drudgery sections! The application of the texts referred to is settled in our constitution. But we are anticipating. We now look into the New Testament.

The first thing, in this connexion, which arrests attention is the common stock laid at the apostles' feet. This stock was money. Acts ii. 45; Acts iv. 34—37; Acts v. 1—4. The question now arises, was it civil or ecclesiastical? To settle the *character* of this common fund is the *main* thing. For if it was civil, a dividend at any time could be made, and the whole revert back to each individual having an interest in the joint stock. Or even after the goods were sold with the purpose in the mind of putting the money into the civil stock, it might be held back and not given. I may sell my farm to-day for any civil or secular purpose; to-morrow I may change my mind, my purpose, and my investment, and offend neither God nor man. On the *character* of this fund rests the *whole issue*. It was not *civil*—because,

1. Such joint civil arrangements would have been similar to a Sons of Temperance association, tending to break down the church organization. It must have worked, too, as did the English poor laws of Elizabeth, at the time of the Westminster Assembly; crippling the church in her endeavours in settling a government for England. And let us not forget—the stock, whatever its character before the vi. of the Acts, *was*, in part, poor fund, as was the "need" of the vi. by all conceded to be poor fund, in part—the poor *were* supplied out of it: and the "need" of the vi. chap. was not an entirely new thing for the first time occurring. That a new character of *paupers* appeared, is foreign to this subject; and beyond this there is no shadow of evidence. What better than Fourierism, for all the Christians *absolutely* to sell all their goods, and invest all the money in common civil stock? Then, if *all* their effects were sold, where did they reside? and, especially, on what did they all labour? It may be said, they rented houses. Granted. But what, then, would bare walls avail, without household possessions? 2. To lay such joint civil stock at the apostles' feet—*all* their civil possessions—was profane, and incompatible with the apostolical functions. They would not have suffered it; nor themselves to be dividers of civil inheritances. But they did receive and divide. Hence, the fund was not civil. 3. To ordain seven men, by imposition of hands, over a civil joint stock, was as profane—which profane thing they did, if *all* in the possession of the whole Christian church had been previously thrown into one common civil fund—for then, out of what could a poor fund have been created? And how could any of that stock, already given out of Christians' *own* hands, laid at apostles' feet, and, consequently, directions thereto given, be *misdirected* so as to form the object of an ecclesiastical ordination. 4. For Christians to throw all their effects into any civil stock, thus giving all to civil purposes, is to rob God, the greatest civil sin; and to rob his church, the next in criminality. Mal. iii. 7. God and his church *always* had higher claims than civil arrangements; and, we are sure, apostolic times formed no exceptions. 5. Such was to make the care of the poor a civil, not a church arrangement, which is an error. There are good reasons why all the poor of the church should be under her care exclusively. One only we give. All church members should have access to all her ordinances. Hence, every pauper should be lodged in a family of the church where God is worshipped according to the pat-

tern. This, we are confident, is included in the divine designs in the organization of a visible church. 6. This is in direct opposition to the letter and spirit of the standards, which say, ministers are ordained over such funds, "to take care of the poor," which doctrine they prove by Acts xi. 30, Acts iv. 34—37. They find poor fund here, and fund under the official power of ordained officers. Form, p. 17, 18. How can these texts, with the others quoted, prove what belongs to the pastoral office, if they refer to the power of the magistrate, or to the civil rights of the multitude of the people? Then, either the stock was *not* civil—or, to manage civil joint stock is a power communicated by ordination to the pastoral office—or, our standards are wrong. The two latter cannot be admitted—the former is the truth; this joint common money stock was not civil. It was managed, neither by the magistrate nor his "substitute." *The fund was ecclesiastical.* Because,

1. For all the reasons, tithes belonged to an ecclesiastical arrangement. Like tithe devoted to God for sacred purposes, laid at apostles' feet, as tithe at the priest's "in a basket," and could not be held back by the donor, for it was no more his "own." Acts v. 1—4. To hold it back, it seems, was to "lie to the Holy Ghost." Why? Because a sacred, or religious transaction, not civil; and, because keeping back, was keeping back from God, and not from man—was the violation of a solemn religious covenant betwixt the soul and God, and not betwixt the soul and civil society.

The phrase, "at the feet of," has a technical and settled meaning; and no man has the right of giving to it a new and unusual, a forced and unnatural application. It means, power over that which is laid at the feet. The apostles had official power over the fund. Remember, it is not said, Peter's, John's, Paul's feet—but apostles' feet. Reference to all the places where the phrase occurs, will settle this matter. In Acts xxii. 3, "Feet of Gamaliel," means, power of a master over his scholar. Acts vii. 58, "Clothes at Saul's feet," means, charge over, as keeper in trust. So says Saul himself, Acts xxii. 20: "I *kept* the raiment." In Deut. xi. 6, our translators say, "Substance that was in their possession;" original, "Substance at their feet"—synonymous. Judges iv. 10, "Barak (a general,) went up with ten thousand men at his feet"—under his command. Ps. viii. 6, "All things put under Christ's feet," means, delegated mediatory official power over. Error and sophistry may attempt to wrest the meaning—truth scorns such paltry tricks.

2. No individual could appropriate of this fund to his private use, but such as church law contemplated, as having need. Acts ii. 45, Acts iv. 34. The whole church fund being (like tithe,) laid under official control, must have been managed according to church rule, as a matter of course. At that time, all church power, spiritual and temporal, whether of church officers or of church courts, was in the apostles, till distributed and lodged with bishops and deacons, or rulers and distributors; and with sessions, presbyteries and synods. Acts xi. 30, Acts xiv. 23. 3. There was one only common fund for all church purposes. Where a second—one at the apostles' feet, another in the people's hands—both distributed by their respective managers? No where, but in men's imaginations. On such an airy foundation no theory should be based. 4. This church fund was not extraordinary in character, kind, ends, objects—only in degree; that is, saints of property then exceeded in liberality. Persecution furnished the occasion. Persecution has, in later times,

occasioned proximate liberality. Sometimes among the Waldensian churches—sometimes among the other persecuted continental churches; nor was the persecuted church of Scotland always a stranger to the “occasion,” of great sacrifices even, in this matter of great liberality. But our standards put this matter at rest with all who believe them, and regard their profession. They decide that this fund was ordinary, distributed according to ordinary principles of church government; that it establishes divine right, and ordinary and perpetual ordinances in the church—yea, “unalterable form of church government.” Westminster Form. “The pastor is an ordinary and perpetual officer in the church.” P. 12. “It belongs to his office,”—p. 13,—“to take care of the poor.” Proof—Acts xi. 30, and Acts iv. 34, 35, 36, 37. And yet some who *swear* to this, that these texts prove the ordinary and perpetual *official* power of an ordained officer, *say* they prove the *unofficial* power of the people, or their agents. Which do they believe?—what they *swear*, or what they *say*? If the latter, how much truth does the oath confirm? Again, the standards say, Acts vi. 1—4 “holds out deacons,” whose office is perpetual, and to distribute to the poor. Form, Pp. 22, 23. Now, has the church attempted to establish an ordinary and perpetual institution “*jure divino*,” from an extraordinary and temporary circumstance? If so, no marvel many of her sons don’t believe her. Nor could any sensible Christian man believe any such absurdity. If the fund at the apostles’ feet, and of Acts vi., was not ecclesiastical and ordinary, the Testimony and the Westminster Form err. Others may, we shall not, impugn the standards. The common fund was ecclesiastical, not civil.

We now turn over to Acts vi. 1—6, from which we deduce the following. The apostles ordained *deacons, distinct, perpetual officers—requisite in each particular congregation for temporalities exclusively*. This proposition is stated in the very language of our acknowledged standards. And now, if all who subscribe the standards are willing to abide by their subscription, and refrain from assuming any position contravening, there will be little difficulty in settling the whole question about the deacon—the office, extent of the power, duty of having the officer in each particular congregation, &c. It is worthy of grave reflection, that every *material* position taken by anti-deacon, or half-way anti-deacon men, is in direct opposition to the standards. Even the position, confidently declared to be “*the key-stone of the arch*,” is of this character. It is perfectly utopian to think that the covenanted church will ever be brought to harmonize in standing upon an arch, whose “*key-stone*” is of human daubing—rejecting the old Bible key-stone laid by our covenant fathers, when erecting the beautiful and compact fabric of “our unalterable form of church government.” The fund laid at the apostles’ feet was not managed by the people. If so, how came our standards to commit the puerile blunder of attempting to prove the *ordained official* power of the successors of the apostles, in managing church funds, from Acts iv. 34—37? But to the proposition. We argue,

I. *From the power or party electing “the seven”*—the people, congregation, or “multitude of the disciples”—*they* elected. Verses 2, 5.

1. The divine right of a congregation to elect ministers, elders, and deacons, is long established—is recognised in *our* covenanted reformation, and ever since 1551 received as axiomatic. Any position impair-

ing is deemed *de facto* an error. But does any one therefore maintain either from the Bible, the standards, or from nature, that any congregation or multitude of disciples have a divine right to elect either minister, elder, or deacon, for any other congregation or people? Is it ever claimed that any congregation or people have the right of choosing from among themselves a candidate for the ministry for the church catholic, or for the heathen, and to be, by an ordination instanter, clothed with the pastoral office and sent abroad? This is absurd—none believe it. If any do, it is like the deacon faith of some, never practised. Long, long have Presbyterians claimed this passage as establishing the divine right of congregations to choose *all* their officers. They have long withstood the claims of *patrons*, yea, of church courts even, to choose for the people any officer. Not even the apostles, Paul and Barnabas—no, nor the whole college of apostles, dared assume the right of choosing any officer for any congregation. The Presbyterian elective franchise is sacred, and well defined.

2. The “seven” chosen could not have been fixed pastors, as seen from the narrative—no such intimation. On the contrary, it is opposed to all established usage in the history of presbyterianism, to elect from among the common people, and on the very day of election, before the assembled multitude of electors, ordain to the holy ministry. This would be, with a witness, “laying on hands suddenly”—contrary to express precept, example, and teaching of the Bible. The following, and parallel passages, plainly show the designation to the gospel ministry: Matt. x. 7, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, Mark xvi. 15, Luke ix. 2, Acts i. 16, 17—25, Acts xiii. 2—5, 1 Tim. v. 22. Here the designation is plain, for temporal things. Beyond this, is begging the question.

3. They were not evangelists. For, *first*—evangelists, like apostles, were never chosen by the multitude of the people—by congregations. Reference to the above texts just quoted, will settle this matter. They were appointed by Christ himself, or by the apostles extraordinary. Never elected by the people, any more than missionaries are now, *then* ordained and sent by church courts. How much “*dead faith*” must all errorists need have in evangelical churches! For, *second*—evangelists were *itinerants*; not like pastors, ministering to congregations by whom they were chosen. *They travelled*. Luke x. 1, Titus i. 5. The twelve apostles were not travellers—“and they were all scattered abroad, *except the apostles.*” Acts viii. 1, Acts xv. 2, 23.

II. *From the reason and occasion for the election and ordination.* 1. The increase of disciples in the church of Jerusalem. This could have been no reason for sending out evangelists to the heathen, but a good one for electing deacons from “among themselves,” to serve them at Jerusalem. 2. The murmuring was about temporalities, not preaching or any spirituality—about the daily “*diaconia*,” not the “*diaconia logou*.” These, by the Spirit of inspiration, are here placed in contrast. The cure was designed for the complaint. A stone was not given for bread. 3. Temporal matters began to interfere with spiritual duties. Hence, deacons, to meet the *interference*, and to remedy its effects, diverting from spiritual things. 4. The occasion furnished no reason for ordaining any other kind of officer, except temporal. To appoint seven men to spiritual functions, to relieve twelve from temporal, is absurd! This would give more time for temporal things only—the very opposite of that for which they needed time. 5. It is objected here—“Some of the ‘seven’ preached—we have no after account of

their ordination, therefore, this ordination was to preach." Ans. (1.) We have no account of the *ceremony* of the ordination of any one of all the evangelists that ever preached in primitive times—where? Do we not read of Paul preaching long before any word of his ordination? (2.) As we have said before, evangelists never were ordained pursuant to such election. (3.) Christ, in his word, provides for the rising of deacons in office, 1 Tim. iii. 13, while he makes no provision for the election of evangelists. (4.) The standards decide positively that this election by the people was for deacons, and not for preachers of any kind. "Deacons, to whose office it belongs, *not* to preach the word." Proved from Acts vi. 1—6. Form of Gov. p. 23. The "seven" were not ordained to preach; at least, our standards are as good authority as the *ipse dixit* of those who contradict them: of those, especially, who *profess* to make them theirs.

III. *The election and ordination establish an ordinary, perpetual, and unalterable institution.* 1. The institution, upon this occasion, of the ordinary and perpetual office of deacon, as distinct, is according to the analogy of faith. The patriarchal form of government was changed on the first occasion—the numerous family of Jacob remaining together. The family merges into a nation, and church and state begin to appear in distinct organizations. Moses institutes the civil Sanhedrim, courts of appeal, &c., on the first occasion. Ex. xviii. 21, 22. Elders were ordained in every church, only when need arose. Church courts, congregational elderships, classical and synodical, when the first occasions occurred for their organization. Settled pastors were introduced in the room of an itinerancy, as congregations began to put on a full organic form. The right of the people to elect *all* their officers, was guaranteed when congregations were ripe for them. Sabbath collections for general or synodical purposes were taken up in congregations, and sent up to Synod, (Acts xi. 30, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4,) when the whole church began to be compactly organized in presbyterial form, and officers and powers extraordinary were being passed away. The church, under all dispensations, went gradually into organization, and by single example, one thing after another became established, till the whole New Testament fabric was erected. And because usages and divinely established order have a beginning, must the first occurrence, therefore, be pronounced extraordinary and of no authority? Then no scripture example can ever have any force. Was there not a first election—a first ordination—a first congregational eldership—a first presbytery—a first synod, &c.? And were all these, what some call, extraordinary? But, 2. The subsequent practice and order of the church were established upon this ground as a basis. Acts xi. 30, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4, Phil. i. 1, 1 Tim. iii. 8. And our standards are in perfect accordance with the practice of the primitive church, in improving the example of the election of the seven deacons at Jerusalem. Form, p. 23, 26. Ref. Prin. p. 87, 88. Scottish Testimony p. 65. And, consequently, they decide that Acts vi. 1—6, establish ordinary, perpetual, and unalterable truth—the divine right of the temporal deacon.

IV. *From the business over which the seven were ordained.* In considering this last argument, we shall take occasion to recapitulate, and present in one brief view, the whole question at issue. There are three distinct views of the business or need over which the seven were ordained; and as having reference, somehow, to the fund at the apostles'

feet. 1. That the whole was extraordinary—the fund and all arrangements connected therewith; consequently, prove nothing. 2. That it was ordinary; but distinct from the common stock at the apostles' feet, managed by the people as their civil property, in the exercise of their civil rights, as members of a civil association, and no part under the control of the apostles as church officers. Hence, never committed to the "seven." But, a new case bringing poor *first* to light, called for deacons to manage the poor fund *exclusively*. 3. That the *money* at the apostles' feet was all church fund, for all church purposes, managed by the apostles as church officers, transferred by them to the "seven," and all this settling ordinary and permanent institutions in the church.

Now, the *first* involves the following absurdities: 1. That the apostles solemnly ordained men over an extraordinary joint civil stock of property possessions, and that too, *pro tem!*—which was to profane Christ's name, as much so as to ordain a chaplain, who should have power to manage provisions for a sea voyage, or a military campaign! 2. That it can never be quoted in proof of any thing ordinary, which, if true, the church has absurdly done!

The *second* involves the following absurdities: 1. Before the ordination of the "seven," Acts vi., the church had no fund for ordinary church purposes; as for the ministry and support of gospel ordinances; nor yet, either poor or poor fund. 2. If they ordained for the Grecian widows' business, they ordained for a nonentity; not over the people's fund, nor the apostles', since they had none; consequently, over no fund then in existence. 3. If a church fund was contemplated, of what *could* it be formed, if no man had any thing of his own, if all was in the civil stock of the people in their civil ecclesiastico-organic associated capacity? For we are told that absolutely, "no man had aught his own," Acts iv. 32. Of what could a fund for the poor Grecian widows be formed, without levying upon things otherwise appropriated, and beyond the control of individual donors? 4. That there could not have been either ground or object of complaint, either justly or unjustly. Against whom? For what? Who could neglect the widows, when none had a poor fund to dispense, on which widows had any claim? 5. Scarcely any case can be even supposed to exist, exhibiting more uncivilized anarchy: twelve thousand Christians, as is supposed, all having equal claims upon a common stock, and all distributors! No wonder poor weak widows were trampled down in the general scramble! High time for apostolic extraordinary interference, in this civil derangement in the ecclesiastical machinery, to bring order out of confusion! 6. That this view of the distribution or management by the people, and *unofficial*, is against the standards which say preachers distributed. Form of Gov. p. 17.

Finally, the *third* and true view. 1. The apostles did supervise the whole fund, which was neither impossible nor absurd. They had with them "one hundred and twenty disciples," Acts i. 15, distinct from the "multitude of the disciples," Acts vi. 2, said to be twelve thousand at least. Perhaps, too, they had with them the seventy sent out by Christ. Then, surely, one hundred and thirty-one, or two hundred and one, ecclesiastical officers could have distributed for twelve thousand. But if they managed for the poor, the ministers and gospel ordinances only, the difficulty vanishes. 2. The apostles ordained the "seven" to attend to the business or need which the whole church fund was to supply. Compare Acts ii. 45 and Acts iv. 35, with Acts vi. 3. "This

business," or work, was to distribute to all, "*as every man had need;*" the same with "serving tables"—"diaconein trapedzais"—to serve in money matters. 3. The whole transaction being ordinary, and for perpetual example and authority, establishing a permanent institution, the seven were ordinary and perpetual officers of the congregation electing them. So decide our standards. Form of Gov. p. 22, 23, 26. Testimony, p. 87, 88.

The extent of the power of the deacon, the duty of immediately restoring this officer to his place in the church, and of removing the trustee which has supplanted the deacon, remain to be considered hereafter.

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EMANCIPATION IN KENTUCKY.—HENRY CLAY.

Our readers are aware that there is a strong party in Kentucky earnestly desirous of ridding that State of the *burden* of slavery—a few, probably, wish to free themselves from the *sin*. A convention has been called to amend the constitution, and slavery is expected to be *the* question before the convention. However, the opposition spirit is fairly roused, and, to the astonishment of all parties, the legislature, during its late sessions, passed, nearly unanimously, a resolution deprecating any present action in reference to emancipation. Under these circumstances, a letter has appeared from the pen of Henry Clay, which has, of course, attracted a great deal of attention. But what shall we say of this letter? Is it a letter worthy of a statesman—to say nothing of a philanthropist, a republican? Far from it, we are constrained to say. It is a little in advance in its theory of his celebrated speech in the senate of the United States, which lost him his election to the presidency, but in most of its practical details, it displays the same cold-blooded indifference to the rights and feelings of the oppressed.

The following is good, true, and seasonable; and will be a bitter draught for the slavites of the Calhoun school, and even for the less excusable apologist of the system in the northern states.

"I am aware that there are respectable persons who believe that slavery is a blessing, that the institution ought to exist in every well-organized society, and that it is even favourable to the preservation of liberty. Happily, the number who entertain these extravagant opinions is not very great, and the time would be uselessly occupied in an elaborate refutation of them. I would, however, remark that if slavery be fraught with these alleged benefits, the principle on which it is maintained would require that one portion of the white race should be reduced to bondage to serve another portion of the same race, when black subjects of slavery could not be obtained, and that in Africa, where they may entertain as great a preference for their colour as we do for ours, they would be justified in reducing the whites to slavery, in order to secure the blessings which that state is said to diffuse. An argument in favour of reducing the African race to slavery, is sometimes derived from their alleged intellectual inferiority to the white races; but, if this argument be founded in fact, (as it may be, but which I will not now examine,) it would prove entirely too much. It would prove that every white nation which had made greater advances in civilization, knowledge, and wisdom, than another white nation, would have a right to reduce the latter to a state of bondage. Nay, farther, if the principle of subjugation founded upon intellectual superiority be true, and be applicable to races and to nations, what is to prevent its being applied to individuals? And then the wisest man in the world would have a right to make slaves of all the rest of mankind! If, indeed, we possess this intellectual superiority, profoundly grateful and thankful to Him who has bestowed it, we ought to fulfil all the duties and obligations which