

LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF

“ A COLLECTION OF THE ESSAYS ON THE

SUBJECT OF

EPISCOPACY,

WHICH ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN

THE

ALBANY CENTINEL.

WITH ADDITIONAL

NOTES AND REMARKS.”

BY THE AUTHOR OF “ MISCELLANIES.”

“ With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

1. TIM. IV. 14.

“ The mystery of iniquity doth already work.”

2 THESS. II. 7.

“ A bishop, during the first and second century, was a person who had the care of one christian assembly.”

MOSHEIM.

“ The Christian doctors had the good fortune to persuade the people, that the ministers of the Christian church succeeded to the character, rights and privileges of the Jewish priesthood ; and this persuasion was a new source both of honors and profit to the sacred order.”

MOSHEIM.

ALBANY :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT was intended that the two first of the following letters should appear in the *Albany Centinel* ; but the printer having suggested, that this might occasion the application to him of more bishops than he could find *dioceses*, the writer has altered the letters, added some others, and printed the whole in the shape of a pamphlet. This will be more durable, more suitable for the pocket, and more convenient for the reader to consult at his leisure.

Albany, May 1806.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

HAD you chosen to collect and publish the Essays in the same order in which they originally appeared, without a *Preface*, without *correction* or *addition*, and without numerous *notes* and *remarks*, you would not have been troubled with any observations from me. Now, I think it necessary, for the cause in which I have been engaged, and it may be serviceable to yourself, to point out in as few words as possible, some things in which you seem to have acted unfairly. At the same time, I hope, that any error has proceeded from the judgment merely ; or from a zeal which sometimes hurries the best of men beyond the bounds of discretion.

1. In your *preface* you assert, that “ the author of *Miscellanies* has, with great industry, collected together all the arguments against Episcopacy.” This is not correct. The author has in his possession certain numbers which he never published, and he had contemplated others. He had no opportunity to publish these, nor remarks which he intended on the pieces of his opponents. The reader will find several things promised which you remark (rather tauntingly) were never performed. It was impossible for me standing alone against four sons of the episcopal church, diligent and copious writers, to find room in the

newspaper. Besides the public wished to see an end to the controversy.

Again, you assert, that “as the printers became at length extremely averse to publishing on the subject, the advocates of episcopacy were compelled to pass by, without *particular* notice, several of the assertions of the author of *Miscellanies*. These are principally the subjects of the additional *notes* and *remarks* added to this volume by the *Editor*.” That the printers should become averse to publishing is no wonder, considering the manuscripts which daily poured in from the episcopal side ; but if you mean any reflection upon them, you do them great injustice. They gave you ample time and room, and they had my request and approbation (so far as these are of weight) in the conduct which they pursued. Is it fair in you to represent me as having “collected together all the arguments against episcopacy,” and, after the advocates had written more than twice as much, to come forward with *additional notes and remarks* ; no opportunity being afforded to me to make a single explanation or addition ? Your publication has been made entirely without my knowledge, or even suspicion.

“In the present publication,” you say, “the arguments *for* and *against* Episcopacy are presented to the reader ; and he has thus a fair opportunity of judging of the merits of this important question.” You must think that your book, especially having so many *additional notes and remarks*, contains all which can be said *for* episcopacy ; but assuredly it does not contain all which can, and was intended to be said *against* it. I trust, however, that the intelligent and candid reader will think that enough has been

said, notwithstanding you have arranged the business in your own way, burdened my text with notes, and frequently either misrepresented, or mistaken its meaning.

In your preface also, the matter of controversy between us is rather concealed, than properly exhibited. You alledge, that “every Christian minister must be vested with *a divine commission*.” Respecting this, there has not been, and there can be no dispute. The single point is, whether the ordinances of the church administered by Presbyterians are *valid* ; or whether Episcopalians alone, and to the utter exclusion of all others, have a valid ministry. I am glad to find, that both in your preface and your notes, you have shown a liberality and benevolence which you have not expressed in “a companion for the altar,” and “a companion for the festivals and fasts.”

2. You have not placed the Essays in the order in which they originally appeared. Besides that some are printed as a whole which had appeared in parts, and at different times, you have transposed the others too generally. Why have you done this ? Is not your arrangement calculated to alter the impression formerly made on the public ? Were they not entitled to, and had they not a right to expect the old view of the subject ? Is there not now, as you have managed it, an anticipation of my arguments, so as to put them into a disadvantageous light ? The pieces were printed in one order, you have re-printed them in another. This is the cause of greater complaint, because few readers may recollect the original order, and may be deceived by this false mirror which is held up to them.

3. In your publication there are several alter-

ations and corrections in what was written by my episcopal opponents. I have compared only a small part with the newspapers ; and indeed I checked myself, having, certainly, so much confidence in you as to believe that you would not alter the original text. The variations, so far as I went, are verbal and not material. Any thing of importance is found in certain *editorial notes*, which ought to be considered the same as a real amendment or explanation of the text. I refer you to pages, 6. 15. 85. 107. Where is the difference between correcting and adding by a note, or otherwise ? Cannot the sense be entirely changed and new arguments added by a note ? With respect to two of the corrections, I doubt whether, in the capacity of an *Editor*, you had a right to make them, unless the authors had invested you with the powers of a *Plenipotentiary*. But, when it is known, that you have exercised a privilege denied to me, and one in which I was interested—that I could not change a single word, nor make a single note, your conduct will be thought, at least, questionable.

4. Not contented with the liberties already mentioned, you have inserted a piece unknown to me before. This is “ A Letter from *Cornelius to Cyprian*,” beginning, “ Dear Brother.” The reason which you give for the insertion of this brotherly epistle, is as follows : “ The foregoing letter was sent to the printers of the Albany Centinel, who, from a wish not to extend the controversy, declined inserting it.” This letter you have placed in the 133 page of your collection, being 77 pages before the conclusion of said work ; so that it may be supposed to have been written about that time, considerably beyond which the “ controversy was extended.” No

certain conclusion, however, can be drawn from your collation of the Essays. This one may have been written just when "Cyprian" was *summing up*, and yet you may have chosen to stick it in here. What has it to do with "a collection of the Essays which appeared in the Albany Centinel?" It never was printed there. If it contains nothing new, it is lumber in the volume. If it militates against me, as you must have thought by inserting it, the collection is no longer what you pretend. The controversy is not such as it stood in the newspaper. Here is a new piece consisting of nearly three pages; and which, perhaps, you might have more wisely, certainly, more fairly, cut up and interspersed among your multiplied notes. I never have yet fully known the number and exertions of my assailants. Lo, one is presented of whom I had not the least warning or conception! I appeal to you, Sir, as to the ingenuousness of this, and the propriety of calling your publication "a collection of *the* Essays which originally appeared," &c. Is it not a collection of these so arranged and altered as to give them a very different appearance?



LETTER II.

SIR,

HAVING objected, in my former letter, against your *preface*—the manner in which you have *misplaced* the Essays—your *alterations and corrections*, by certain notes, of what was written by the advocates for episcopacy—and the addition of a whole essay—I object now,

5. Against the plentiful *Notes and Remarks* which you have annexed to the essays written by me. It is true, that in the quality of an *Editor*, you were “at liberty to republish them with such comment as you might think proper ;” but if this comment should contain misrepresentations or mistakes, the author will justly complain.—The work of a commentator is always difficult and requires great judgment ; too often is he found to obscure instead of elucidating the original. It is besides, in the power of an ingenious man so to interpret an author as to make him teach what was the farthest from his design.—Thus, explanations may be read of the *seventeenth* article of the Episcopal church, diametrically opposite to the meaning of the venerable divines who penned it ; and as opposite to what the words, in their common and plain acceptance, have ever conveyed.

It will not be expected that I should go through all your notes and remarks ; much less that I should enter upon a formal refutation of them. I shall take notice of a few, just as they occur in your book, and which are evidently, evasion, mistake, or misrepresentation.

In your first note, and in some notes which follow, you blame me for asserting, that “the Classical or Presbyterial form of church government is the true and only one which Christ hath prescribed in his word,” while I complain of Episcopalians for maintaining that their government is of *divine right*. You will please to observe, that I do not give this opinion to the exclusion of all others. In the very next paragraph, I speak of Presbyterianism as having “the fairest claim to a divine right.” I have never denied the validity of the ordination and of the sacraments ad-

ministered by Episcopalians. In the last piece of mine in the Collection, p. 193. I say expressly, “ I believe that the Episcopal church is a part of the church of Christ, and that the ordinances administered by her are, with the blessing of God, effectual means of salvation. Did I reside in a place where I could attend only that church, I would worship with her, and receive the sacraments from her hand ; yea, had I been educated in that church, I think it highly probable, that I would remain in her communion.” Is this, Sir, bigotted or uncharitable ? Is this setting up exclusive pretensions ? Have I ever contended for the *re-baptism* or *re-ordination* of those who left the episcopal, and joined the presbyterian church ? Have I not, in another place, p. 138. explicitly avowed my sentiments, by saying, “ I would be cautious in asserting the *divine right* either of Episcopacy, or of Presbyterianism ; though I think, that the latter has the superior claim ?”—Must you not be sensible that you have not shown the same liberality in the books which you have published ? Do you not know that your church does not, either in doctrine or practice, extend the same privilege to others which they do to her ?

You ask in a note, p. 12. “ Is not every pastor *the* bishop of his congregation.” Yes, Sir, most assuredly ; but this is very different from a man being styled “ *the* bishop” in the episcopal church ; from a *diocesan* bishop. You speak of “ aspiring conduct.” What do you mean ? Is it aspiring in a minister to be called by the name given him in the New-Testament ? I see no *aspiring conduct* but in those who aim at a superiority over their brethren—to be of an order or rank not warranted by the holy scriptures.

You might better have omitted the note, p. 14. Where you say, " This writer is exceedingly averse to quoting this text accurately. It is with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery ;" because the reader will see in the next page, and in pages 26. 38, &c. that the fact is not as you have inadvertently stated it.

The notes which follow in the same page, about the " conveyance of a divine commission," and the " ministerial office being divine," are, to say the least, useless. Nobody denies these things. The only dispute is about the mode of conveyance from Christ and his apostles. The Presbyterians maintain that the commission of their ministers is from Christ and is *divine* ; but they deny that the power is conveyed by an order superior to presbyters, and that any such order exists in the church. The Apostles never had, in their extraordinary capacity, any successors ; and when they ordained, they acted as *presbyters* or church-rulers. This is the highest order which they instituted, and which remains in the church.

You allege with the " Layman," p. 21. that my extracts from your books are " disjoined and mutilated." This is a matter on which I meant to discipline the " Layman," could I have found room to thrust in a piece. Though he sailed soon afterwards to take the *tour* of Europe, yet he left Rector " Cyprian" to be responsible ; and the bold assertion seemed to require from me some attention. There would be no use now, Sir, in contradicting him and you. It would be like two children, one of whom cries, " You did it," and the other " I didn't." Let the reader examine and judge for himself.

I shall not trouble myself with your long note,

p. 24. 25. on baptism. I who believe that the baptism both by Presbyterians and Episcopalians is valid, care little what this or the other class think. You will permit me, however, to remark as somewhat extraordinary, that those who hold baptism among the former to be “nugatory and invalid,” should admit of bishops and priests who never had any other ; and who, according to their doctrine, are no more members of the visible church than the Indians who gambol on the banks of the Wabash, or traverse the wilds of Louisiana. You have not denied, nor can you deny, that the first bishop of the Episcopal church in this state, never had any other baptism than what was administered by a Minister of the Reformed Dutch Church ; and that several of your priests are in the same predicament. They consecrate others, themselves not being consecrated ; for their baptism, according to you, is not *valid* ; they are not even members of the church ; and if baptism be regeneration, they have never been regenerated. You have not denied, nor can you deny, that your present bishop in this state has acted as though the Lutheran church, and the Methodist Episcopal church had no *valid* ministry ; that he has done what I call *re-ordaining*, and, in some instances, *re-baptizing* ; and that he has laid his hands upon a man either from Geneva, or one of the cantons of Switzerland ; it is of little consequence from what place he was imported. I have not heard that your bishop has, as yet, got hold of any from the Presbyterian or the Reformed Dutch church. Indeed I hope that their principles are too well fixed to be either allured or threatened into a recantation of them.

In p. 35. You speak of the connexion between

the Jewish and the Christian Priesthood as ably explained and defended by the "Layman."— This is another matter on which I had thought of some remarks, during the controversy ; but the ranks of my opponents thickened, and prevented me. As soon as "Layman" made his sail, "Cyprian" took up the wondrous tale ; so that I was obliged to be a mere looker-on.

The *petticoats* and *breeches*, p. 35. you may, Sir, if you please, dash out, and your note will go along with it.

Some other notes must come under consideration. A few have been now exhibited as a specimen ; and those not the worst, but which first occur in your volume. The subject may be, generally, taken up, by other and abler hands than mine, in the CHRISTIAN'S MAGAZINE, respecting which your fears seem to be wakeful. I wish you had printed the Essays in the exact order in which they originally appeared, and thrown all your notes and remarks, with the letter of brother "Cornelius," into an Appendix.



LETTER III.

SIR,

THOUGH I am not fond of the business, yet it is necessary that some more of your 196 notes and remarks should pass in review.

In page 47. you say, "at one time he ridicules the doctrine of *succession* ; at another he makes it the foundation of all his reasonings." Let it be remarked, Sir, that it is the succession as taught in your church which I ridicule. All the officers of the church, undoubtedly, derive their author-

ity from Christ, and it is conveyed down from him. The only matter in dispute between us, is whether the authority is valid, *only* or *exclusively*, in the mode practised by the Episcopal church. Why will you keep the real question out of sight?

You ask, p. 50. "Had Timothy and Titus no superiority over the other ministers of Ephesus and Crete. but what "talents, learning, piety, and usefulness give?" Yes, Sir, they had; but it does not follow, that after the establishment of the church, the ministers have any other superiority. When Timothy and Titus had executed the directions given them by the apostle Paul, their extraordinary authority ceased.—There is no *permanent* order in the church higher than presbyters who are called in the New-Testament bishops, and are the only true ones.

A review of ecclesiastical history which I had promised, you say, p. 61. that I "very prudently declined." If by *declined* you mean *refused* or *shunned*, which is the common signification of the word, you are hardly correct. Little room as could be found in the newspaper from the long pieces of "Layman," "Cyprian," "Detector," &c. the promise was, in some measure, performed by the quotations from Bishop White's pamphlet, which I introduce by saying, "I had intended to have examined the testimony of the Fathers, and to have produced the sentiments and conduct of the first Reformers; but copious extracts from a pamphlet which has fallen into my hands will supersede, in a great measure, the necessity of these things." It is hoped, that the advocates for Episcopacy will be now satisfied, since you have joined their pieces which appeared before in parts, and then long enough; particularly that brother "Cornelius" will be grati-

fied, who could not obtain an admission for his, until you issued your collection “*with additional notes and remarks.*”

In page 80. you ask, “Is it not evident that the “*maintaining*” Episcopal ordination, and “*practising*” accordingly, is what has called forth the invective and ridicule.” No, Sir, it is not evident. It is not the doctrine and practice, confined to your own church, respecting which there is complaint. It is your denial of the same privilege to other churches which they freely extend to you. It is the *re-ordaining* and *re-baptizing* those which had belonged to some of the best constituted and most respectable churches upon earth.

You blame me, p. 87. for asserting, that you “seek to deprive all others of the privilege of judging for themselves.” The word *judging* is here not precisely used. Of this privilege you shall not, and you cannot deprive them ; and I hope that their judgment will continue to be modest, candid, and liberal.

In p. 88. you ask, “Whom does the Reformed Dutch Church mean by “Lords over God’s heritage ?” I simply ask you, whom does the Apostle Peter mean ? 1 Peter v. 3.

The note p. 92. is rather unfair. You represent me as “appearing willing to rest my cause on an Episcopal divine,” meaning Bishop White. So far as he gave support to my cause, I was certainly right in availing myself of his assistance. I relied on the facts which he produced. I have asserted, and I now assert, that “no Presbyterian could reason more to the purpose” for which I quoted him. I hoped at the same time, that greater attention and reverence would be paid to a bishop of your own church, than to me, who

am really, and, for any thing I yet see, will remain non-episcopally ordained.

As to the “very high compliment” which you are pleased to allege, p. 93. that I pay “to the consistency and the sincerity of” Bishops Prevost and White, I shall only declare, that I think them sincere and perfectly consistent. The sentiments of the one with respect to the *succession* stand on record ; both were sound *Whigs* during our revolutionary war ; and would, I conceive, be averse from submitting to any foreign dominion, either civil or ecclesiastic. They thought ordination by the Bishop of London *expedient*, whenever it could be obtained ; and they thought right. Indeed, I cannot believe that ordination would have been refused even in time of the war. Can it be possible that the visible head of the church would have refused to hand down the *succession* ! If so, it is deposited in a very unsafe hand. If so, it could have been obtained, equally genuine, and nearer the fountain, in France the magnanimous ally of the United States. The circumstances of the Episcopal church rendered ordination by the Bishop of London *expedient* ; and I agree with Mr. *M’Leod*, in his valuable publication, that the ordination is essentially *presbyterian* ; for the presbyters lay on hands with the Bishop.

Your quotations from Dr. LATHROP, p. 95, &c. are not in your favor. They appear to be introduced in order to shift or obscure the question. I beg you, Sir, to remember, that I maintain as strenuously as yourself, that the ministers of the church must have a *divine commission* derived from Christ—that in every regular church there must be an *external* mode of admission—that the Doctor’s reasoning is entirely levelled a-

gainst *lay-preachers*, “ self-constituted teachers,” to whom I am as much opposed as any man.— With what propriety do you quote Dr. Lathrop who is a “ *Congregational or Presbyterian minister* ?” Does he teach that bishops are a superior order to presbyters ? Does he hold the same “ uninterrupted succession” as you do ? Very far from all this. No church can be too watchful against unlearned and unauthorized preachers. They are pests to the church. “ He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” Permit me, Sir, to repeat, and to impress upon your mind, that the point in dispute, is *singly, solely, and exclusively* about the *mode* of conveying the ministerial commission. I have acknowledged, and I do hereby acknowledge over again, that the ordination of the Episcopal church is *valid*. Will you say the same of the Presbyterian church ? Then would you act worthy of your good understanding, and the real benevolence of your heart.

To the assertion of Bishop White, that “ whatever his church holds must be included in the thirty-nine articles of religion ; which were intended for a comprehensive system of necessary doctrine,” you have the following note, p. 111. “ It is to be presumed that the Liturgy and Officers of the church are also the standards of her doctrine.” The Bishop is right. The Articles are to be considered as properly the *standard* of doctrine. Beware, Sir, of touching the Bishop. I have pledged myself to defend him ; and if any thing makes me angry, it will be insinuations against him. There are some expressions not so respectful as I could wish. Your remarks on the preface to the ordinal, on the sentiments of

Dr. Maurice, Bishops Cranmer, Stillingfleet, Burnet and Hoadly are in contradiction to what Bishop White has stated. In p. 125. you administer something like a reproof; and in p. 189. you say, that "the question of Episcopacy is surely not to rest on the decision of any individual, however great his reputation and amiable his character." I warn you against any thing more of this kind.

You express an unfavorable opinion of archbishop Grindal; particularly for his admitting the ordination of John Morison, a Scotch Presbyterian minister, to be valid. If you have nothing more against him than this, and his lenity to the Puritans, he will stand high in my estimation. This instance Mr. *M'Leod* has quoted in the notes to his late excellent "Ecclesiastical Catechism," a work which I recommend to your perusal; and shall leave the character of Grindal to be settled between you and him. I know that there have been more than one good archbishop, who is the highest officer in the church of England, except the king, who, since the pope was renounced, is the head of all.

How can you ask, p. 124. if I "mean to assert that the power of ordination, and the power of governing the church, died with the apostles?" No, Sir, the apostles committed the power of ordination, and the power of governing the church to presbyters, as you see now practised by the church called presbyterian.

You say, p. 151. that "Clemens and Polycarp were both bishops." So they were; but they were presbyters; for both names are acknowledged, on all sides, to be applied to the very same officer. I say, that they "mention only two orders of officers in the church." Produce

me one sentence of theirs to the contrary. When I say, in one place, “ that there are three orders in the church is not disputed,” I had in view the distinction made in scripture between a *teaching* and a *ruling* elder.

“ Here is the great advantage,” you say, p. 191. “ of the Episcopal church. Even its opponents cannot assert that its “ administration of ordinances is invalid.” I trust, Sir, that none of them ever will be guilty of so arrogant and uncharitable an assertion ; and you may take all the *advantage* which this gives you. The Roman Catholic church might plead the same advantage ; for you do not deny that their ordination is valid, though you do not extend the same mercy to Presbyterians. But I forbear to press you on this subject, having perceived that it is one on which you are sore.

I shall not pursue your notes further in the manner I have done. Had you given them together and in connexion, so that I could have grasped a substance, they could have been the more easily destroyed. If the subject should be taken up in the *Christian's Magazine*, it will, no doubt, be discussed by able hands. This has caused you no small alarm ; and, like a skilful general, you have begun to fortify in time.



LETTER IV.

SIR,

I HAVE taken more notice of your multitudinous notes and remarks than I had at first designed. It is the fashion of late, with some celebrated writers, such as the author of the “ Pursuits of

Literature," *Darwin, Gifford, and Fessenden*, to have a bundle of notes ; though I think it inconvenient for the reader. The great difference between them and you, is that they have affixed notes to their own writings, you to those of another. I would not, however, complain, had you not added, changed the original position of the pieces, and given an improper gloss of them.—I shall, in the present letter, undertake to show, that you have, by fair construction, surrendered all for which I have contended.

In your Preface is found this sentence : " Every benevolent heart ardently cherishes the delightful belief, that mercy will at length be extended to all who humbly and earnestly seek to know and to do the will of their heavenly Master ;" and you *adopt* as your own the following sentiment of Bishop Horsly : " The innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, and people, (why should I not add of all sects and parties ?) assembled round the throne, shall, like the first christians, be of one soul, and one mind." I am pleased to see that you have grown more charitable since you published " A companion for the altar" and for the " festivals and fasts."—In these, you assert, that it is " essential to the efficacy of the Lord's Supper to be administered by those [the Episcopal priests] who have received lawful authority to administer it"—that not to maintain the necessity of Episcopal ordination is to " present salvation to men stripped of those conditions on which alone it is attainable." You have many expressions to the same purpose, some of which I quoted in " *Miscellanies*," and shall not now repeat. I never denied that the administration of ordinances in your church was valid. I only combatted your *exclu-*

sive preterisions, and the opinion that none could be right but yourself. I verily believe, that, with the information which you have, the goodness of heart, and the reflection and experience which time will naturally give, you will become still more liberal.

You fully and repeatedly admit, that a departure from Episcopacy is proper in cases of *necessity*. See pages 125. 127. 137. 150. 182. 187. 190. You say in p. 143. "The *succession* is not interrupted by any *particular* church departing from Episcopacy. It could only be *interrupted* by a *total* departure from Episcopacy throughout the *universal* church. The succession is preserved in the order of Bishops; and as long as any of this order remains, the succession is not interrupted." Again, p. 187. "The succession is not interrupted when any *particular* church throws off the succession. Wherever the order of regular Bishops exists, there is the succession *uninterrupted*."

Here, Sir, I am conscious of such an advantage over you, that I shall use it with great moderation. You speak of "inevitable necessity." Let me remark, that a necessity which is not *inevitable* is no necessity at all. Where is there a single word about this *necessity* in the books to which I have so often referred? If *necessity* for a departure from Episcopacy be admitted, what are we to think of your many strong and unqualified expressions? Has the glorious Head of the church placed his members in such a situation as to oblige them to be guilty of "sacrilege," "schism," a breach of "the unity of the church," and to have ordinances "nugatory and invalid?"

When is this *necessity* to begin, and when is it to end? Who are to be the judges in the matter?

May it not exist for a year, an age, or forever ? Where then is your “ uninterrupted succession ? ” You say, that the succession is not interrupted as long as any of the order of bishops remains. Of what use is this, when part of the church cannot enjoy their consecrating hands ? Is it to be, in the mean time, without a valid ministry and efficacious ordinances ? Had the reasonable, scriptural, and pious proposal of Bishop White been adopted, would the existence of bishops in England or in Rome, have preserved the succession in the United States ? Would there not be something ridiculous in saying, We have not the succession here ; but it is in another quarter of the globe ; and we must jog on as well as we can ? Really, Sir, your information and good sense must have convinced you of the absurdity of your former assertions. I consider what you have now said as a recantation ; made in a covert way, and the least injurious to your feelings. A *necessity* being admitted for a departure from Episcopal ordination, your doctrine vanishes at once, like the “ baseless fabric of a vision ; ” for otherwise, the Head of the church hath not made provision for certain circumstances, or your succession is *interrupted*, or you can have no ordinances effectual to salvation. As to the notion of your bishops still remaining some where or other, they might as well be in the moon as in our planet, while no access can be had to them.

I have no difficulty about what is called *necessity*. I believe that Christ hath provided for every situation in which the church can be placed. Dr. Lathrop, as quoted by you, asks, “ Where is this solitary island or coast—this secluded country of Christians ? ” I reverence the Doctor, admire his writings, and have been edified by

them. But, surely, the supposition mentioned is not impossible. I wish the fruitful genius of some of the New-England divines had never supposed any thing worse. It is the case which you say I have not "specified." Something of the kind is quoted from Bishop Crammer in the excellent pamphlet of Bishop White. I have been informed that an Episcopalian residing in this state, for whose political and religious character I have a profound respect, did, when in France, and not being able to obtain a protestant minister, baptize one of his own children. This, in my opinion, was proper. It would be still more so, on a "solitary island or coast." Though the rules of a church, when constituted, ought to be strictly observed, yet in the cases mentioned, there ought to be no hesitation about administering and receiving divine ordinances. The power is derived from Christ, and is the true *succession*.

Besides, the argument which you use in favor of Episcopal ordination is equally good in favor of Presbyterian. You say that "the succession is preserved as long as any of the order of Bishops remains." Were it shown that presbyterian ordination was always in the church, would it not be as much in favor of this, as of yours? What then would become of your "fifteen hundred years?" But this would lead me into a discussion which would exceed the bounds, at present, prescribed to myself. Does the Episcopal church ordain after the fashion of the Romish church? Do not the presbyters, in the former, lay on hands with the bishop? Is not the ordination then, as Mr. *M'Leod* asserts in his "Ecclesiastical Catechism," really *presbyterian*, and therefore valid?

Having said so much about addition, altera-

tion, and the order in which you have published the Essays, I shall not take notice of an *omission* in your collection. It is immaterial, and does not affect the argument.

LETTER V.

SIR,

If you think that your compositions need no correction, I do not think so of mine. I am not ashamed to say, that amendments might be made in any thing which I have ever published. The numbers of "*Miscellanies*" went to the press in the first draught without the advice of any friend ; and so far from being kept " nine years," they were not in my possession hardly a day. Perhaps there is more pride than humility in this acknowledgment. The corrections which I wished would have strengthened my arguments, and saved you the trouble of several notes.

I had intended, had my numerous opponents suffered me, to have devoted a paper expressly to show the inconvenience or impracticability of your church government in this country. In the year 1799, you had only 7 bishops in the United States. The territory is very extensive ; and it has been since increased by the wonderful purchase of Louisiana ; the extent and curiosities of which are not yet fully known. It may be deemed a digression, but I must be permitted to say, that there is not a jockey in Virginia, who would not have made a better bargain. The country however, will not make, for some time, more than one *diocese*, on the plan of your church.

In England there are 24 bishoprics, besides

that of Sodor and Man ; in Ireland 18. The state of New-York is larger than either of these islands, and yet it has one solitary bishop. He must travel 350 miles one way, and 300 another, in order to ordain, to confirm, and to consecrate churches ; or those who wish to be confirmed, or ordained must travel to him ; and if they should, still the churches cannot travel. Do you think, Sir, that this is a convenient government ? Does not the inconvenience, and indeed impossibility of it, show its impropriety and absurdity ? Would it not require the salary of the archbishop of Canterbury [£8,900] and nothing else to do, to attend to all this business ? How much more simple, rational and scriptural is the presbyterian mode !

Your comment on the XVII article of your church must pass without any remarks. It is wholly foreign from the dispute between us. I am willing to subscribe your articles at any time, so far as they respect *doctrines* ; but cannot believe in the *orders* which you have set up in the church ; and must refuse to submit to your ordination ; having been already ordained in the presbyterian manner ; and you having no other to give. You will not admit me into your pulpit ; you are welcome to any one where I have the liberty to ask you. I might inform you that I once preached in the pulpit of Trinity church, in the city of New-York, with the consent and approbation of Bishop Prevost ; though I never considered myself as thereby episcopally consecrated ; but that my presbyterian ordination was implicitly acknowledged by him to be valid.

You, and “ Layman,” and “ Cyprian,” and the whole regiment of you, are dissatisfied whenever mention is made of your connexion with the

Roman Catholic church. This is not the only instance in which I have known persons to disown their poor relations. The Pope is not the man he has been ; and whatever agency he has had in handing down the “uninterrupted succession,” he is likely soon himself to have no successor. No one has charged your church with holding the doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation—with worshipping images, and praying to saints and angels. There are notwithstanding a few points in which there is an apparent agreement between *modern* Protestant Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

You acknowledge that your succession is derived from the Romish church, who is called, in your homilies, “*a foul, filthy, old, withered harlot ; the foulest and filthiest that ever was seen.*” Would it not have been prudent and decent, not to have called your mother such ugly names, and to make her a *witch* as well as a *whore* ? In the doctrines of justification—the nature of the sacraments—the rite of confirmation—the consecration of churches—the observance of what are vulgarly called holy days—and the various orders of officers in the church—there is a coincidence of sentiment in the two churches. Particularly to point out this would carry me beyond my present purpose. I do not say that this will be found in the articles of your church, from which many Episcopalians, in these latter days, have departed.

As these things do not belong to the subject of dispute, they are now avoided. Say not that I have *declined* ; for I wish to settle one thing at a time. You say that presbyterian ordination is not valid ; and I say, with Mr. *M’Leod*, that yours is valid, because it is essentially *presbyte-*

rian. In what way the subject will be taken up in the **CHRISTIAN'S MAGAZINE**, I am not informed. From the hands by which I understand it will be conducted, I believe that it will be able, just, and liberal. Much should I regret, if they set up *exclusive* pretensions, and do not meet you on that charitable ground which you have lately chosen.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

THOUGH it is improper, at present, for me to enter into the merits of the controversy, and to discuss them at length, yet I would fain mention, under some short heads, the arguments in favor of the side which I have espoused.

1. The plan of the government of the Church is to be proved and defended by the Holy Scriptures. If Christ and his Apostles have instituted a particular form, it is to be found in their practice and precepts which are recorded; and we cannot depend with certainty upon any thing else. The Scriptures are the unerring, constant, and only rule for the church in all ages.

2. Admitting the opinion, that no precise form is prescribed, and that several things are left to be ordered by local circumstances, the outlines of what is called *presbyterian* government are laid down, or may be plainly inferred. Timothy being sent to Ephesus, and Titus to Crete, is no valid proof that the apostle Paul constituted a *permanent* order superior to presbyters. With whatever authority these and other persons were invested at the organization of the church, it ceas-

ed with the extraordinary powers of the apostles. Distinct from the special commission received from Christ, for certain purposes, the apostles themselves were only presbyters. There is not a direction given to Timothy and Titus which presbyters, in the ordinary state of the church, cannot and do not perform.

3. Those called Episcopalians can never evade the force of that single text, "With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." In the church of England, the presbyters lay on hands with their bishops, at ordination; in this country, the same mode is practised; and the ordination in both is presbyterian. There is this difference; indeed, that the Episcopalians contend for their bishops as a distinct and permanent order, whereas the Presbyterians believe in no higher order than presbyters; and in their judicatories, and at ordinations they appoint, out of their number, one to act as a temporary moderator, president, or superintendant. Thus the latter have all the advantages of the former, without giving to any one man an unwarrantable and dangerous pre-eminence.

4. The sentiments of the Fathers are to be admitted so far as they teach what is agreeable to the doctrine and practice recorded in the holy scriptures. When their testimony is examined, it will be found, that they are not so general, uniform and strong in favor of Episcopacy, as has been sometimes alleged. *Clemens Romanus*, and *Polycarp* mention only two orders in the church. The epistles of *Ignatius*, another early writer, are involved in great obscurity. It is doubted whether the writings ascribed to this great prop, and as it were the rock of Episcopalians, are justly ascribed or not. The words of *Jerome*, by

every fair construction, militate against Episcopacy. There is besides, a chasm in the history of the time when bishops, probably, began to claim to be a distinct order from presbyters.— There are strictly speaking, only *two* orders ; presbyters and deacons ; of the former of whom some both teach and rule ; and others only rule. The presbyter who both teaches and rules, is the true bishop ; or rather, he is to “ be accounted worthy of double honor.” This remark will show why *Clemens Romanus*, and *Polycarp* speak of only *two* orders ; and why some speak of *three*, calling the first bishops. There are three when the distinction is made between teaching and ruling presbyters ; and there are only two when this distinction is not mentioned ; all the presbyters coming under the denomination of bishops. Respecting the same officers being called presbyters and bishops there is no dispute.

5. It is a fact notorious beyond contradiction, that presbyterian ordination has been allowed to be valid, by the Church of England, and that several learned and good men of that church have contended for it. If it is valid at one time, why not at another ? Why not at all times ?

6. Were it granted that the Fathers declare the existence of three distinct orders, such as the episcopal church holds, is Episcopacy the same in England as in the early ages ? Where was the *diocesan* bishop, exercising power over a large district, and over a large number of presbyters ; claiming a superiority, by *divine right* ? The Episcopacy of England resembles that of Rome, and not that of the primitive age.

7. The argument that Episcopacy has been in the church for fifteen hundred years will be of no weight, if it can be shown that presbyterianism

was also ; and if it cannot, still the argument is the strongest for popery. Where was the Episcopal church during a great part of this time ? If the presbyterian church was buried, the other was equally so. If the former revived under John Calvin ; so did the latter under Henry VIII.

8. If any choose to have moderators, presidents, or superintendants for a number of years, or for life, it is hardly worth while to contend with them. The Lutheran churches in Pennsylvania, have a superintendant for three years ; those of that denomination, in this state, have elected one for life. The practice of the Presbyterians is to elect one for a year to preside in their assemblies ; one, occasionally to preside at an ordination, or to perform any other ecclesiastical business which may be necessary. The last mode is the safest and best. To the others, however, there is no solid objection, except that bishops with exclusive claims may soon, like rank weeds, spring up and injure the garden of the church. The plan proposed by Bishop White was wise, and, considering the prejudices which he had to encounter was liberal. His idea was to have *permanent presidents*, appointed by the presbyters of his church in this country ; wholly rejecting the notion of what is called a *divine right*. The plan was never tried ; but it is believed, that it would have promoted the honor and happiness of the Episcopal church.

9. If by “ uninterrupted succession ” be meant that power is conveyed down from Christ to transact all the affairs of his church, the Presbyterians maintain it in the fullest and strongest manner.— They renounce the pope and his bishops, as they do the devil and all his works ; and would as soon submit to be sprinkled with his holy water as to receive any of his consecrations.

I have given you, Sir, in as good order, and in as few words as I could, off-hand, some heads upon which I should insist, were I seriously, systematically, and largely to take up the subject. There would be little use in my reading *Hooker*, *Potter*, and *Daubeny* ; for if they plead for the *exclusive* validity of ordination in your church, they must depart from Scripture, history and common sense. I would read Dr. *Chandler*, did he fall in my way ; because I bear for his family a sincere and high respect.



LETTER VII.

SIR,

WHEN I began the papers under the title of " MISCELLANIES," I had little expectation of the manner in which they have ended. I meant to embrace subjects political, literary, and religious ; taken up to employ a leisure hour, though not without a hope of suggesting useful hints to my readers. The subject of church government was introduced, among other reasons, for the sake of variety ; at the time, I had not read the books which you have published. Upon examining them, they appeared more offensive than they had been reported to me, and justly deserving reprehension. This, with the sudden attack which was made upon me, threw my pieces more into the controversial than the didactic style than was originally intended. Besides, I was informed that certain Episcopal ministers were eager for battle. Some of them, indeed, had early manifested views of distinction from, and superiority over other denominations.

You, Sir, may not be acquainted with the fact ; but immediately after the conclusion of the revolutionary war, and the establishment of the independence of the United States, the following paper was presented to the Legislature of Maryland :

“ *To the Honorable the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the State of MARYLAND.*

“ The MEMORIAL and PETITION of the Subscribers in behalf of themselves and others the Clergy of the Episcopal Churches—

“ **SHEWETH,**

“ **THAT** the happy termination of war, the establishment of peace, and the final recognition and acknowledgment of the sovereignty and independence of the United States among the powers of the world, yield a favorable occasion (which this State has long desired) of making permanent provision, agreeable to the constitution, for the Ministers of religion, and the advancement of useful knowledge and literature in this rising American empire.

“ That in respect to the Episcopal Churches in this state (to the communion of which so large a proportion of the good people of Maryland belongs) the following things are absolutely necessary, viz-

“ 1st. That some alterations should be made in the liturgy and service, in order to adapt the same to the revolution, and for the purposes of uniformity, concord and subordination to the State.

“ 2dly. That a mode or plan for ordaining and keeping up a succession of fit and able Ministers or Pastors for the service of the said Churches, agreeable to antient practice and their professed

principles, as well as that universal toleration established by the constitution, be speedily determined upon and fixed under the public authority of the State, and with the advice and consent of the Clergy of the said Churches, after due consultation had thereupon—

Your petitioners therefore pray that the said Clergy may have leave to consult, prepare and offer to the General Assembly, a bill for the good purposes aforesaid ; and as bound, they shall ever pray, &c.

WILLIAM SMITH,
THOMAS GATES.”

One of the signers of the above has been long and well known in this country. Dr. *Smith* was provost of the college in Philadelphia. He died a few years ago, at an advanced age ; and was considerably distinguished for his literature and for his talents as a fine writer. Of Mr. *Gates*, if ever I heard any thing, I do not now recollect it. I know not whether he is dead or alive. This, however, is no proof that he was not, and is still a great man.

The bold attempt of the two ecclesiastics acting, as they represent, in the name of others, to connect the episcopal church with the state, was powerfully opposed by a writer, and entirely defeated. His pieces were first published in a newspaper, and afterwards re-published in a small pamphlet, dated *Frederick, October 28, 1783*.

They,” [non-episcopalians] says the writer, “are indifferent whether these apostolic personages are denominated Presbyters or Metropolitans, Patriarchs or Popes, or dignified by any more pompous sounding names, which adulation may have devised, or superstition adored.” The use of the phrase, *apostolic personages*, seems to be

peculiarly happy ; for the bishops of the Episcopal church give out, that they are the “ successors of the Apostles ;” though they have never wrought a single miracle, except that of making some people subscribe to their pretensions.

The writer calls Messieurs *Smith* and *Gates* “ two zealous Divines”.—“ two turbulent priests.” In the one place, he, probably, speaks ironically ; and in the other, he appears to be in earnest. Or, if *zeal* was at all applicable to them, it was for an early and gross endeavour to have a discrimination made, by the civil government, in favor of themselves and that sect to which they belonged. *Turbulent* they, no doubt, were ; that is, their conduct was calculated to produce an alarm and disturbance among other denominations who wished to see no privileges, advantages, preferences, distinctions given to one above the rest.

In one place, the language of the writer must be understood figuratively. “ The former head of the Church,” says he, “ was amputated, and the former way of obtaining Episcopal ordination totally obstructed, when America declared herself independent,” &c. The English have not *literally* taken the head off Henry VIII. off Queen Elizabeth, (of blessed memory) nor off George III. as the French did off Lewis XVI. The writer must mean, as he expresses himself, that “ the former way of obtaining Episcopal ordination was totally obstructed.” He seems not to have been aware of the late principle adopted, that while a bishop remains in any part of the world, the succession is not interrupted. Admitting that the head of the episcopal church had been *amputated*, some of his bishops would still

live to hand the succession down ; if they did not, bishops might be found at Rome, from which the succession was originally derived ; and had generations passed away in this country without Episcopal ordination, the succession would be continued on the other side of the great waters.

The history now given is of this use, to show the strange and exclusive claims which some Episcopalians have entertained at so late an age, and even in this country. It would hardly be credited by posterity, were it not found written in the archives of the state of Maryland. At the same time, let it be said, that a denomination is not chargeable with, nor accountable for the opinions and conduct of a few wild men. The Episcopalians have otherwise settled their plan of church government ; they have contrived to bring over from the head of the church in England, what they believe to be the succession ; and though they hold fast the different orders of bishops, priests and deacons (to which they are extremely welcome, and to more, if they fancy them) yet they have not asked the authority and aid of the civil government. Some of them assert that theirs is the *only true* church ; but this does not make it so, nor hinder others from thinking that they belong also to a *true* church, though not the *only* one.

How different was the conduct of the good bishop *White* from that of Messieurs *Smith* and *Gates* ! He was for constituting a church in this country without asking leave from civil government, and even without the sanction of the head of the church of England. His liberal, intelligent and scriptural pamphlet published on this subject, contains indelible truths ; is a modified presbyterianism ; is “ feet to the lame and eyes

to the blind." Indeed the constitution of the Episcopal church, in this country, could be shown to be, in all its material parts, *presbyterian*. In this sentiment a late writer [the Rev. Mr. M'LEOD in his "*Ecclesiastical Catechism*"] is perfectly correct.

When these things are considered, there will be no wonder that I should indulge in a strain of ridicule of weak, though arrogant attempts; or be roused to a degree of indignation greater than I have suffered myself to express. There are follies at which it is better to laugh than to be angry.

I wish not to write again, and would, therefore, say every thing necessary for me; committing and recommending you to the attention of Mr. M'LEOD, and the editor of the CHRISTIAN'S MAGAZINE. I have the fullest confidence in both. There will be something, no doubt, which I might profitably add or correct in these letters. I have no talent at infallibility. There is a sentence or two in the last piece of "*Vindex*" which I believe the goodness of your heart would have corrected, or omitted; and yet had you done either in your collection, I should have severely censured you. It would have increased my complaint of the liberty which you have taken in transposing the Essays; in altering them, and adding to them.

After all, what is your ordination but *presbyterian*? What is your bishop but a permanent moderator or president? Your church gives to one man for life what the Presbyterian church gives for a short time, and occasionally. My great objection to your mode is, that it naturally produces an idea, and claim of superiority, as it did soon after the days of the apostles. *Jerome*

says, " the presbyters always *named* one, who being chosen from among themselves, they called their bishop," &c. He does not say, that the person whom they named [*nominabant*] sailed 3,000 miles in order to obtain consecration. I have little objection against the plan proposed by the enlightened and amiable Bishop White, except what I have already mentioned. In conversation with your bishop in this state, whom I highly respect and feel obligations, I found that he insisted on ordination by a bishop of the Episcopal church. This is a thing to which Presbyterians can never agree. Why renounce their own ordination to obtain what is the same ; for your church ordains " with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

I conclude with assuring you of my respect for your talents ; and, as I believe, for your upright intentions. I have a real esteem for all my opponents ; and, little as we are acquainted, an attachment to yourself. I can never forget the amiable qualities and friendship of Dr. CHANDLER's family. I have never read his publications to which you refer ; but I certainly would read, with pleasure, any thing which he has written. I knew him when he was afflicted with a cruel disease ; and the serenity and unaffected cheerfulness of his mind under the certain prospect of a sudden dissolution, made a deep impression on my mind, which I have repeatedly mentioned in conversation since.

You, Sir, have just entered on public life, I am going off. May you belong respectable and useful ! The points about which we differ are not essential ; and there is another world in which all will be harmony and love.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE printer having informed me that there would be some blank pages in the last sheet, I thought once of filling them with **EXTRACTS** from the works which you have published. But enough of these appears in "**Miscellanies**;" and I am not fond of repeating what, I am persuaded your more mature judgment and experience will correct. The plan which I have followed of taking notice of only a few of your *notes* and *remarks*; and these just as they first occurred in your "**Collection**," has prevented me from fixing upon some equally, if not more exceptionable, than any which have been mentioned. To have pursued you through all, would have led me far beyond my present purpose.

I have examined the letter of "**Cornelius**," which you rank under the title of "*the Essays which originally appeared in the Albany Centinel*;" though it never appeared there. Whatever is found censurable in this letter, I am disposed to pass by. I discern in it the traces of a pen which has been long admired; held by a man who, like myself, has entered upon the evening of life; and for whom, differ as we may in sentiment, I have an undiminished friendship.

Permit me, Sir, to declare again that I have never had, nor have now the least personal resentment against my opponents. It is not in my nature, and it is contrary to my principles. I should despise myself, were I capable of doubting their sincerity, or lowly esteeming their talents. I have never lost a friend on the account either of politics or religion, who did not unrea-

sonably (as I think) quarrel with me ; though I have opposed and *ridiculed* democratic principles ; and shall until my dying day. Difference of opinion ought not, and does not with me produce any alienation.

As to Mr. *How*, the writer of the “ Layman,” it is unnecessary to profess my affection for him ; and this is, certainly not the less for his having been once the “ private Secretary of the late Gen. HAMILTON,” the most enlightened and incorruptible statesman I have ever seen, or expect to see in this world. I have also a great regard for Mr. *Beasley* the writer of “ Cyprian ;” and with respect, Sir, to yourself, I have already expressed a high opinion of your talents and your virtues. I sincerely honour both. I never have complained of your asserting what you believe to be right ; but of the manner in which you have done it. In your own church, you may, and have a right, to establish and teach what rules you please ; but to set up *exclusive* pretensions, to deny to other large and respectable denominations the privilege which they extend to you, will and must be viewed as uncharitable and offensive.

You will probably, Sir, be dissatisfied with some things in these letters, and say again, that *ridicule* has been too freely indulged. Be assured, that your sentiments only are the subjects of ridicule. I will, at any time, cheerfully laugh *with* you ; but I regard you too much ever to laugh *at* you. What I have now written has been without the consultation or advice of a single friend. It has gone to the press just as it fell from my pen. Were it necessary, I would subscribe my name. You are right as to the person to whom you have ascribed the pieces. I wish you success in your ministry, and eternal happiness hereafter.

POSTSCRIPT II.



I HAVE already mentioned the impracticability of your church government in this country ; unless you plant bishops much thicker than they are. In the “ Order of Confirmation,” it is directed, that “ so soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say the Creed, &c. they shall be brought to the Bishop.” And it is positively enjoined, that there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.” Suppose that these persons can neither be brought to the Bishop, nor the Bishop go to them, are they to be kept from the Holy Communion ? Surely in a *diocese* which embraces a whole state, and various conditions of people, this is more than supposition. It must necessarily happen. Do you say, it is only required, that they “ be ready and desirous to be confirmed ?” Pray, Sir, who is to judge in this case ? If the priest, and he admits the persons to the Lord’s supper, are they afterwards to be confirmed by the bishop ? If not to be confirmed, where is your “ apostolic rite.” Who is the higher officer in this instance, the bishop or the priest ? If the hand of the bishop be still necessary, though the persons have been admitted to the table of the Lord, and the bishop finds that they cannot say the creed, much less their catechism, and chooses to *non*-confirm them, what is the state of things then ? Either the admission of the priest supersedes confirmation by the bishop, and in this case, the former actually confirms ; or his admission is, as you say of or-

dinances administered by presbyterians, “ nugatory and invalid ;” or confirmation does not belong to the bishop alone. This is really a puzzling business. You have had a bishop and several priests who were never sprinkled with water but by those whose administrations you do not allow to be *valid*. In what way did these dignitaries in your church become consecrated ?— Were they confirmed by a bishop ? Or did their admission to the holy eucharist in your church set all right ? If the latter, what becomes of the “ apostolic rite” which can be administered only by a bishop of your church, a successor of the apostle Paul or any one of the apostles, or it may be of Timothy and Titus, the bishops of Ephesus and Crete. I must believe, Sir, that the government of your church is inconsistent, absurd and impossible ; and therefore never could have been the institution of the glorious Head. I repeat the assurance of my respect for you.