

THE
PAMPHLETEER,

No. II.

I R E N I C U M

OR THE

P E A C E M A K E R .

Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and
between my herdmen and thy herdmen: *for we be brethren.*

GENESIS xiii. 8.

RICHMOND:

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INTRODUCTION.

IN prosecuting the work in which we have engaged, it is thought proper, at this stage of it, to give a fuller explanation than we have done of our main design. The great object then is to promote the spirit and practice that ought to prevail among christians—a spirit of mutual kindness, and the practice of free communion.

The natural tendency of christianity is to unite all who feel its genuine influences, in firm and lasting friendship. The true church of Jesus Christ is ONE, and it cannot be divided. All who are united to him by a living faith, belong to that mystical body of which he is the head. The members of the church may, in relation to points of order and external observance, be ranged under different banners, and be called by different names; some may be of Paul, and some of Apollos, and some of Cephas; but all faithful men are of Christ. The primitive christians acknowledged this truth, and acted under its influence. One need only peruse the New Testament, to ascertain the judgment and feelings of the apostles of Jesus Christ on this subject. The *Unity* of the church is explicitly taught or implicitly recognized in almost every page of that sacred volume. And such was the practice of the early christians, that it extorted from their enemies the often quoted exclamation, “See how these christians love one another.” We can scarcely conceive of a more honourable testimonial. The effect of this conduct was visible in the numerous and wide spread triumphs of our religion. For in this world, where there is so much of what is cold and selfish, nothing so wins upon the best feelings of our nature as the exhibition of pure,

fervent, fraternal love. A religion, which unites its votaries as in one family, which identifies their interests and feelings, and produces forbearance, charity, industry that we may have to give to him that needeth, and self-denial that we may promote the good of others, is one which it is not easy to reproach or gainsay. It was this religion which triumphed over heathenism, and planted its victorious banners in Rome, in Corinth, in Athens, in Ephesus, and in every part of the civilized world.

In process of time, however, the purity of this religion was soiled, and its simplicity was corrupted. Then violent contentions arose among its votaries. Its glory departed, and a long, dark and dreary night succeeded. At length the star of the Reformation rose. Then dawned that day, which in its meridian will throw light over this benighted world. The work of reformation is, however, still imperfect; and much remains to be accomplished, before the evils induced by a thousand years of bigotry and superstition shall be done away.

To the observer, who looks only at the genius of christianity, it seems wonderful that there should exist so many divisions among christians, and that matters confessedly of minor importance should produce such deep alienations, such warm contentions among those who profess to be disciples of the same Lord and Master. That such is the fact cannot be disputed; and it cannot be too deeply lamented. There is however this consolation—that the Head of the church, who overrules all things, here as in other cases, educes good out of evil. The divisions and jealousies of professed christians in former times give us assurance that the book containing the doctrines of our common religion has not been corrupted. And the controversies of modern times have induced a much more thorough and critical study of the bible, and a more intimate acquaintance with scripture doctrine, than would otherwise have obtained. At least the understandings of men have been exercised,

and their knowledge increased, if no other benefit has been derived. We appreciate this advantage; and are far from wishing, by a suppression of discussion to prevent this good. But we wish subjects on which christians differ, to be treated as brothers, who respect and love each other, treat matters on which they do not agree in opinion. Two Episcopalians, or two Presbyterians differ on some point. A long and spirited discussion takes place. In the midst of it, perhaps, the customary season for worship arrives. The debate is suspended, and they kneel together before the same God, and enjoy delightful communion in prayer—They rise, and continue the argument perhaps till a late hour, and the next day take their places together at the table of the Lord, mingling their vows, offering prayers for each other, and enjoying sweet fellowship in this service. With this spirit we wish to see all discussions between christians of different denominations carried on.

In accounting for the fact that although the spirit of christianity is a spirit of love, yet its professors are divided and sometimes alienated from each other, it is necessary to look at the moral condition of human nature. It is depraved—It is deeply corrupted. Sincere christians, although regenerated are not made perfect. And many, there is reason to fear, take the christian name, without having felt the saving power of the gospel. These simple remarks will account for the divisions and disorders of the church. But it may be worth while to be a little more particular. The religion of Jesus Christ, then, differs from all other systems in this, that its object is to regulate the heart. Its rites and ordinances are instituted for this purpose, and derive all their importance from their subserviency to this great end. Mere compliance with an external observance, however, is incomparably easier than the cultivation of right affections, and the mortification of bad passions required in the gospel. Hence, in fallen man there is a proneness to substitute outward forms for inward holiness. And when

it happens, as it often does, that external things produce the distinction between different denominations, there is an opportunity of indulging this propensity; and the conscience, which perhaps would otherwise be uneasy, is quieted and silenced by zeal for that which costs little and is easily rendered—The same remark, with very little modification will apply to that *zeal for orthodox opinions*, which it is so easy to put in the place of charity, forbearance, and self-denial.

Some of the divisions, however, which exist in the present day may be traced back to causes which operated in past centuries; but which reach, in their effects, to us. In the commencement of the Reformation, although the reformers differed on many points of order they loved one another—they acknowledged and rejoiced in each other's gifts, and were ready to afford mutual counsel and assistance. By degrees however, political disputes were mingled with theological discussions, and party rancour embittered the spirits of those who ought to have been of one heart and one mind. This feeling was spread through the politics, the religion, and the literature of the age, and has come down to us. For it was during that time of contention that this part of America was settled. Many of our ancestors fled from intolerance and oppression at home; and sought liberty of conscience and of worship in the wilds of the new world. The changes of political and ecclesiastical power that took place in England, however, were felt in her colonies; and the same temper that raised a storm there, was seen and felt here. It is not a little curious to look from the present back to former times, and trace the connection between our petty jealousies and alienations, and the violent contentions which overturned the throne of the Stuarts in England.

We are persuaded, however, that a full and candid investigation of the general subject would show that christians in this country ought to dismiss all these little things,

and set an example to other nations of unity of spirit amidst differences in form and order. In that free communion, however, which we recommend, it is far from our wish that the misnamed and indiscriminating liberality of the present day should be countenanced. We do not, as the world now is, plead for an amalgamation of different societies. But we do wish the societies which acknowledge each other to be orthodox in fundamental matters, to acknowledge each other as churches of Jesus Christ, to strengthen each others hands in the support of christian discipline, to encourage communion together, and to unite in the propagation of vital religion in our nation. This is our earnest wish; and after the best examination of which we are capable, we do not see any just objection against it: whereas we see much to commend it to the understanding and heart of all who love the cause of true religion.

We know that difference in baptism is one thing, that prevents communion among christians. In the knowledge of this, we undertook in our first number to show that the practice of those who baptise the children of believers, and baptise by sprinkling is so supported by scripture, that they ought to be received as having complied with the will of Christ in that respect. It is believed that this point was established by arguments and authorities amply sufficient. And therefore, we who practise what is called infant-baptism, do claim to be acknowledged as members of the *one* church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Free communion is discountenanced in this country, on account of a difference in respect to ordination also. Now it is our intention to show in this number, that they who practise presbyterial ordination, do so comply with the scriptures in this respect, that their *orders* ought to be regarded as *valid*, and they not only received to communion, but acknowledged as truly and properly a part of the universal church of the Lord Jesus. All ought to wish us success in this undertaking. Because our object is to

promote truth and charity; to heal divisions and remove reproaches. And here let it be distinctly understood, that it is not by any means our intention to attack others. We readily and cheerfully admit the validity of Episcopal ordination and administrations, we recognize Episcopalians as brethren, and can heartily join with them when they pray that God may "send down on their bishops and other clergy and on all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of his grace;" and that he may "pour upon them the continual dew of his blessing."

Had the spirit, which animated Protestants in the beginning of the reformation, continued with them, there would have been no occasion for this attempt. Our object, then, is to bring back, if we can the professors of religion in this country to the good old standard. It is true that there were many things in the temper and conduct of the Reformers, of which we cannot approve. But in regard to this matter, we can only lament that their mantle has not descended on their successors. Had this been the case, far different at this time would be the condition of the protestant world. But complaints are vain. By a brief historical induction we shall show that the illustrious men who, under God, broke the chain of ecclesiastical bondage, and set the mind and conscience at liberty, cherished the very spirit and pursued the very practice which we humbly attempt to promote in these pages.

We begin with Archbishop Cranmer. He was primate of all England, during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI.; and is justly considered as the main pillar of the reformation in England. John Knox was the life and soul of the same cause in Scotland. Cranmer was a decided Episcopalian—John Knox was the instrument of introducing Presbyterianism into Scotland. Now in the year 1549, Knox was obliged to flee from his own country and take refuge in England. He was received with open arms by the English reformers. And they, thinking that such

gifts and graces as had been conferred on him by the head of the church ought not at that time to be unemployed, at once, without re-ordination gave him a commission to preach. His services were greatly blessed in various parts of the kingdom.—He was appointed one of the chaplains to king Edward VI.—And in the year 1551, *when the book of common prayer was undergoing a revisal*, he assisted in that work. His suggestions were not all adopted; but “he had influence to procure an important change in the communion office, completely excluding the notion of the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament, and guarding against the adoration of the elements.” This fact was so notorious that Dr. Weston, the prolocutor of the popish queen Mary openly complained that, “*A runnagate Scot did take away the adoration or worshipping of Christ in the Sacrament, by whose procurement that heresie was put into the last communion book; SO MUCH PREVAILED THAT ONE MAN’S AUTHORITY AT THAT TIME.*”

In the year 1552, Knox was employed in revising the Articles of religion previous to their ratification by parliament. [See M’Crie’s life of John Knox. Period III.]

About the year 1549, Peter Martyr, Martin Bucer, Paul Fagius, and Emanuel Tremellius were invited to England with other learned foreigners. These were all non-episcopalians, *yet without any question about the validity of their ordination*, they were employed as professors of Divinity in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This was the case with at least some of them: and if they did not all retain the places that had been given them, it was because they thought that they could be more useful elsewhere.

The primate of England and Calvin, the illustrious reformer of Geneva, were in habits of free and friendly correspondence. The sentiments of Calvin respecting church government are too well known to require mention in this place. Yet in England as well as on the continent, he was regarded as one of the brightest luminaries of the

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reformation. There is now before us a long letter written by Calvin at the request of Cranmer, to the lord protector of England urging him to carry on and complete the work of reformation in that country. In the beginning of this letter Calvin says that he was emboldened to write to the protector, because, "*You acknowledge me as a servant of the Son of God.*" This shows what was the judgment in England concerning the ministerial standing of Calvin. We have also before us a letter from Cranmer to Calvin expressing a most earnest wish that a general council of the Protestant churches should be called, for the purpose of drawing up a *common confession*, for the whole body. In conclusion he says. "*Habes meum votum, de quo etiam ad D. Philippum, et ad D. Bullingerum, oroque ut vos inter vos deliberetis, qua ratione synodus hæc congregari commodissime possit. Vale. Lambethi, 20 Martii, MDLII.*"

Frater tuus in Christo charissimus,

TH. CANTUARIENSIS."

"You have my wish, concerning which I have also written to Melancthon and Bullinger; and I pray you to deliberate among yourselves, by what means such a council may be most conveniently assembled. Farewel. Lambeth 20th March 1552, *Your most affectionate brother in Christ, Thomas of Canterbury.*"

Now here is a proposal for Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Lutherans to hold a convention for the purpose of promoting the common protestant faith. What if a letter should be written by bishop Griswold or bishop Hobart to Dr. Green, Dr. Hoge, or any other leading man among the Presbyterians of the present day urging the call of a convention of orthodox ministers, for the purpose of opposing the Socinian heresy? This would be just such a specimen of liberality and zeal, as that exhibited about three centuries ago by the highest ecclesiastic in England.

But Cranmer was not singular in his feelings in relation to Presbyterians. There is also before us a letter from

Hooper, bishop of Worcester, to Calvin, giving an account of the state of religion in England after the death of Edward VI. and the accession of the bloody Mary. This letter concludes thus, “*Ecclesie vestrae et omnium piorum preces supplices rogamus, ut alacri et infracto animo Christi gloriam quaeramus, et mortem ipsam gloriosissimam pro nomine illius sustineamus.* We earnestly entreat the prayers of *your church* and of all the pious, that with a cheerful and unsubdued mind we may seek the honour of Christ, and may sustain even a most glorious death for his name’s sake.

Bishop Jewell was one of the most learned and able men of his age. He wrote an *apology for the church of England*, which was held in very high estimation. This man was accused by a Papist of being a disciple of Calvin. In reference to this charge, without denying it, he says, “Touching Mr. Calvin, it is great wrong untruly to report so great a father, and so worthy an ornament of the church of God. If you had ever known *the order of the church of Geneva*, and had seen four thousand people or more receiving the holy mysteries at one communion, ye would not, without your great shame and want of modesty, thus untruly have published to the world, that by Mr. Calvin’s doctrine the Sacraments of Christ are superfluous.” In Humphrey’s life of Jewell, we find the following declaration, “In 1562 the Apology of the English church was published, which was approved by the consent and authority of the queen, published by the counsel of all the bishops and other clergy, as it was also composed and written by the author, as the public confession of the Catholic and christian faith of the English church, in which is taught our agreement with the *German, Helvetick, French, Scotch, Genevese,* AND OTHER PURE CHURCHES.

It would be easy to produce many more witnesses to prove that the Episcopal and Presbyterian Reformers, not only *acknowledged* each other as *brethren*, but entertained a

high esteem, and cultivated a fervent fraternal love one towards the other.

But one fact is all sufficient for this purpose.—The *Institutes of Calvin*, a work in which his peculiar doctrines are embodied, was used for a number of years as the text book of English theological teachers, and that man was regarded as best instructed who was most completely master of Calvin's book.

It may be thought by some a little surprising, that the founders and chief pillars of the Episcopal church should thus fraternize with men from whom they differed as to the polity of the church. The fact will appear, at any rate, less strange when the sentiments of these great and good men are known and duly considered. They maintained that no *particular form* of church government was unalterably established by divine right; but that only certain fundamental principles were laid down in the New Testament, to be applied according to the circumstances of particular churches, that is according to the obvious expediency of the case. Thus many advocates of Episcopacy in England, adopted Jerome's opinion concerning the *primitive equality* of ministers of the gospel, while they maintained the expediency of establishing *diocesan episcopacy* in their own country; and many of the most learned Presbyterian divines, while they held that in the churches organized by the apostles, the order of presbyters and bishops was the same, admitted that diocesan episcopacy was not repugnant to the word of God.

In 1547, an assembly of select divines was called by king Edward VI. which met soon after at Windsor Castle. A number of questions was propounded to them respecting the ecclesiastical state. Of these, seven related to church government. Bishop Stillingfleet (*Irenicum* pa. 390,) gives a copy of them from a manuscript of Archbishop Cranmer, with that great reformer's answer to them in his own hand writing. Of these, some are in the following words.

Question. “Whether bishops or priests were first; and if the priests were first, then the priest made the bishop?”

Answer. “The bishops and priests were at one time, and were not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ’s religion.”

Question. “Whether a bishop hath auctorite to make a priest by the scripture or no, and whether any other but only a bishop may make a priest?”

Answer. “A bishop may make a priest by the scriptures, and so may princes and governors by the auctorite of God committed them, and the people also by their election. For as we read that bishops have done it, so christien emperors and princes usually have done it. And the people before christien princes were, commonly did elect, their bishops and priests.”

Question. “Whether in the New Testament be required any consecration of a bishop and priest, or only appointing to the office be sufficient?”

Answer. “In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or a priest, needeth no consecration by the scripture, for election or appointing thereto is sufficient.”

This paper is thus subscribed in Cranmer’s own hand writing,

T. Cantuariensf—This is mine opinion and sentence at this present, which I do not temerariouly define, but do remitt the judgment thereof holly to your Majesty.

“In the same manuscript,” continues Stillingfleet, “it appears that the bishop of St. Asaph, Therleby, Redman, and Cox were all of the same opinion with the archbishop, that at the first bishops and presbyters were the same; and the two later expressly cite the opinion of Jerome with approbation. Thus we see by the testimony chiefly of him who was instrumental in our reformation, that he owned not episcopacy as a distinct order from presbytery of *divine right*, but only as a prudent constitution of the civil magistrate for the better governing in the church.”

The same author cites archbishop *Whitgift*, the first solemn defender of the English hierarchy, as often saying, "No form of church government is by the scriptures prescribed to or commanded the church of God." *Dr. Cozins* says, "All churches have not the same form of discipline, neither is it necessary they should, seeing it cannot be proved that any certain particular form of church government is commended to us by the word of God." *Dr. Law*; "No certain form of government is prescribed in the word, only general rules laid down for it." Bishop *Bridges*; "God hath not expressed the form of church government, at least not so as to bind us to it." We might prolong testimonies of this sort to almost any extent. The judicious *Hooker*, as he is called, employs one whole book (the third) of his *Ecclesiastical Politie* in proving that the plan of church government is not unalterably prescribed in scripture. This was the opinion of the incomparable *Hales*, of the great *Chillingworth*, of the immortal *Bacon*, and of *Locke* whose name may well stand with the foremost. To these a great multitude more might be added, but we only mention two others, archbishop *Usher*, than whom the English church can scarcely mention a man of greater learning and more fervent piety, and the famous *Selden* whose attainments are proverbial even to the present day.

But farther, that no doubt may be entertained on this subject, we observe that in the 13th of queen Elizabeth, chap. 12, it was enacted that the ministrations of those who had only been ordained according to the manner of the Scots, or other foreign churches, should be admitted. In the year 1582 there were many in the church of England who had received no other ordination. *Neal*, (*Hist. of Puritans*, Vol. I. pa. 386,) gives a copy of a license given, by *Dr. Aubrey*, vicar general of the archbishop of Canterbury, on the command of the primate, "to Mr. John Morrison a Scot's divine, who had been ordained by a Scottish presbytery, to preach over his whole province. The words of

the license are as follows: ‘ Since you the aforesaid John Morrison, about five years past, in the town of Garrat, and in the county of Lothian, of the kingdom of Scotland, were admitted and ordained to sacred orders and the holy ministry, *by the imposition of hands, according to the LAUDABLE FORM AND RITE of the reformed CHURCH of Scotland:* And since the congregation of that county of Lothian is conformable to the orthodox faith, and sincere religion now received in this realm of England, and established by public authority; We therefore as much as lies in us, and as by right we may, APPROVING AND RATIFYING THE FORM OF YOUR ORDINATION AND PREFERMENT DONE *in such manner aforesaid*, grant unto you a license and faculty, with the consent and express command of the most reverend father in Christ, lord EDMUND by the divine providence archbishop of *Canterbury*, to us signified, *That in such orders as you have taken, you may, and have power in any convenient places in and throughout the whole province of Canterbury, to celebrate divine offices, to minister the Sacraments, &c. as much as in us lies: and we may de jure, and as far as the laws of the kingdom do allow.* Dated April 6, 1582.

We add another historical fact. The famous Synod of Dort met in the year 1618. This synod was composed chiefly of Dutch Presbyterians—a plain presbyter was president—yet the English church was represented there by four Episcopal divines, namely *Dr. Carlton*, bishop of Landaff; *Dr. Hall*, afterwards bishop of Norwich; *Dr. Davenant*, afterwards bishop of Salisbury; and *Dr. Samuel Ward*, master of Sidney College, Cambridge. Here was a sufficient acknowledgement of the validity of presbyterial ordination.

The evidence produced seems entirely decisive on the subject before us, respecting the judgment of the fathers and founders of the Episcopal church. They fully acknowledged the validity of presbyterial ordination, and the administrations of Presbyterian ministers.

With respect to the opinions of Presbyterians, there is no doubt: they have all along admitted that episcopal ordination was not repugnant to the scriptures. Such was the admission of Calvin, of Beza, of Peter Martyr, of Bucer, of Blondel, of Amyrault, of Bochart, and numbers more whose opinions might be quoted on this subject. But the detail would occupy too much room. It will be of more purpose to show the practical effect of these opinions.

When the popish queen Mary ascended the throne of England, and for a time abolished the labours of Edward and Cranmer, many of the English Protestants fled from the fury of persecution, and took refuge on the continent of Europe. They were every where received with open arms by the Presbyterians; were acknowledged as brethren; and allowed every privilege that they could ask, or fraternal affection could afford. Their sufferings called forth the deepest sympathy; and their wants the most active charity. It was a goodly sight to behold how christian love triumphed over little differences in form and order. The unity of the church was fully recognized, and various classes of Protestants considered each other as members of one body of which Christ was the head.

Afterwards a great and lamentable change took place; and it is worth while to enquire into the cause to which this change is to be attributed. With this view it is observed that since the reign of *Henry* the eighth, the sovereign of England has been acknowledged as the head of the church in that country, and has exercised the power of appointing all the great ecclesiastical officers in the realm. The affairs of the church have, all along, occupied much of the attention of the religious powers. The whole of the Stuart race aimed to extend the royal prerogative, and acquire unlimited power. For this purpose great use was made of the influence of the clergy. But the church of Geneva was established in a republic, and its constitution was popular. The clergy were all equal, and their ecclesiastical

bodies admitted laymen to consult and vote. The effect of this form of polity was very visible. The numerous disciples of Calvin in England, were not ready to fall in with the schemes of royalty. Elizabeth was no friend to the presbyterial parity. James I. had been bred up a Presbyterian, and while king of Scotland had felt something of the uncompromising and irrelative character of that discipline. After mounting the English throne, he showed the rancour of his heart against the church in which he had been educated; and the historians tell us had frequently in his mouth the saying, "No bishop, no king." His successor, the weak and unhappy Charles, carried the exercise of the royal prerogative farther than any of his predecessors—and met with more violent opposition than they had experienced. The dispute between Presbyterians and Episcopals was mingled with the violence of political prejudice and party spirit. The monarchy was overthrown; an adventurer seized the reins of government, and held them as long as he lived—another revolution took place at his death, and Charles II. was restored. Tranquility, however, was not restored with him; and at length the famous *Act of uniformity* was passed. In this law, by which two thousand of the most pious and zealous clergymen were ejected from their livings, it was enacted, "That no person shall be capable of any benefice, or presume to consecrate or administer the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, before he be ordained a priest by episcopal ordination, on pain of forfeiting for every offence one hundred pounds." And ever since, this has been the law of the church of England as established by *king, lords and commons*.

Hence we see that the denial of the validity of presbyterial ordination did not originate with the fathers and founders, and brightest ornaments of the Episcopal church. It arose from the mingling of ecclesiastical zeal and prejudice with fierce political disputes. The occasion has long since passed away; but yet we, in these times, feel the

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effects of the passions and prejudices that were then excited. In this country, however, there is not a solitary reason for the perpetuation of these prejudices and disputes. Because, happily for the purity of the church and the interests of true religion, there is a complete separation between political and ecclesiastical affairs. Neither Presbyterianism nor Episcopacy has the least political influence. And christianity, without any foreign admixtures, without the adulteration of any unholy connexion with parties in the state, is, left entirely to manifest its native tendencies. Its influence is totally and absolutely a moral influence. There is then a noble opportunity for the churches in this happy country to return to the old ways, to take up the spirit and follow the example of Cranmer and Calvin and Knox, and Jewell and Martyr and other worthies, who, while they maintained their own peculiar sentiments, acknowledged each other as the servants of the Son of God, and as brethren in the gospel of their common Lord. It is in vain to expect, after a subject has been so long debated as that before us, that exclusive claims on either side will be admitted. Besides, the spirit of the age, the temper of the people is against them. They ought surely to be waved; and let pure fervent brotherly love take their place.

We have not only a fine opportunity of showing how christians love one another; but, as appears to us, the circumstances of the country and the interests of the church loudly call on all to show that they can conquer traditional prejudices, that they can let *little things* pass for *little things*, and lay out their exertions for the promotion of evangelical piety. For illustration and confirmation of this position we offer the following remarks.

1. The last thirty years may be regarded as the period of infidelity; its prevalence was extensive and desolating—its advocates were open and intrepid—their attacks were incessant—their hopes of victory were sanguine. It pleased God however, to defeat their counsels, and to disappoint

their hopes. But the infidelity of the human heart is not subdued. The enemy now occupies a masked battery. The standard of the cross, indeed, waves above it, but the men in the fortress "deny the Lord that bought them," and are in strict alliance with avowed unbelievers. In fact, what appeared before as infidelity, is now Socinianism. And no little zeal is employed to propagate this fatal error. We shall, in this country witness its triumphs, unless it please God to stir up his people of every name to oppose its progress. It will enter into our seats of learning, it will flatter the self-sufficiency of the young, and gratify them by its pliability and its accommodations to their passions, it will deceive them by its pretended liberality, it will lull their consciences by its assumption of piety, and shut up all the ordinary avenues by which divine truth makes its way to the heart. Surely while the church of God is threatened with this evil, it does not become her friends to weaken one another by contentions respecting matters of form and order. Rather, it is imperiously and solemnly their duty to unite, and employ all the influence that they have in society in opposing the march of this enemy of the faith once delivered to the saints.

2. This is an age distinguished for the union and co-operation of evangelical churches, in sending the gospel to the destitute in heathen and christian lands. The united exertions of the faithful in this work and labour of love, have been conspicuously and eminently blessed by the Head of the church. Already great things have been effected. We, however, in this part of the vineyard have accomplished little. But there is a spirit stirring within, from the operations of which we augur good things. The cloud which is now like a man's hand, will, we hope, enlarge and overspread the whole land, and pour down a copious und refreshing shower.

But it will be disastrous indeed if the awakening energies of the church here, should be expended in controversy about matters which the people now judge to be unimportant

It will be deplorable, if those fires'are rekindled which had been almost extinguished; and in this land of perfect religious liberty, where even the term toleration has no application, the jealousies and discord which agitate high churchmen and dissenters in another country should disturb and interrupt the pleasures of social intercourse and christian communion. With these views and feelings we have undertaken this work: and we pray to God to bless this humble endeavour to promote truth and charity. Should the attempt fail, we shall rejoice in the belief that sincere efforts to advance the glory of God, the prosperity of his church, and the best interests of our fellow men, however they may be regarded in this world, will not be disowned by that gracious Saviour, who will reward the gift of a cup of cold water to one who belongs to him. Or, to adopt the words of the famous Hooker; "*There will come a time when three words uttered with charitie and meeknesse, shal receive a far more blessed reward, then three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpnesse of wit.*"

LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE!

PART I.

INQUIRY INTO THE MEANING OF THE TERM ORDINATION AND THE NATURE OF THE RITE.

OUR object, as has been stated, is to show that Presbyterian ordination is so conformed to the scripture, that our brethren who differ from us, ought to acknowledge the validity of our administrations, and receive us as true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this purpose, it is proper to present as distinct a view of the nature of *ordination* as possible. Indeed this is necessary; because many seem to have very confused notions of the subject. In general, it is understood to mean, the appointing of persons to the sacred office of the gospel ministry. But this simple and perfectly intelligible transaction has been clothed with mystery; and is regarded by many as a strange affair into which, as they are not ecclesiastics, it does not become them to enquire.

Roman Catholics make ordination one of their seven Sacraments. They suppose that it imprints, when *duly* administered, an indelible character; and confers, not merely authority to minister in holy things, but a power to give virtue and efficacy to all other sacraments of the church. This opinion is utterly unsupported by scripture, and is liable to the most flagrant abuses. If a minister of the gospel indeed possesses this power, there is no limitation or control of his influence over the people. The sacraments according to the judgment of the Roman Catholic church are necessary to salvation; and, in the opinion of a great majority of Protestants, are important means of attaining that end. A *priest*, as he is called, to accomplish his purpose, refuses to administer. Suppose a child about to die. The parent is operated on by the utmost force of parental affection. He regards his child as just ready to sink into perdition—Nothing can prevent it, according to a widely

prevalent superstition, but the administration of baptism by a duly authorised minister. To what terms may not the priest bring down his parishioner, while in this situation? A thousand instances might be adduced to show what mighty power is possessed by a man, who has persuaded the people that he alone can give efficacy to observances necessary for the everlasting welfare of themselves and those they best love. Who will not acknowledge the authority of one who can grant him absolution, or bind him over to everlasting destruction?

Against the grossest of these errors Protestants have raised their voices, and contended with great ability. Much was gained in the cause of truth and liberty, when the people were persuaded that priests were invested with no such power. Still, however, it is firmly believed by many, that there is some mysterious virtue in ordination, by which *something*, which nobody is able to define, is communicated to him who, as the phrase is, has been *duly* ordained. And this opinion is even at this day strangely prevalent among many classes of christians. Hence the propriety of looking into this subject, of stripping off its vesture of mystery, and setting it before the people in its native simplicity.

With this view we ask—When ordination, by whomsoever performed, is completed, what has been conferred? Is the minister invested with more knowledge, wisdom, or piety than he possessed before? If he was ignorant, imprudent, self-sufficient, worldly-minded, or graceless, is he not so still? Surely the contrary will not be pretended. All experience shows that there is no virtue, no mysterious charm in the imposition of hands, whether by one or by many, that communicates additional power to the understanding, or implants new graces in the soul. It would be strange indeed, if a mere external rite could supply the place of diligent study, and of careful culture of the heart; and perhaps stranger still, if it could alter the original

character of the mind. If any men do indeed possess power to confer such gifts, they are much to blame, if ever they suffer insufficient ministers to pass from under their hands, to burlesque preaching by their ignorance, and dishonour religion by their want of zeal and piety. But, really, this notion when closely inspected does not deserve serious consideration.

But perhaps it may be thought by some that, although no capacity of communicating gifts of this sort, belongs to those who possess the *ordaining power*, yet that there is a *validity* appertaining to the ministrations of men ordained in a certain way, which can no how else be imparted to them. We ask—what is intended by *validity* here? Do those who use the term know exactly what they mean by it? Is it, that these ministrations are recognized by the church as authorised and proper? That department of the church in which they are performed, doubtless acknowledges them; but, it may be, others do not. Protestant ministrations universally are regarded as invalid by Papists. Many Protestants return the compliment. Some Protestants, again, deny the validity of the administrations of other Protestants. All, however, maintain, let who may be wrong, that they are right. But it is nothing for a man to tell me that he and his party believe that my ordination is no ordination, while all my immediate ecclesiastical relations acknowledge my administrations, and multitudes come forward to receive the ordinances at my hands. The question returns then, what is this validity which you say I want? Is it, that in the judgment of the great Head of the church, my ordination is no ordination at *all*? But how is this ascertained? Is it so written in the scripture? We should be glad to see the passage. It has as yet escaped our most diligent researches. Besides, when we look to the administrations of preachers in the different denominations, we cannot see that there is any peculiar efficacy belonging to those of any one society, which proves that it

alone constitutes the true church of Jesus Christ. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents, all preach, and administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Now the preaching of all is sometimes fruitless, and sometimes—thanks be to the God of all grace—it is made effectual; the baptism administered by all appears, in many cases, to be unproductive of good, and in many others it is greatly blessed—the Lord's Supper is among all societies received by worthy and unworthy communicants; by persons who discern not the Lord's body, and by those who feed on him by faith, and are nourished up to everlasting life. But to what is this efficacy, in every case, to be ascribed? Is it not to the blessing of God on the ministrations of his servants? As there are, then, flourishing churches of the Episcopal, and Presbyterian, and Congregational order—as thousands in these societies are enlightened, and sanctified, and visited with the consolations of the Holy Spirit; are zealous for the glory of God, and active in promoting the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, who will dare to say that in the judgment of the Head of the church, that is of him who thus accepts these services, their *orders* are invalid, and their ministrations null and void? For ourselves we could not venture such a declaration. And indeed the harvest is so great and the labourers are so few, and the extension of the gospel is so desirable, and the salvation of souls so important, that really we are under no temptation to wish it true. “He that is not against us is on our part.”—And we bid God speed to all who labour in faithfulness and love in this cause—To enquire whose ministrations, among these various denominations, are most acceptable to God and most useful to man, would be in a high degree, both invidious and presumptuous. We however had rather have the *seals* to our ministry which were given to *Bernard Gilpin, †Isaac Watts, or ‡Samuel Davies, than to be able to trace our ecclesiastical genealogy through

* An Episcopalian.—† An Independent.—‡ A Presbyterian.

bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes, up to St. Peter himself.

We have no doubt, indeed, but that there has been a succession of ministers in the church, from the days of the apostles to the present day. But when any class of christians undertakes, for the support of their exclusive legitimacy, to trace the line of succession, they become so perplexed, and the subject is so darkened by uncertainty, that really their title on this ground appears not worthy of dispute. We believe that not a single minister now in the world can go from the bishop or presbytery that ordained him through every age, naming his ecclesiastical progenitors, and adducing in every case the evidence of their regular ordination, until he reached an apostle at the head of the line. And if this cannot be done, what is the value of that succession which has been so much boasted? We are assured by one who knew well [See Locke, IV, 559. Edit. 1758,] that previous to the Act of Uniformity, there was no re-ordination of foreign Protestants in England; and that "several bishops were made of such as were never ordained priests by bishops." Now, for any thing that can be shown to the contrary, the archbishop of Canterbury himself, might in tracing his ecclesiastical genealogy find instead of a bishop with his mitre, a plain presbyter with a Genevan cloak! In fact, the history of the church when minutely examined, puts down high pretensions, and brings us all, however aspiring we may be, to the same humble level. In this we ought to rejoice; for humility becomes our profession. Yea even when we are most successful in our labours, and numerous seals are given to our ministry, we ought not to be lifted up, but to remember that even when *Paul* planted and *Apollon* watered, it was God who gave the increase.

But it may be asked, is ordination then a mere ceremony, without meaning and without use? By no means: on the contrary it is an ordinance of great importance, and

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productive of the most valuable effects. How this is, and what is its true nature, will appear we hope from the following observations.

The great Head of the church has determined to employ the instrumentality of truth in promoting the interests of his kingdom, and carrying on the purposes of his mercy in the world. But truth to be efficacious must be known and received. It might have been communicated immediately by the God of mercy to the understandings and hearts of his creatures; but he has chosen a different method. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher." "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual mean of convincing and converting sinners, and building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation." Now, as God has appointed that the great system of divine truth should *by men* be taught and enforced on their fellow men, it is obviously proper and necessary that particular persons should be set apart to that office. And accordingly the apostle Paul informs us that God gave, "Some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

It is almost too obvious to remark that men whose business it is to afford moral and religious instruction, ought to be qualified for their office, or, in scriptural language, ought to be *apt to teach*. When our Lord sent out the first preachers, he sent them with qualifications perfectly adapted to their employment. They underwent a previous preparation. And we are warranted in requiring that they who aspire to the sacred office, should put themselves under training for their work; and on trial, that it may be ascertained, as far as man can ascertain, whether they are able rightly to divide the word of truth, and are workmen that need not be ashamed. And we here remark that preparation

for the ministry implies knowledge and love of truth, zeal for its propagation, a faculty of communicating ideas with precision and clearness, ability to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and above all warm practical piety.

These things being so, that course of discipline, that form of government, and that manner of ordination, which most completely secures the raising up and sending forth men of active yet prudent zeal, of fervent piety, of good understanding, and of cultivated minds, is certainly most conformed to the intention of the Head of the church in the institution of the gospel ministry; as it is best calculated to promote the interests of true religion in the world. But who shall direct the studies, judge of the progress, and ascertain the fitness of candidates for the gospel ministry? The same maxims of good sense and prudence, which apply to other cases, apply here. Who should judge of the progress and ascertain the qualifications of a student of law or medicine? Certainly, lawyers or physicians—men deeply versed in these branches of science both in theory and practice. In like manner, theologians are the proper and competent judges of the progress made by a student of theology. It was doubtless because they would in general be most capable of judging correctly in this case, that the Head and Lawgiver of the church appointed them to the performance of this office. Ordination must be performed in some way. It was performed by the imposition of hands by the primitive christians. It is the mode universally pursued, we believe. Not that we think any particular form essential. Appointing to the office, as archbishop Cranmer said, is sufficient. But it is well to observe that manner of doing the thing, that was practised by the apostles. At the same time, however, we must take heed of mistaken notions here. The apostles by laying hands on a man had power to communicate miraculous gifts—the Holy Spirit was often thus given. But it is not so with ordinary ministers of the gospel. None have succeeded to this apostolic

power. And in fact there is no mystery here. To us the case seems to be simply this. The laying of hands is a public and solemn declaration by those who perform the ceremony, that they have subjected the candidate for the ministry to such a course of discipline, and put him on such trials, as have enabled them to form a judgment concerning him; that according to that decision, he is qualified to give instruction in the school of Jesus Christ; and that he ought to be recognized as a teacher. At the same time engaging in prayer, and commending the candidate to the guidance and blessing of heaven, they have reason to hope that He, who hears prayer, will lend an ear to the voice of their supplications, and grant to the preacher the influences of his good Spirit. The candidate is thus inducted into an office instituted by Jesus Christ, is authorised to preach and administer the ordinances of the church, and do all things that befit a minister of the gospel. Nothing has taken place here but a simple investiture. The man has not been raised to a new order: he has only been placed in a new relation, and brought to occupy a new office. It is parallel to the case of investing a man with a civil office. Now every body understands this. A man is chosen President of the United States. The constitution points out the manner of his inauguration. As soon as this is performed, that person is clothed with all the authority which belongs to the office. But it is not the Chief Justice, who administers the oath, that communicates, in some mysterious, undefinable manner, a new character to the man, and invests him with new powers. It is the constitution of the country, expressing as it does the sovereign will of the people, that gives to the president all his power. So it is the gospel of Jesus Christ, expressing as it does the sovereign will of the Head of the church, that gives to the minister all his right and authority. The instrumentality of men is used for the purpose of training suitable persons for this office, judging of their qualifications,

declaring their fitness, and preventing the intrusion of the ignorant and wicked into the ministry. If there is any thing more in ordination than this, we should be glad to be informed what it is—and we shall certainly not refuse to learn from any who are willing to instruct us.

Here we wish it to be distinctly understood, that ministers of the gospel are the persons to whom the office of ordination is committed, by the appointment of Christ:—not because there is some secret virtue, some peculiar sacredness, or some extraordinary character communicated *from the hands imposed, to the head of the candidate*;—not because any thing is transmitted in the way of ecclesiastical propagation; but because men, who have been taught, and have enjoyed the benefit of experience, are the most suitable persons that can be employed in an affair of such unspeakable importance. And in this view of the subject the wisdom of the appointment is commended to us. We see and understand the adaptation of the means to the end. All is simple and intelligible. But in the contrary scheme, every thing is dark and mysterious; and there is much that contradicts all experience. The primate of all England, or the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland might *lay hands* on some “younger brother’s younger son,” who comes reeking from the profligacy of the University to enter on a *living* purchased by some rich relative or procurer by the patronage of some noble lord; and might infuse all that official virtue or power could enable them to communicate, and yet *this duly authorised* minister would be a graceless reprobate still.

Let it not be objected that hereby we let down the dignity of the sacred office. On the contrary, we fix its character and support its honour, when we strip it of pretensions which cannot be supported; and perpetuate it by means, which in their adaptation to the end proposed, approve themselves to the understanding of all. Our plan seems calculated to ensure watchfulness and care in the

officers of the church, in regard to both the literary and religious qualifications of candidates; while that which we oppose appears to us to have an opposite tendency. We can only train by the most efficient discipline that we know how to use, and examine, and then decide; while those who hold a contrary doctrine, suppose that they can transmit something (we know not what) received from their predecessors, which will give validity to the ministrations of the ordained, and make the sacraments administered by him true sacraments, which would otherwise be no sacraments at all. In truth, there can be no necessity for careful previous training, and frequent examinations, and numerous severe trials, among those who possess this undefined power.

Again, in farther reply to the objection, we observe, that we in this country deny *the divine right of kings*, yet we do fully believe that the powers that be, are ordained of God. We are not in the least degree disposed to withhold due honour from the civil magistrate, because we maintain that it is the right and the duty of the people to look out from among themselves men of ability and integrity, to be intrusted with the management of their affairs. On the contrary we are prompt to render respect to such men, while we cannot bestow it on those who make assumptions which mortal man ought never to make, and proclaim that they reign by a right derived from heaven. Submitting to magistrates, while exercising power in the way approved by ourselves, is, we are persuaded, as complete compliance with the ordinance of God as is rendered by the most loyal subject of his majesty. The President of the United States or the Governor of Virginia is just as much a divinely appointed magistrate, as legitimate ruler of the people, as the king of England or Louis *the desired*—And indeed much more so. Because while the latter claim a right, which heaven has never recognized; the former receive a trust from the people, to discharge for their benefit. These

illustrations, while they serve to show that christianity is not unfavourable in its precepts to human liberty, show that the objection noticed by us has no weight. In fact when the people see the clergy renouncing mysterious claims to honour, and adopting the wisest measures to secure a succession of truly able, enlightened, and pious ministers, then will they be disposed to regard the office with highest reverence, and the ministerial character will exert the greatest moral influence.

Let it be here understood that our remarks are directed against all high *jure divino* claims, by whomsoever advanced: and that we can never admit the exclusive pretensions of any, whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Congregationalists, until it shall be proved that the labours of those who assert them are alone blessed by the Head of the church. To such authority for these claims, we shall be ready to bow at all times. Indeed this would, at once settle all disputes. But until this can be produced; or what would be equivalent, an express declaration of scripture; we do think that it is the part of prudence not to bring forward pretensions of this sort.

We have attempted to show that the *rationale* of ordination, as performed by those who have themselves been ordained, is the securing of a succession of pious, zealous, and capable teachers in the church of Christ. This being indisputably the case, that particular society which adopts the wisest and most efficient measures for this purpose, does in this respect most fully answer the intention of our Lord in instituting the gospel ministry. We shall not, here enter on the invidious task of comparing the different denominations of christians among us, and endeavouring to ascertain which among them all has adopted measures most marked by wisdom. This we had rather leave to the judgment of others. But it will be shown, it is hoped, to the satisfaction of every reader, that the measures adopted by the Presbyterian church to secure a succession of able and

faithful ministers of the New Testament, are not so defective as to vitiate their proceedings and nullify their ordination.

Previously, however, it may be remarked that a minister of the gospel sustains two relations—He is a servant of Christ, and an officer in the church; that is, he is related to Christ and the church. And in his appointment it is necessary that respect should be had to both these relations: that is he should be admitted to office according to the principles established in the New Testament, so as to make him a suitable depository of the truth revealed by Christ and of the interests of his kingdom here on earth; and also an acceptable minister to the faithful among whom he is to labour. The first of these important concerns respects *ordination*; the second, *installation*. On this last we may have occasion to remark in the sequel. Our immediate business is with ordination. The steps taken by the Presbyterian church in this transaction are as follows:

The candidate for the ministry is licensed to preach *on trial*; and as a preparation for this licensure,

1. He produces to the Presbytery satisfactory testimonials of his good moral character, and of his being a regular member of some particular church.

2. He is examined as to his experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence him to desire the sacred office.

3. He is required to produce authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

The candidate having given satisfaction on all these points, is then and not before, taken under the care of the Presbytery. That body proceeds thus,

4. They *try* the candidate as to his knowledge of the Latin language, and of the original languages in which the holy scriptures were written.

5. They examine him on the arts and sciences; on theology natural and revealed; and on ecclesiastical history.

6. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel, the Presbytery requires of him an *exegesis*, on some common head of divinity; a *Presbyterial exercise*; a *Lecture* or explication of a portion of scripture; and a popular sermon, or other similar exercises, to be performed at several successive sessions, till they have obtained complete satisfaction as to his **PIETY, LITERATURE, and APTNESS to teach** in the churches. All of which will more fully appear from the following extract.

“The holy scriptures require that some trial be previously had of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded, by being committed to weak or unworthy men(*a*); and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose presbyteries shall license probationers, to preach the gospel; that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may, in due time, ordain them to the pastoral office(*b*).

It is proper and requisite, that candidates applying to the presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel, produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being regular members of some particular church. And it is the duty of the presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influenced them to desire the sacred office(*c*). And it is

(*a*) 1 Tim. iii. 6. Not a novice. 2 Tim. ii. 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

(*b*) 1 Tim. iii. 7. 3 John 12.

(*c*) Rom. ii. 21. Thou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? &c. in connection with letter (*a*).

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recommended, that the candidate be also required to produce a diploma, of bachelor or master of arts, from some college or university: or at least authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the church, to intrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men (*d*), the presbytery shall try each candidate, as to his knowledge of the Latin language; and of the original languages in which the holy scriptures were written. They shall examine him, on the arts and sciences; on theology, natural and revealed; and on ecclesiastical history. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel, the presbytery shall require of him, an exegesis on some common head of divinity; a presbyterial exercise; a lecture or explication of a portion of scripture; and a popular sermon, or other similar exercises, to be held, at several successive sessions, till they shall have obtained satisfaction, as to his piety, literature and aptness to teach in the churches (*e*).

That the most effectual measures may be taken, to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office (*f*), it is recommended, that no candidate, except in extraordinary cases, be licensed; unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years, under some approved divine, or professor of theology."

Form of Government of Presbyterian church, chap. XIII. sec. i. ii. iii. iv. pp. 363—365.

The presbytery then proceeds to license the candidate as a *probationer* for the holy ministry. He is thus authorized to preach, that the people may have an opportunity of judging of his qualifications. Should he preach so much

(*d*) See letters (*a*) and (*b*).

(*e*) 1 Tim. iii. 2.—Apt to teach. See also the foregoing quotations:

(*f*) See letter (*a*).

to the satisfaction of any congregation, that the people elect him as their pastor, the presbytery is required to proceed thus;

“Trials for ordination, especially in a different presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the constitution, the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the church; together with such written discourse, or discourses, founded on the word of God, as to the presbytery shall seem proper (b). The presbytery, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought to be, if convenient, in that church of which he is to be the minister. It is also recommended that a fast day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination (c).”

Form of Government, chap. XIV. sec. ix. pa. 371.

These measures, it is thought are well calculated to secure, what has been already stated to be the great object in view, a succession of pious, well-taught instructors in the church of our blessed Lord. Far be it from us, proudly to set ourselves in comparison with others. But this we say, that if we knew any better plan, any measures of greater efficiency, they would most certainly be adopted. For we endeavour to appreciate the importance of this part of our duty, to consider its bearing on the welfare of the church and the great interests of society; and would gladly receive instruction from all who can afford it. In the mean time, we are persuaded that our brethren will do us the justice promptly to acknowledge, that we have not been

(b) See the proofs in sections 1, 2, 3, 4, of chapter xiii,

(c) Acts xiii. 2, 3.

inattentive to the design of our common Lord and Master in appointing teachers in his church. They will believe that we honestly desire to know and do his will respecting this great concern.

It has already been seen by the reader that the office of ordination is performed, among us, *by the Presbytery*. The scriptural authority on which we ground our practice will be stated hereafter. In this place, if we may assume that herein we do not err, it will be remarked that there appears to us a good reason for the appointment. The question, shall a man be set apart to the holy ministry of the gospel is one of paramount importance. Because it involves interests of incomprehensible magnitude, and of eternal duration. Now, when this question is examined by a number of persons, and several of them, as is almost universally the case, men of long experience and much observation, it seems fair to believe that it will be decided as wisely as in any *other mode whatever, except it be by inspired men.* "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Besides, there is a responsibility in rejecting a candidate for the ministry—His feelings may be wounded—His friends may be alienated. But when this responsibility is divided among numbers, they are under less temptation to regard any thing but the qualifications of the candidate, and the interests of the church. And farther, the idea of being subjected to the inspection and scrutiny of a presbytery, that is of a number of men of learning, piety, and experience, has an imposing influence on a candidate, and he is powerfully excited to look well to his motives, and use all his exertions to approve himself before so many and such judges. Circumspection in conduct, and diligence in study may well be expected of him—There does then appear to be wisdom in that appointment, which makes it the duty of a *number* of persons i. e. of a presbytery to ordain to the work of the gospel ministry. This too coincides with what we have before stated, as the *rationale* of ordination.

These reasonings are intended to prepare the way for an exposition of the scripture doctrine on this subject. It is not pretended that any mere reasoning will settle a question of this nature. But as it is certain that the appointments of heaven are not arbitrary, but in the highest degree wise, it is pleasant and profitable to investigate the reason of them, and contemplate the fitness and wisdom displayed in them.

We shall now turn to the scriptures, and show that in the constitution of the Presbyterian church there is such conformity to the appointments of our common Lord, as ought to induce other branches of the church to acknowledge us as legitimate members, and our ordination as valid. The conclusion will be that they ought to receive us, in our church capacity, as brethren.

SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF ORDINATION.

The word *ordain*, in the sense of choosing or setting apart to an office occurs but seldom in the New Testament. We limit our enquiries to this part of the sacred volume; because the manner of appointing officers in the church during the old dispensation was different from that which has prevailed under the *new*. We shall cite every passage in which the term is to be found.

Mark iii. 14. "And he ordained twelve to be with him, and that he might send them out to preach."

The original word here is *ἐποίησε* (*epoiesē*) usually rendered by the English verb *to make*. And a more general or indefinite word could scarcely be found in the whole compass of language. This passage then instead of determining any thing as to the particular mode of ordination, simply affirms the fact that our Saviour appointed twelve apostles. How this was done we know not. Only we know that he kept them in training and under discipline about three years, before they were sent out as duly qualified for their sacred office.

John xv. 16. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you; and *ordained* you, that you might go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit might remain."

In this passage the word is *εθηκε* (etheka). Its theme signifies, in English, to place, and is nearly or quite as undefined as the former. It also simply declares the fact that Christ had appointed the twelve to go forth as teachers of his religion.

Acts i. 21—22. Wherefore of these men that have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be *ordained* to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

In this passage the original word is *γενεσθαι* (genesthai), the ordinary meaning of which is, *to be, to exist, and thence to be made.* So that this is most the indeterminate word of any yet used.

Acts xiv. 23. "And when they had *ordained* them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

The word used here is *χειροτονήσαντες* (Cheirotonesantes.) Its signification is limited, and it therefore deserves farther enquiry. It occurs only twice in the New Testament—in the passage before us, and in 2 Cor. viii. 19. "And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; and not that only, but who was also *chosen* of the churches to travel with us with this grace," &c. Here it is rendered *chosen.* The apostle is speaking of a contribution for the poor christians in Judea; he gives his advice concerning it; commends Titus, who carried his letter, to the Corinthians; and with him mentions another brother, supposed to be Luke, who was *chosen* by the churches to travel with Paul, assist him in the collections which he was making, and aid in carrying them to Jerusalem. In this there is nothing

more than an appointment to a particular office; just as though the citizens of Richmond, Philadelphia, or New-York, should appoint some person worthy of trust to bear their contributions to the distressed inhabitants of Savannah. The word does not express the particular manner in which the ordination, that is the investiture with office was performed. Whatever it implies beyond the mere statement of the fact will be considered hereafter.

1 Tim. ii. 7. "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The apostle Paul speaks thus of himself. He uses the same word that John uses when he records the declaration of our Saviour before quoted. John xv. 16; *ετέθην* (*etethen*). "And we have before shown that this is a very general word, the sense of which must be determined by its particular connection, wherever it occurs.

Titus i. 5. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and *ordain* elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

The Greek word here is, *καταστήσης* (*katasteses*;) and it is very often used in the sense of *constitute*, *appoint* or *ordain* to an office, as in Luke xii. 14. Man who *made* me a judge or a divider over you? Acts vii. 10.—And he *made* him a governor over Egypt and all his house. Ver. 27. But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who *made* thee a ruler and a judge over us? See also ver. 35. Heb. vii. 28. For the law *maketh* men high-priests, which have infirmity, &c. The same verb also occurs Heb. v. 1. For every high priest taken from among men is *ordained* for men in things pertaining to God, &c.

These are all the passages, if we mistake not, in the New Testament, where the word *ordain* occurs in the sense of appointing to office. In the original there are five different words employed; of which, three are the most general terms that could be used, and two others are used to express

the ordinary appointments to office among men. Now it does seem to us that this indifference in the use of terms referring to this subject, this taking up of the very first that offers, favours the view which we have given of the nature of ordination. If it is that mysterious rite that many have supposed it to be, duly performed only in one specific manner, surely the sacred penmen would have used some specific and appropriated term for the expression of this truth, and the prevention of error. On the contrary they seem to speak on the subject, just as we do in this country respecting the appointing of civil officers, when we say of a man that he is *made, chosen, set up, appointed, a delegate, judge, governor, congressman, &c.*

But the business of ordination, as has been remarked, must be performed in some way. In the Presbyterian church it is done as we have seen by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. We repeat this for the sake of reminding the reader, that the rationale of this mode is to secure the judgment and concurrence of several persons in an affair of so much importance. Another reason might be assigned, which, considering the disposition of man in every age, has great force; we mean to prevent the accumulation of power in the hands of individuals. But on this we shall not dwell. Let us look to the scriptures, and see whether the manner of appointing to office as recorded there, does not justify the practice of the Presbyterians.

The first instance of this kind of which any account is given after the apostles received their commission, is the appointment of the seven deacons, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We do not adduce this example because we believe that these deacons were preachers of the gospel; but for the sake of showing, in general, the manner of appointing to office, as practised in the days of the apostles—

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians

against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason, that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”—Acts vi. 1—7.

In this case the brethren having *looked out* seven men approved by them, brought them to the apostles, and *they* prayed and laid their hands on them. One apostle probably presided as chairman or moderator, and conducted divine service; but the appointment to office, after the choice of the people had been made, was the joint act of the apostles. “They prayed and laid their hands on them.”

The next instance that occurs is recorded in

Acts xiii. 1—3. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

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Some may perhaps suppose, because Barnabas and Saul had before been employed in preaching, that there was no ordination here. But it ought to be understood that although they had been called immediately by God to preach the gospel, they had not been, as far as appears from the record, designated to that office by any rite performed by men. They preached only to their own countrymen. And it seems to have been quite a common case, as soon as any one was made to feel the saving power of the gospel, and know the preciousness of Christ as a Saviour, for him to proclaim what he knew and felt to his friends and fellow-citizens. But here was a new case: two men were to be set apart for a special work, to be sent as missionaries to the Gentiles—And then it was the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, that they should be ordained, or appointed to their office in the way intended for perpetuity in the church. Besides, there was at the command of the Holy Spirit, a setting apart to a particular work, there was fasting, there was prayer, and the laying on of hands—and if these do not constitute ordination, what does? Hammond, Lightfoot, Taylor, and many others acknowledge that here was an ordination. But it was performed by the ministers in Antioch, by Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. As we should say, they constituted the presbytery that officiated on this occasion. And we think this a strong case in point, to justify presbyterial ordination.

In Acts xiv. 23. It is recorded that Paul and Barnabas, returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, cities which they had visited in their mission, ordained them elders in every church, with prayer and fasting. The office of ordination was here performed by at least *two* persons. We do not contend for any specific number; but for a plurality. And for this principle we find support in this passage.

1 Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of

hands of the presbytery." Thus speaks the apostle Paul to his son Timothy, confessedly too in relation to his ordination. The Greek word for *presbytery* Πρεσβυτέριον (Presbuterion) occurs in two other passages of the New Testament. Luke xxii. 66. And as soon as it was day the *elders of the people* (in Greek the eldership of the people, the presbytery) and the chief priests and the scribes came together. &c. Acts xxii. 5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and *all the estate of the elders*, &c. (Greek, the whole presbytery.) In these two places, it means the members of the great Sanhedrim, which sat in Jerusalem. This was entirely a Jewish assembly. In the first cited passage, it means the college of presbyters in the church, whose office it was to govern the church, to teach, to administer sacraments, to ordain &c. This is the usage of the term in the writings of the fathers, as is abundantly proved by Suicer in his *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, and by Vitringa in his book *De Veteri Synagoga*, to which the learned reader is referred for evidence. The term *presbytery* is used, because the standing and regular officers in the church are most commonly in the New Testament called *presbyters*. A presbytery then is a consistory or college of presbyters held for the transaction of ecclesiastical business. Of which business an important part was the ordaining of ministers by the laying on of hands. A meeting of this sort ought always to have a chairman, a president, or moderator. And we have reason to believe that at the ordination of Timothy, Paul presided; because, in his second epistle to the evangelist, he says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

These two passages compared, seem to justify the practice of Presbyterians in ordaining by a presbytery, and always appointing some person to preside on the solemn occasion.

There is, we believe, no other example of ordination recorded in scripture to which an appeal may be made. It is

true that the subject is adverted to several times by Paul in his epistles to Timothy and Titus. The passages are these. 1 Tim. v. 22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be thou partaker of other men's sins. 2 Tim. ii. 2. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Tit. i. 5. For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city." It may be thought that these words suppose the sole power of ordaining in the churches of Ephesus and Crete to be in Timothy and Titus; or at any rate, that they might ordain without the assistance of others. We shall present in as few words as possible, our view of this subject, and leave it to all to form their own opinions. And assuredly we shall quarrel with none who differ from us.

Timothy and Titus then were *evangelists*. Now evangelists were officers of the church, "next in order to the apostles, and were sent by them, not to settle any where, but to travel through the infant churches of the christian name, and ordain ordinary officers, and finish what the apostles had begun. Of this kind were Philip the deacon, Timothy, Titus, Mark, Silas, &c. See Acts xxi. 8." They were a sort of deputies of the apostles, and acted for them in the places to which they were sent. Of course, they would preside in all ecclesiastical meetings in the churches where they officiated. The apostles, therefore, would address their letters and give directions respecting all that was to be done, and the manner of doing it, to them. In the same manner that now a communication made to a presbytery, would be addressed to their moderator; or a letter to a committee, would be addressed to their chairman. It is not denied, indeed, that, as evangelists were extraordinary officers, they had extraordinary powers. But, as in all the instances of ordination expressly mentioned in scripture we see a plurality of persons employed, it appears

highly probable that when Timothy, for example, engaged in the solemn work, he would see to it that the customary method should be observed; and as he was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, so it should be in ordinations where he was to preside. This is our view of the subject—let the reader judge. But however this may be, it does seem to us that scriptural example so supports the manner of ordaining observed by Presbyterians, that our brethren of all denominations ought to acknowledge it as valid, and us as true members and ministers of the church of Jesus Christ.

If nothing has escaped our attention, we have now produced every passage of the New Testament which has a bearing on the *manner* of ordination. Our readers, who have never before attended to the subject, but yet have heard that it has been the occasion of many and obstinate controversies, will be surprised to find that the sacred writers say so little about it, and if we might use the expression without offence, seem to make so little of it. Whenever the subject occurs, it is taken up precisely as a writer takes up a subject which he knows to be perfectly simple and intelligible, and supposes to be perfectly understood by his readers. The fact is stated in very few words, without caution or explanation, and the writer passes right on. The reason of this is, that the manner of ordination in the christian church was adopted from the practice of the Jewish Synagogue. And as the Jews, in the times of the apostles were dispersed all over the world, and had their Synagogues in all countries, the subject could not but be a familiar one. It is therefore mentioned by the apostles without solicitude, without amplification, without explanation.

But the case is widely different, when they speak of the qualifications of candidates for the gospel ministry. Then they express themselves in terms of great caution and great earnestness. Let the reader take the following passages of scripture as an illustration of this remark.

“This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach: Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetuous: One that ruleth well in his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil. Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. Even so *must* their wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”—1 Tim. iii. 1—13.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins; keep thyself pure.”—1 Tim. v. 17 & 22.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”—2 Tim. ii. 2 & 24, 25.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly, For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”—Tit. i. 5—9.

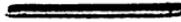
These are the matters, which, in the judgment of the apostle Paul, are of primary importance. As to the manner of ordination, they lay no stress on it; but as to the qualifications of ministers, they give “line upon line, precept on precept.” And it deserves notice, that they regard as important both *moral* and *intellectual* endowments—A man must be patient, faithful, meek, humble, godly. He must also be *apt to teach*; he must be *able to teach*; he must stop the mouths of gainsayers, and vain talkers; he must vindicate the truth as it is in Jesus.

This is the reason why we said, and let the reader judge whether the scripture does not bear us out in saying, that the *rationale* of ordination is the securing a succession of truly pious and enlightened men in the ministry of the gospel; and that the particular church which adopts the most efficient measures to accomplish this important object, most exactly conforms to the intention of the great Head of the church in instituting the gospel ministry.

And here we cannot but express our pleasure in observing, that the various denominations of christians in this country are adopting measures to attain this great end. We refer to the Theological Seminaries which are established, or are attempted to be established among them. We pray for God’s blessing on them. And it would be to us a goodly sight, to see different christians aiding each

other in this important undertaking. We all want schools, in which a thorough theological education may be obtained. And in which antient learning as well as modern science shall be fully cultivated. Unless new and more vigorous efforts are made by christians of the present day, the rising generation of preachers will encounter an enemy, for whose assaults they will not be prepared. For Socinianism will go forth supported by the best learning that this country can afford; and sad will be the havock made in many of the ranks of orthodoxy. Let us unite, and afford to each other all the aid that we can. We do not mean a union of churches; but of efforts, of counsels, of prayers, of resources.

On all that call on the name of the Lord Jesus, both *their* LORD and *ours*, let grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied!



PART II.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL TITLES OF THOSE WHO POSSESS THE ORDAINING POWER.

The view which has been given of ordination as it is represented in scripture, and as it is practised by Presbyterians ought, we think, to convince the reader that there is a conformity between the representation and the practice. We know well, however, the influence of names and of early associations connected with names. Some, for instance, whenever they hear of an ordination, think of a *presbytery*, by whom the rite is performed. And it never enters their mind that the office is or can be performed in any other manner. While others, on a similar occasion, think just

the same of a *bishop*. This being the case, it seems necessary to look back to the primitive constitution of the church, and see how this affair was managed in antient times. Our object in this, let it be understood, is to show that the general principles laid down by the apostles have been so applied by the Presbyterians that other denominations ought to acknowledge them as regular. It is very far from our purpose to attack others, however they may differ from us. They are our brethren in Christ, and as such we love them. We would even treat what we think their prejudices with respect, knowing, as we do, the influence of education and early associations. But we should love them, and they would love us more, if they could be persuaded that we all do in fact belong to the same body, that we are all members of the one undivided and indivisible church of the Lord Jesus. It is to this object that we are directing our efforts; and while thus engaged, we can heartily offer up the following petitions, "O God, the creator and preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men, that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them; thy saving health unto all nations. *More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic church; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.*"

Before entering on the examination of scripture which we have proposed, it may be well to give an extract from the constitution of the Presbyterian church.

"The *pastoral* office is the first, in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. *The person who fills this office, hath, in scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his*

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church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.”—*Form of Government, chap. III.*

This passage presents the subject in terms so clear and explicit, that we have only to look into the scripture for the evidence by which this part of our polity is warranted. The general proposition laid down in the chapter quoted is, That he who fills that office which is first in the church for dignity and usefulness, has obtained different names expressive of his various duties. This is amplified and illustrated by the following particulars.

1. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed *bishop*. This appears from the following passages of scripture.

Acts xx. 28. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops, *ἐπισκοποις*) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Phil. i. 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons. 1 Pet. v. 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight thereof* (acting as bishops thereof, *ἐπισκοποῦντες* *episcopountes*) not by constraint, but willingly” &c.

2. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed *pastor*.

This is according to a prediction of Jeremiah iii. 15. “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Eph.

iv. 11. And he gave — some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints,” &c.—In conformity to this, ministers are frequently exhorted in scripture to feed the flock of God. See the passages before quoted Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.

3. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister.

1 Cor. iv. 1. “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2, Cor. iii. 6. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament. 1. Cor. iii. 5. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but *ministers* by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man.”

4. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed *presbyter* or *elder*.

1 Pet. v. 1, 2. “The elders which are among you, I exhort who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, &c. Tit. i. 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city,” &c. See also, 1 Tim. v. 17, 19. and many other passages.

5. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the *angel* of the church.

Rev. ii. 1. “Unto the *angel* of the church of Ephesus write, these things &c. ver. 8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna &c. ver. 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos” &c. See the addresses to the seven churches, and comp. Rev. i. 20.

6. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed *ambassador*.

2. Cor. v. 20. “Now then we are *ambassadors* for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in

Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Eph. vi. 19, 20. That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

7. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed *steward* of the mysteries of God.

Luke xii. 42. "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Now it will not be pretended that all these words express different permanent offices in the church; that is that there is one office of *bishops*, another of *pastors*, a third of *ministers*, a fourth of *presbyters*, a fifth of *angels*, a sixth of *ambassadors*, and a seventh of *stewards*. But the true account of this matter is given in the quotation made above—namely, these various terms express the various duties of one and the same officer. In this, if we mistake not, our brethren will agree with us, with one exception. The bishop is supposed to be an officer of a distinct and superior order in the church. And the power of ordaining is thought to be exclusively in him. This makes it necessary that we should enquire a little more particularly into the reasons why the Presbyterians hold the sentiments stated above. But here we remark, that we are entirely willing that our brethren should manage their affairs in their own way. If they think that it is expedient to acknowledge a superior order distinct from presbyters, *we* have no objection. All that we aim at is to show that the order of the Presbyterians on this subject is consistent with scripture, and for this reason we proceed to enquire into the

OFFICE OF A SCRIPTURAL BISHOP.

The Greek word rendered bishop (*ἐπισκοπος*, episkopos) is used in the Septuagint as the general title of all those who sustain the management of any business; so that the prefect or principal person to whose care the administration of any affair is committed, is called a bishop. Examples are numerous. The reader who understands Greek, and has a copy of the Septuagint may consult the following passages. Num. xxxi. 14. Judges ix. 28. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12, 17. Nehem. xi. 9. 14. The word is used with the same latitude by the profane Greek writers. Thus, those who presided in the public games, were called bishops; generals of armies, were so called; persons sent, every year, by the Athenians into their colonies to inspect their affairs, were thus denominated. The word is derived from *ἐπισκοπέω* *episkopeo* to inspect; and might be rendered *inspector* or *overseer*. Hence its application, in the New Testament. It is there used to signify the principal officer in a christian church; or as we express it, the pastor of a congregation. That this is its use in the New Testament, appears from the following passages.

Acts xx. 28. "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, (bishops, *ἐπισκοπος*) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This is the first time of using the word bishop in the New Testament. In a former part of this chapter we read that Paul, hastening to Jerusalem, arrived at Miletus, and sent to Ephesus for the *presbyters* of the church. On their arrival he addresses them in a most solemn and affectionate exhortation, a part of which has been quoted above. It is obvious to remark here, that the same persons who in one place are called presbyters or elders, are in another termed bishops. This is too plain to be denied; and accordingly it has been conceded, that the word bishop is used in the

New Testament to designate the ordinary pastors of a church. But it is said that the dispute is not about *names* but *things*; that these persons were not bishops in the subsequent use of that term; and that there was, and there ought to be a distinction of order in the ministers of the gospel. Certainly we have no disposition for logomachy; we never dispute about words. It is granted then that there was a distinction between the apostles, and the ordinary and permanent pastors of the church. But we deny that the apostles had any successors in their *apostolical office*; that is any successors as to those particulars in which this distinction consisted. And we only ask our readers to take their bibles, and ascertain for themselves, what were the distinguishing marks of the apostolical office. It will then be seen that they could not possibly have successors in this respect.

But let us examine the words of the apostle Paul in the passage before us, "Take heed" saith he, "to yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*"—to do what? Our translation has it, "to *feed* the church of God." The Greek word here is (*ποιμαίνειν* *poimainein*,) the true import of which is to be ascertained. It is derived from *ποιμην* (*poimen*) a shepherd. Now we know that it is the office of a shepherd to *direct* and *control*, as well as to *feed* his flock. When Paul then exhorts the bishops of the church of Ephesus to *act the part of shepherds* to the church of Ephesus, he implies much more than preaching and administration of the sacraments. He plainly includes direction and government; and this will appear from the usage of the word in the sacred writings.

Matt. ii. 6. "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a governor, that *shall rule* my people Israel," [ὄστις ποιμανεῖ τον λαόν μου την Ισραήλ *ostis poimanei ton laon mou ton Israel.*]

This is a prophecy of the Messiah. It is declarative of his office as king of his people, and the word here has always been understood to imply the exercise of authority.

John xxi. 16. Feed my sheep. [Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου. Poimaine ta probata mou.]

This is a command given by our Saviour to the apostle Peter. It enjoins the duty to be performed by the apostle to the sheep of Christ's flock. This may be expressed in two words, to feed and direct, or to drop the figure, to instruct and to govern. Now what the Saviour here commands Peter, Paul commands the presbyters or bishops of the church of Ephesus to do.

1 Pet. v. 1, 2. "The elders that are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God that is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly," &c. [Ποιμαίνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐπισκοποῦντες, &c. Poimanete to en umin poimnion tou Theou, episkopountes, &c.]

This is a remarkable passage, and well deserves consideration. The address is to the *presbyters* of the church. These are universally believed to be ordinary ministers; and they are exhorted to instruct and govern [ποιμαίνετε] the flock; that is Peter gives to them the very same command that his master had given to him. It seems to be a fair inference, then, that they were to afford the same instruction, and exercise the same authority over the particular flock committed to their charge, that Peter was authorised to do in the church at large. But farther, in the words used by the apostle, there follows the verb *feed* [ποιμαίνετε, poimanete] a participle, which according to the idiom of the Greek, expresses the manner in which this duty is to be performed: *ἐπισκοποῦντες* [episkopountes] performing the office of bishops. If, then, it is a part of the

office of a bishop to rule in the church, the word which we are now considering has that signification; and by the same reasoning it appears, that those who are here called presbyters are invested with episcopal authority in the churches to which they are called. For what is a bishop to do, but act the part of a bishop?

Rev. ii. 27. "And he shall *rule* (Ποιμανεῖ Poimanei) them with a rod of iron. Rev. xii. 5. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to *rule* [Ποιμανεῖν] all nations with a rod of iron." Rev. xix. 15. Precisely the same form of expression.

This word occurs very frequently in the Septuagint in the same sense, in which it is used in the passages just adduced. The reader, that we may avoid as much as possible quotations in Greek, is referred to 2 Kings v. 2. Micah vii. 14, Ps. ii. 9, Ezekiel xxxvii. 23.

This usage is quite common in the profane Greek writers. Indeed when applied to men in office, and intended to express the exercise of official duty, it generally if not universally has this signification. The same remark applies to the substantive [Ποιμήν. Poimen] usually rendered shepherd. Homer very frequently calls kings and generals of armies. Ποιμένες [Poimenes.]

— Δρύαντά τε ποιμένα λαῶν. II. α. v. 263.

— Dryas the king [shepherd] of the people.

Authorities in very great numbers might be adduced from many of the best Greek writers to the same effect. But it is unnecessary. When therefore the apostle calls the presbyters of the Ephesian church *bishops*, and directing them in the exercise of their official duties, says that they must take heed ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, are we not warranted to assert that he enjoins it on them to govern as well as to teach? Surely no one, who has considered the examples above cited, will deny it. But the presbyters addressed by Paul, were not diocesan bishops—they were

bishops of the church of Ephesus. They were the ordinary, standing officers of the church. The scriptural bishop, then is the pastor of a particular church.

The word bishop next occurs. Phil. i. 1. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons."—Here it seems obvious that the ordinary, standing officers in the church, are addressed by the apostle. These are *bishops*, and deacons. For the office of a scriptural deacon, the reader is referred to Acts vi. And as for the bishops of Philippi, we are authorised in saying that they were men in the same office with those mentioned Acts xx. 28, the passage just considered.

The place in which we next find the word bishop is 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2. Here it occurs twice. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober," &c.—On this passage, two remarks are offered. 1. The qualifications of a bishop here described and required, are the same with those elsewhere required in a presbyter or elder. (See Tit. i. 7.) 2. The apostle after saying what sort of a man a bishop must be, goes on to point out the character of a deacon: No intermediate office is even hinted at. It is just the same case with that, in the salutation of the church-officers at Philippi. In both, St. Paul speaks only of bishops and deacons. This strengthens our argument, that the scriptural bishop is the pastor of a particular church.

The word bishop next occurs, Tit. i. 5—7. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **ELDERS** in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly: for a **BISHOP** must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, &c." Now it has often been remarked that here, again, the same

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officer of the church is in one place called an elder, and in another a bishop. Otherwise the apostle must reason very strangely. Suppose a political writer should say, "Appoint in every district *judges* who are blameless, temperate &c., because a *governor* ought to be blameless &c." Would it not be thought that, in the latter part of the sentence, he had forgotten the beginning? Surely then the *scriptural* bishop is, in the judgment of Paul, the same with the presbyter. And, as the apostle directs that these presbyters or bishops should be ordained in every city, so he lets us see that they are the ordinary pastors of the church.*

The word bishop is used only once more in the sacred writings; and that is in 1 Pet. ii. 25. "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of souls."—Here our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ is intended. Of course this text does not belong to the subject now under consideration.

Thus it appears that the term bishop occurs only five times in the New Testament, namely Acts xx. 28. Philip. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 7. 1 Pet. ii. 25; that in four instances it means the ordinary pastors of the church; and that in two out of these four, the words, bishop and presbyter are used synonymously. Let the reader now recollect that our enquiry is into the office of a *scriptural* bishop, and let him decide for himself. Or let him read again the extract from the constitution of the Presbyterian church, on this subject and say whether that part of our polity is not sustained by the scripture.

But now for the use of all this—If any of our brethren suppose that the agency of a bishop is necessary to impart

* Christian churches were almost universally planted in cities in the beginning of Christ's religion. And these were for a long time the strong holds of christianity. As it gradually gained strength, the inhabitants of the cities, who continued idolatrous, retired into the country, and settled in villages—Hence they were called pagans, from *paganus* one who lives in a *pagus* or village. We see the reason, then, why the apostle directed Titus, "To ordain elders in every city."

validity to ordination; then our ordination ought to be acknowledged as scripturally valid, because it is performed by a *number* of such bishops as we find described in the New Testament. On these grounds then we rest our claims—our ordination is administered by a presbytery, and our presbytery is composed of such bishops as we read of in the writings of Paul.

Our statement concerning the office of a scriptural bishop, is confirmed by the writings of the ancients. As far as we have been able to learn, the charge of a bishop was, in the earliest times, expressed by the Greek word *παροικία*, parish, and not by *διακονία* diocess. Thus we read of *παροικία Αντιοχείας*, the parish of Antioch, of the *parish* of Alexandria &c. And universally, the word signified, among the Greeks, the church that lived in one city, and was under charge of one bishop. In the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, every passage that has any bearing on this subject shows that the bishop intended by him was a *parochial* bishop. Thus he frequently speaks of the bishop and his charge being assembled in the same place, of their joining in the same prayer, of their partaking of the eucharist at the same altar, of the people doing nothing in the absence of the bishop—Nay he says, “That he who does any thing without the bishop’s privity, does the devil a service,” so that baptism or a love feast must not be celebrated without the bishop. Again he exhorts the bishop of Smyrna to be the common guardian of the widows in his church; to assemble his congregation often together; to enquire for the absent by name, and not to overlook the men-servants and maids; and many things of the same kind, which show that the bishop, as was said, was a parochial bishop, or pastor of a particular church. Many more evidences might be produced from the earliest writers of the church, to prove that the office “first in point of dignity and usefulness,” was designated sometimes by the word bishop, and sometimes by the word presbyter. But the

authority of scripture is decisive with us; and as we support our practice by an appeal to the scriptures, we think our brethren ought to admit them.

We have now shown,

1. That the *rationale* of ordination is the securing of a succession of well taught, pious ministers of the gospel.

2. That this rite is to be performed by men in the ministry: and *that* because, in general, their education and experience render them the most competent judges of the qualifications of a candidate.

3. That the appointments to office mentioned in the scriptures, were made by a plurality of persons; and a presbytery is expressly said, in one case, to have conferred that gift.

4. And as the power of ordination is supposed by some to be vested in the bishop, we have shown that the *scriptural* bishop, is the pastor of a particular congregation; whence it follows, that a number of such bishops has beyond all doubt the power of ordination.

To us this, in all reason, seems sufficient; yet it is apprehended that traditional opinions have so strong possession of the minds of many, that something farther is necessary. It is believed that there was originally established a distinction of order in the church; that ecclesiastics of the highest order alone have the power of ordination; and of course, as Presbyterians do not derive their *orders* from them, they are null.

That the apostles were superior to all other church officers is readily admitted. But it is maintained that the apostles has no successors in their *apostolical* office. This subject has been glanced at before. We resume it here; and use the words, as we adopt the opinion of that ornament of the church of England, the late Dr. Barrow.

“The apostolical office, as such, was personal and temporary, and therefore according to its nature and design not successive nor communicable to others in perpetual descendance from them.

It was, as such, in all respects extraordinary, conferred in a special manner, designed for special purposes, discharged by special aids, endowed with special privileges, as was needful for the propagation of christianity, and founding of churches.

To that office, it was requisite that the person should have an immediate designation and commission from God; such as St. Paul so often doth insist upon for asserting his title to the office; *Paul an apostle not from men, or by man—not by men, saith St. Chrysostom*, this is the property of an apostle.

It was requisite that an apostle should be able to attest concerning our Lord's resurrection or ascension, either immediately as the twelve, or by evident consequence as St. Paul. Thus St. Peter implied at the choice of Matthias, *Wherefore of those men that have companied with us—must one be ordained to be a witness with us of the resurrection; and, Am I not, saith St. Paul; an apostle, have I not seen the Lord? according to that of Ananias, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt bear witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*

It was needful also that an apostle should be endowed with miraculous gifts and graces, enabling him both to assure his authority, and to execute his office; wherefore St. Paul calleth these *the marks of an apostle*, the which were wrought by him among the Corinthians in all patience (or persevering) in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

It was also in St. Chrysostom's opinion, proper to an apostle, that he should be able, according to his discretion, in a certain and conspicuous manner to impart spiritual gifts; as St. Peter and St. John did at Samaria; which to do, according to that father, was the peculiar gift and privilege of the apostles.

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It was also a privilege of an apostle, by virtue of his commission from Christ, to instruct all nations in the doctrine and law of Christ; He had right and warrant to exercise his function every where; his charge was universal and indefinite; the whole world was his province, he was not affixed to any one place, nor could be excluded from any; he was (as St. Cyril calleth him) an Œcumenical judge, and an instructor of all the sub-celestial world.

Apostles did also govern in an absolute manner, according to discretion, as being guided by infallible assistance, to which they might upon occasion appeal, and affirm, *It hath seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us.* Whence their writings have passed for inspired, and therefore canonical, or certain rules of faith and practice.

It did belong to them to found churches, to constitute pastors, to settle orders, to correct offences, to perform all such acts of sovereign spiritual power, in virtue of the same divine assistance, *according to the authority which the Lord had given them for edification;* as we see practised by St. Paul.

In fine, the apostleship “was (as St. Chrysostom telleth us) a business fraught with ten thousand good things; both greater than all privileges of grace, and comprehensive of them.

Now such an office, consisting of so many extraordinary privileges and miraculous powers, which were requisite for the foundation of the church, and the diffusion of christianity, against manifold difficulties and disadvantages, which it then must needs encounter, was not designed to continue by derivation; for it containeth in it divers things, which apparently were not communicated, and which no man without gross imposture and hypocrisy, could challenge to himself.

Neither did the apostles pretend to communicate it; they did indeed appoint standing pastors and teachers in each church; they did assume fellow-labourers and assistants

in the work of preaching and governance, but they did not constitute apostles, equal to themselves in authority, privileges, or gifts. For who knoweth not (saith St. Austin) that principate of apostleship to be preferred before any episcopacy? and the bishops (saith Bellarmine) have no part of the true apostolical authority."

[Barrow's Treatise of the Popes Supremacy. Works. Vol. I. pa. 594, 5.]

We have made so long an extract, because it is believed that this state ment is correct, and these arguments unanswerable. We quote from this most eminent episcopalian, because we love to point out instances in which brethren of that denomination fully agree with us. The apostles then had no successors in the apostolical office. All the *permanent* authority possessed by any officers of the church was transmitted by them (if there was any transmission at all) to the ordinary pastors or bishops of particular churches. In them, then, the power of ordination was vested—And now, a *parochial* bishop possesses really all the power of this sort that any man has ever possessed, since the death of the apostles.

We are persuaded that the view which has been given by us of the nature of ordination is correct. And we are glad of an opportunity of showing that we are not singular in our opinion, by the following extracts from an able and learned writer, into whose work we have been looking since the former part of this essay was written.

It is a mistake to suppose that "the ordainers give the power to the person whom they ordain—the power is derived from Christ, and flows from his charter that constitutes the office, and describes the qualifications of those that shall be admitted to discharge it. And the ordainers no more give that power, than the recorder gives the lord-mayor his power, when he invests him in his office, or the lord-chancellor gives any officer of state his power, when he sets his seal to his patent. This plainly shows that the ordainers, only for order's sake, recognize the authority

which the charter of Christ conveys to the person ordained, upon his being qualified for the office, consenting to undertake it, and being [by the election of those he is to minister to, if he take a particular flock as his charge] called to it.—The ordained person is, doubtless, authorized and obliged to all parts of the ministerial function. I would gladly know then from whom he derives that authority, and by whom that obligation is laid upon him. If he derive that authority and obligation from the charter of Christ, [as the Mayor of a Town-Corporate derives his authority from the royal charter] then the ordainers have no more to do than to judge of his qualifications; and upon his consent, to give him a solemn admission to the exercise of the office by fasting and prayer, and imposition of hands, [as the Recorder invests the Mayor.] If he derive his authority and obligation from the ordainers, he is then properly their minister, acts by a commission derived from them; so that 'tis the bishop's letters of ordination, not the charter of Christ, that give him his authority. But can any minister of Christ satisfy himself with deriving his authority from no higher source than his ordainers?"

To this it has been objected, "If the ordainers only recognize the authority, which the charter of Christ conveys to the person ordained, this seems a full commission to preach without ordination. And there is no reason why the person should be hindered from putting his authority in execution, because some will be so refractory as not to recognize it." It is answered, "He that hath all the qualifications requisite by the charter for the ministerial or pastoral office; he whose qualifications are approved by other pastors, who are the most proper judges of them, and [if he be ordained to a particular flock] by the people whom he is to take the oversight of; he who voluntarily devotes himself to this special service of Christ, is by him actually authorised and obliged to the office. But he is, by the same charter, obliged not to enter on the actual exercise of it,

without the solemnity of public prayer and fasting to recommend his labours to the blessing of God, and imposition of hands in order to the public recognition of this authority in the face of the church; whenever this solemn inauguration can be had; and till then he is not a minister *in foro ecclesiæ*, nor to be received and regarded and obeyed as such. 'Tis the like case as in Baptism; he that was an infidel, but becomes a sincere convert to the christian faith, is in the estimate of Christ a real member of his church, and has a right to the priviledges of it: And his baptism does not give, but suppose that right, and solemnizes his admission into the church. But the church is not obliged to own him as a member till he is baptised; and he cannot regularly partake of its external priviledges, till he has taken on him this external badge of his profession."

[Boyse. *Of the Ancient Episcopacy*. Works, Vol. II. pa. 262—3.]

This learned writer pursues the argument to considerable extent, and with irresistible force of reasoning; and then by a long citation shows, that herein he agrees with learned and eminent episcopal divines. We are happy to find our own ideas on this subject, expressed more fully and forcibly than we are able to express them ourselves. And we are persuaded that if our brethren, who differ from us, will consider that all ecclesiastical power is derived, not from those who ordain, but from the charter which Christ has given, they will not magnify any particular mode of performing ordination. In truth the great question respecting this subject is, what are the measures best calculated to raise able and faithful ministers of the New Testament? To this point we wish the attention of all societies to be directed; and the only rivalry among them to be in training, by the most efficient means, labourers in the vineyard of our common Lord. All have our prayers and best wishes; and they who succeed best shall have the tribute of our humble applause.

I

Having thus shown the general principles on which we proceed, we shall in the next place, speak in

PART III.

OF THE PARTICULAR MANNER IN WHICH A PERSON IS INVESTED WITH THE OFFICE OF PASTOR OR BISHOP.

The original word translated *bishop*, signifies, as we have seen, an *inspector* or *overseer*. Now it is obvious that no man can be an overseer, without persons whom he is to *oversee*. That is, the very name of bishop implies, what we term the pastoral relation. This relation is instituted for the edification of the church. But a preacher must be acceptable to the people, or he never will minister among them for their good. Hence the propriety and necessity of a choice of spiritual guides by the people. This is fully recognized by the Presbyterian church, as will appear from the following extract.

“When any probationer or probationers, shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of any congregation as that the people appear prepared to elect a pastor, the session shall solicit the presence and counsel of some neighbouring minister, to assist them in conducting the election contemplated, unless highly inconvenient on account of distance: In which case they may proceed without such assistance.

On the day appointed, the minister, whose assistance has been obtained, shall preach a sermon, at the usual season for publick worship; and after sermon, he shall announce to the people, that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation, for a pastor if such be their desire; and when this desire shall be expressed, by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take the votes for a pastor. In this election no person shall be entitled to vote, who refuses to

submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered; or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements, or the rules of that church, to all its necessary expences.

When the votes are taken, if it appear that a great proportion of the people are averse from the candidate, who has a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the assisting minister shall endeavour to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly, or entirely, unanimous; or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a minister; then in that case, the minister after using his utmost endeavours to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors; certifying, at the same time, the number and circumstances of those who do not concur in the call: All which proceedings shall be laid before the presbytery, together with the call.

When a call shall be presented to any minister or candidate it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his instalment. The acceptance of a call, by a minister or candidate, shall always be considered as a request, on his part, to be installed at the same time. And when a candidate shall be ordained, in consequence of a call from any congregation, the presbytery shall always, at the same time, ordain and install him pastor of that congregation."

Form of Government, chap. xiv. sec. i. iii. iv. vi.

The right of choice, from the very nature of the case, is inherent in the people. As we have before remarked, it seems necessary for their edification. The exercise of it is essential to the enjoyment of religious liberty. And it may be remarked in passing, that this important principle of Presbyterianism has produced great effect in the world. This is one reason, why this form of christianity has so generally been odious in monarchichal governments; and

has met with such opposition from the *nobility* and *privileged orders*. They never would rest in Scotland, until *lay patronage* was introduced; and this brought about the *secession* from the national Kirk; by which she lost many of her best members. But on this, we shall not dwell.

It seems clear from various passages of scripture, that in the beginning, the people chose their own pastors. Thus they are frequently charged to *try the spirits*—to *beware of false prophets*,—to *take heed of what they hear*. It is admitted that this proves the right of private judgment. And it has been asked with very great force of reasoning; “Does not the right of judging in things of religion necessarily imply not only a right, but a duty also, of acting agreeably to that judgment; or in other words a right of choice? For why must a man examine? That he may have, peradventure, the guilt and mortification of combatting his own conscience, and acting contrary to his sense of things? What an absurdity were this? If the christian laity were to *try the spirits*, and to examine and weigh the doctrine their pretended pastors taught, then, surely, they had a right to reject as their spiritual guides those pastors whom they found without the doctrines of Christ, or the guidance of his Spirit. Accordingly they are charged, (Rom. xvi. 17.) To mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the christian doctrine, and to avoid them.”

The manner in which an apostle was appointed in place of Judas, Acts i, and the seven deacons were chosen Acts vi, shows that from the beginning the right of the people was recognized. And in Acts xiv. 23, where it is said that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every city, the sacred historian uses a word (*χειροτονήσαντες*) commonly employed to express popular elections. Accordingly some very able critics render the passage thus, “They ordained elders who had been chosen by the people.” On this however we shall not insist. That such was the practice of the ancient church is evident. Clemens Romanus, a contemporary of the apostles says, they appointed bishops by the

consent of the whole church. Cyprian says frequently, "Let nothing be done but by the consent of the people." Again, "God appoints that sacerdotal ordinations should not be made without the consent and assistance of the people." He declares that he was chosen, "By the favour and vote of the people." And that, "To the people belongs the chief power either of choosing worthy ministers, or rejecting the unworthy." Indeed testimony on this head is most abundant. As to this point; then, we hope and believe that our brethren will admit that we are sustained by Scripture, and the practice of the primitive church.

We proceed then to exhibit the manner in which the Presbyterian church institutes that relation which constitutes a man a bishop.

"The day appointed for ordination being come, and the presbytery convened, a member of the presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member appointed to preside in this business, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to this transaction. He shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance; and endeavour to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction."

Form of Government, chap. xiv. sec. x.

After this a number of questions are asked of the candidate, by which he enters into engagements such as the nature of the office requires.

"When the candidate is to be ordained as the pastor of a particular congregation, the following question shall be added.

Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength?

The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall demand of the people:

Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called, to be your minister?

Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth, with meekness and love; and to submit to him, with humility, in the due exercise of discipline?

Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labour, and to assist his endeavours for your instruction and spiritual edification?

And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised; and whatever else you may see needful, for the honour of religion, and his comfort among you?

The people having answered these questions, in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down, in the most convenient part of the church: Then the presiding bishop shall, by prayer, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees: and the minister who presides shall first, and afterwards all the members of the presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us." After which the minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly ordained bishop, and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties; and shall then, by prayer, recommend them both to the grace of God, and his holy keeping; and finally, after singing a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing. And the presbytery shall duly record the transaction."

Form of Government, chap. xiv. sec. x. xi. xii.

If the reader will recollect now the previous examinations and trials, to which the candidate for the ministry is subjected, and consider those which he undergoes on this

solemn occasion, it will not be doubted but that the Presbyterian church is attentive to the great object of training men by suitable discipline for the ministry of the gospel. And surely, we need not now repeat our arguments to prove that this solemn investiture performed by a number of scriptural bishops assembled in presbytery, with the laying on of hands, and prayer, is a valid ordination. Indeed we should esteem it a great favour, if any one would show us how we could render it more conformed to scripture, or what better regulations we could adopt for training competent ministers of the gospel.

PART IV.

OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

We have now briefly considered the main parts of our constitution; and assigned the reasons why we think our ordination valid; and of course, why we ought to be placed on an equality with our brethren. We shall proceed, with like brevity, to notice other officers in the church, and shew that herein also our practice is so warranted, that our brethren ought to sustain it.

The following extract is given from our book of discipline,

“ Ruling elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them, for the purpose of exercising government and discipline, in conjunction with pastors or ministers. (a) This office has been understood, by a great part of the protestant reformed churches, to be designated,

I. (a) 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Rom. xii. 7, 8 — Acts xv. 25.

in the holy scriptures, by the title of governments: and of those who rule well; but do not labour in the word and doctrine(b).”—Chap. IV.

Let the reader consider carefully the passages of scripture referred to, and weigh the following remarks. When the apostle Paul says, “Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, *especially they who labour in word and doctrine*, does he not point out two kinds of elders? And do we not at once think of those who *rule only*; and of those who both *rule and teach*? Hear what the learned Dr. Whitaker professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and a zealous Episcopalian says on this subject.” By these words, says he, “the apostle evidently distinguishes between the bishops, and the inspectors of the church. If all who rule well be worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine, it is plain there were some who did not so labour; for if all had been of this description, the meaning would have been absurd: but the word, especially, points out a difference. If I should say, that all who study well at the university are worthy of double honour, *especially they who labour in the study of theology*: I must either mean that all do not apply themselves to the study of theology, or I should speak nonsense. Wherefore I confess that to be the most genuine sense, by which pastors and teachers are distinguished from those who only governed.”

To the same purpose is the opinion of that acute and learned Episcopal divine, Dr. Daniel Whitby, expressed in his note on this passage.

“The Elders of the Jews,” says he, “were of two sorts; “1st. Such as *governed* in the Synagogue; and 2dly. Such “as ministered in *reading and expounding* their Scriptures “and traditions, and from them pronouncing what did

(b) 1 Cor. xii. 28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. See let. (a.)

" bind or loose, or what was forbidden, and what was law-
 " ful to be done. For when, partly by their captivity, and
 " partly through increase and traffick, they were dispers-
 " ed in considerable bodies through divers regions of the
 " world, it was necessary that they should have *governors*
 " or *magistrates*, to keep them in their duty, and judge of
 " criminal causes; and also *Rabbins* to teach them the law,
 " and the traditions of their fathers. The *first* were or-
 " dained *ad judicandum, sed non ad docendum de licitis et*
 " *vetitis*, i. e. to judge, and govern, but not to teach; The
 " *second, ad docendum, sed non ad judicandum*, i. e. to teach
 " but not to judge or govern. And these the Apostle here
 " declares to be the most honourable and worthy of the
 " chiefest reward. Accordingly, the Apostle, reckoning
 " up the offices, God had appointed in the Church, places
 " *teachers* before *governments*. 1 Corin. xii. 28."

" The next passage of Scripture which affords a warrant
 for the office of Ruling Elder is to be found in *Romans* xii.
 6. 7. 8. *Having then gifts, differing according to the grace*
given to us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to
the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our min-
istering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhort-
eth, on an exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with sim-
plicity; HE THAT RULETH, with diligence; he that sheweth
mercy, with cheerfulness. With this passage may be con-
 nected another, of similar character, and to be interpreted
 on the same principles. I mean the following from 1 Co-
 rinthians xii. 28. *God hath set some in the Church, first*
Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that
miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, GOVERNMENTS, diver-
sities of tongues. In both these passages, there is a refer-
 ence to the different offices and gifts bestowed on the Church,
 by her divine King and Head; in both of them there is a
 plain designation of an office for *ruling* or *government*, dis-
 tinct from that of *teaching*; and in both, also, this office evi-
 dently has a place assigned to it *below* that of *Pastors* and

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Teachers. This office, by whatever name it may be called, and however its character may be disguised by ingenuity, is, to all intents and purposes, the same with that which Presbyterians distinguish by the title of *Ruling Elder*.

Let us now proceed to inquire what the *Fathers* say concerning this class of Church officers.

In the *Gesta Purgationis Cœciliani et Felicis*, we meet with the following enumeration of Church Officers, *Presbyteri, Diacones et Seniores*, i. e. "The Presbyters, the Deacons and Elders." And a little after it is added—"Adhibite conclericos et seniores plebis, ecclesiasticos viros, et inquirent diligenter quæ sint istæ dissentiones," i. e. "call the fellow-clergyman, and Elders of the people, ecclesiastical men, and let them inquire diligently what are these dissentions." In that assembly, likewise, several letters were produced and read; one addressed *Clero et Senioribus*, i. e. "to the Clergyman and the Elders;" and another, *Clericis et Senioribus*, i. e. "to the Clergymen and Elders." Now I ask, what can this language mean? Here is a class of men, expressly called *ecclesiastical men*, or *Church officers*, who are styled *Elders*, and yet distinguished from the **CLERGY**, with whom at the same time, they meet, and officially transact business. If these be not the *Elders* of whom we are in search, we may give up all rule of evidence.

Cyprian, in his 29th Epistle, directed "To his brethren, the Presbyters and Deacons," expresses himself in the following term:

"You are to take notice that I have ordained *Saturus* a reader, and the confessor *Optatus*, a *Subdeacon*; whom we had all before agreed to place in the rank and degree next to that of the clergy. Upon *Easter* day, we made one or two trials of *Saturus*, in reading, when we were approving our readers before the *teaching Presbyters*; and then appointed *Optatus* from among the readers to be a teacher of the hearers." On this passage the Rev. Mr. *Marshall*, the Episcopal Translator and Commentator of

Cyprian, remarks—"It is hence, I think, apparent, that all Presbyters were not *teachers*, but *assisted the Bishop* in other parts of his office." And Bishop *Fell*, another Editor and Commentator on *Cyprian*, remarks on the same passage in the following words: "Inter Presbyteros rec-
tores et doctores olim distinxisse videtur divus *Paulus*, 1 *Tim. v. 17.*" i. e. "St. *Paul* appears to have made a distinction, in ancient times, between *Teaching* and *Ruling Elders*, in 1 *Timothy v. 17.*" Here two learned Episcopal Divines explicitly acknowledge the distinction between *Teaching* and *Ruling Elders*, in the Primitive Church; and one of them, an eminent Bishop, not only allows that *Cyprian* referred to this distinction, but also quotes as an authority for it, the principal text which Presbyterians adduce for the same purpose.

Hilary (frequently called *Ambrose*) who lived in the 4th century, in his explication of 1 *Timothy v. 1.* has the following passage—"For, indeed, among all nations old age is honourable. Hence it is that the *Synagogue*, and afterwards the *Church*, had *Elders*, without whose counsel nothing was done in the Church; which by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not, unless, perhaps, by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the *Teachers*, while they alone wished to appear something."

Augustine, Bishop of *Hippo*, who also lived in the fourth century, often refers to this class of officers in his writings. Thus, in his work, *Contra Crescon. lib. iii. cap. 56.* he speaks of *Peregrinus, Presbyter, et Seniores Musticanæ regionis*, i. e. "Peregrine, the Presbyter, and the Elders of the Mustacan district." And again, he addresses one of his Epistles to his Church at *Hippo*, [*Epist. 137.*] *Dilectissimis fratribus, Clero, Senioribus et universæ plebi ecclesiæ Hipponensis.* i. e. "To the beloved brethren, the Clergyman, the Elders, and all the people of the Church at *Hippo.*" There were some *Elders*, then, in the days of *Augustine*, who were not Clergymen, i. e. *Lay Elders.* It

would be easy to produce from the same writer; a number of other quotations equally to our purpose.”*

It has been well remarked that some such officers in the church are necessary; as appears from the employment of them in all churches. Our Episcopal brethren have their *churchwardens* and *vestry-men*; the Congregationalists have their *standing committee*; and the Presbyterian churches have their *ruling elders*. It deserves notice, however, that with the Presbyterians, *ruling elders* are expressly stated to be *representatives* of the people; they sit in their ecclesiastical judicatories; and have equal power and authority, in all cases of discipline, with the teaching elders. There seems to be wisdom in this appointment. For in the first place, nothing can be more happily calculated to afford a check to ecclesiastical ambition, than the *choice of men by the people* to sit, consult, and vote with the clergy. And in the next place; clergymen devoted as they ought to be to the great business of their profession, occupied in study, and of course shut out from the world, do greatly need, in the administration of discipline, the assistance of men who mingle freely in society; know the condition of the people, their feelings, sentiments, and various temptations; and can without difficulty enter into all their circumstances. Besides, discipline is in general likely to be more effectually administered in this way; and the people can have no just ground to refuse submission to it, when men *looked out from among themselves*, chosen by them for this very purpose, and responsible of course to them, are employed in its administration.

A consideration of the passages of scripture cited, of the testimonies of the ancients produced, of the concessions of learned Episcopalians, of the practice of all the reformed churches, and of the reason and necessity of such helps, will

* These quotations are made from Miller's Letters concerning the Constitution and order of the Christian Ministry.—Continuation, pp. 121, 129. We recommend this work to the careful perusal of all who are studying this subject.

surely induce our brethren to acknowledge, that for this part of our institutions we have sufficient warrant.

OF DEACONS.

“The scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the church(*a*), whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use(*b*). To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church(*c*).”—Form of Government, Chap. V.

From this it appears, that with us the proper office of *deacons* is to take care of the poor, and distribute the alms of the church. Whether this is not the scriptural office of a deacon, let the reader examine and judge for himself. This office, however, is not necessary to the constitution of a church. It is necessary, when there are poor in the church, requiring her aid, and so situated that, without some such officers, they would be overlooked and their necessities remain unsupplied. It rests then with a particular church to judge in this case, and, if circumstances require, to appoint the proper officers. Sometimes, it may

(*a*) Phil. i. 1.—1 Tim. iii. 8. to verse 15.

(*b*) Acts vi. 1, 2. And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in their daily ministrations.—Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

(*c*) Acts vi. 3, 5, 6. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.—And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas a proselyte of Antioch.—Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

be, this subject is neglected when it ought to be attended to; but this warrants no objection to the constitution of the church; however it may sustain a censure against a particular society.

PART V.

OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MANNER OF WORSHIP.

As public worship is necessarily, in part, an external observance, and of course an object of the senses, the manner of its performance is likely to attract considerable attention. And differences in the mode of celebrating divine service among christians, will always be noticed. Differences do exist; and very often produce a very unpleasant effect. We believe that they have had considerable influence in keeping brethren of various denominations asunder, and widening the breach among them. We lament this; and would gladly be instrumental at least in lessening this evil. For this purpose we venture the following remarks.

As we are social beings; and as the social principal may be brought to bear on religion, it is a wise appointment that men should meet, and engage together in the worship of their common father. It has a most salutary operation both on individuals and on society. Of this there is no doubt; but we shall not insist on it here. No service of this kind is acceptable in the sight of God, unless it be a sincere expression of the desires of the worshipper. Besides, he must desire things agreeable to the will of God. Wherefore, we have always admired that definition of prayer, which is given in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster divines, "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with

confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." He who prays thus, be his manner what it may, prays acceptably—And on the contrary, he who does not pray thus, in fact does not pray at all in the scriptural sense of the term.

This being understood, it is easy to see that every one ought to look carefully into this subject for himself, and ascertain by what mode of worship the spirit of true devotion is best cultivated, and he enabled to hold the most intimate communion with his God. And in that manner he ought to worship. This is a case, which each individual ought to examine for himself. We do not presume to judge for any, nor prescribe to them. It is a matter between them and their God; and one in which the interests of their own souls is concerned. We are persuaded that there are truly devout worshippers, who use all the modes of service that obtain among christians.

While we hold these sentiments, we believe that general principles respecting divine service are laid down in scripture which all ought to adopt, and apply in the best manner possible. Now our object is to show that the Presbyterian church has so adopted and applied these principles, that their manner of worship ought to be acknowledged as scriptural, by their brethren of different denominations.

One fundamental maxim of scripture is, "That all things be done decently and in order;" and this for the purpose of promoting edification. To show the attention that has been paid to this subject, we give the following extracts from *The Directory for the worship of God in the Presbyterian church in the United States of America*.

Of the Sanctification of the Lord's Day.

"It is the duty of every person to remember the Lord's day; and to prepare for it, before its approach, All worldly business should be so ordered, and seasonably laid aside,

as that we may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the sabbath, as the holy scriptures require.

The whole day is to be kept holy to the Lord; and to be employed in the public and private exercises of religion. Therefore, it is requisite, that there be an holy resting, all the day, from unnecessary labours; and an abstaining from those recreations, which may be lawful on other days; and also, as much as possible, from worldly thoughts and conversation.

Let the provisions, for the support of the family on that day, be so ordered, that servants or others be not improperly detained from the public worship of God; nor hindered from sanctifying the sabbath.

Let every person and family, in the morning, by secret and private prayer, for themselves and others, especially for the assistance of God to their minister, and for a blessing upon his ministry, by reading the scriptures, and by holy meditation, prepare for communion with God in his public ordinances.

Let the people be careful to assemble at the appointed time; that, being all present at the beginning, they may unite, with one heart, in all the parts of public worship; and let none unnecessarily depart, till after the blessing be pronounced.

Let the time after the solemn services of the congregation in public are over, be spent in reading; meditation; repeating of sermons; catechising; religious conversation; prayer for a blessing upon the public ordinances; the singing of psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs; visiting the sick; relieving the poor; and in performing such like duties of piety, charity and mercy.

Of the Assembling of the Congregation, and their behaviour during Divine Service.

When the time appointed for public worship is come, let the people enter the church, and take their seats, in a decent, grave, and reverent manner.

In time of public worship, let all the people attend with gravity and reverence; forbearing to read any thing, except what the minister is then reading or citing; abstaining from all whisperings; from salutations of persons present, or coming in; and from gazing about, sleeping, smiling, and all other indecent behaviour."

Directory, Chap. I II.

These are long extracts; but the importance of the subject justifies their insertion.

The various parts of divine worship, using the phrase in its customary sense, are *reading the scriptures, singing the praise of God, prayer, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments,*

Concerning the two first of these, we shall only quote the Directory; to show what is required.—As to practice there is no dispute.

Of the public reading of the Holy Scriptures,

"The reading of the holy scriptures, in the congregation, is a part of the public worship of God, and ought to be performed by the ministers and teachers.

The holy scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, shall be publicly read, from the most approved translation, in the vulgar tongue, that all may hear and understand,

How large a portion shall be read at once, is left to the discretion of every minister: however, in each service, he ought to read, at least one chapter; and more, when the chapters are short, or the connection requires it. He may when he thinks it expedient, expound any part of what is read; always having regard to the time, that neither reading, singing, praying, preaching, or any other ordinance, be disproportionate the one to the other; nor the whole rendered too short, or too tedious.

Of the Singing of Psalms,

It is the duty of Christians to praise God, by singing psalms, or hymns, publicly in the church, as also privately in the family.

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In singing the praises of God, we are to sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also; making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. It is also proper, that we cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music; that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices, as well as with our hearts."—Chap. III. IV.

In relation to prayer, we have several things to observe, which we wish our readers particularly to regard. But first we must make another long extract for the purpose of letting our brethren see the directions given as to this part of public worship.

Of Public Prayer.

“Then, after singing a psalm, or hymn, it is proper that, before sermon, there should be a full, and comprehensive prayer. *First*, Adoring the glory and perfections of God, as they are made known to us in the works of creation; in the conduct of providence; and in the clear, and full revelation he hath made of himself in his written word. *Second*, Giving thanks to him for all his mercies of every kind, general and particular, spiritual and temporal, common and special; above all for Christ Jesus his unspeakable gift; and the hope of eternal life through him. *Third*, Making humble confession of sin, both original and actual; acknowledging, and endeavouring to impress the mind of every worshipper with a deep sense of the evil of all sin, as such; as being a departure from the living God; and also taking a particular and affecting view of the various fruits which proceed from this root of bitterness:—as, sins against God, our neighbour, and ourselves; sins in thought in word, and in deed; sins secret and presumptuous; sins accidental and habitual. Also, the aggravations of sin; arising from knowledge, or the means of it; from distinguishing mercies; from valuable privileges; from breach of vows, &c. *Fourth*, Making earnest supplication for the pardon of sin, and peace with God, through the blood of

the atonement, with all its important and happy fruits; for the spirit of sanctification, and abundant supplies of the grace that is necessary to the discharge of our duty; for support and comfort, under all the trials to which we are liable, as we are sinful and mortal; and for all temporal mercies, that may be necessary in our passage through this valley of tears. Always remembering to view them as flowing in the channel of covenant love, and intended to be subservient to the preservation and progress of the spiritual life. *Fifth*, Pleading from every principle warranted in scripture; from our own necessity; the all-sufficiency of God; the merit and intercession of our Saviour, and the glory of God in the comfort and happiness of his people. *Sixth*, Intercession for others, including the whole world of mankind; the kingdom of Christ; or his church universal; the church or churches with which we are more particularly connected; the interest of human society in general, and in that community, to which we immediately belong; all that are invested with civil authority; the ministers of the everlasting gospel; and the rising generation; with whatever else, more particular, may seem necessary, or suitable, to the interest of that congregation where divine worship is celebrated.

Prayer after sermon ought generally to have a relation to the subject that has been treated of in the discourse; and all other public prayers, to the circumstances that gave occasion for them.

It is easy to perceive, that in all the preceding directions there is a very great compass and variety; and it is committed to the judgment and fidelity of the officiating pastor to insist chiefly on such parts, or to take in more or less of the several parts, as he shall be led to by the aspect of providence; the particular state of the congregation in which he officiates; or the disposition and exercise of his own heart at the time.—But we think it necessary to observe, that although we do not approve, as is well known,

of confining ministers to set, or fixed forms of prayer for public worship; yet it is the indispensable duty of every minister, previously to his entering on his office, to prepare and qualify himself for this part of his duty, as well as for preaching. He ought, by a thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures; by reading the best writers on the subject; by meditation; and by a life of communion with God in secret; to endeavour to acquire both the spirit and the gift of prayer.—Not only so, but when he is to enter on particular acts of worship, he should endeavour to compose his spirit, and to digest his thoughts for prayer, that it may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as to the profit of those who join in it; and that he may not disgrace that important service by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions.”—Chap. V. §. II. III. IV.

To the spirit and substance of these directions, surely no objection will be made. All the parts of prayer are here laid down in their natural order, and with great propriety. And while reliance is placed on the Holy Spirit in the performance of this, as well as every other duty; there is nothing to countenance the notion of inspiration. On the contrary, great care is taken that this important service may not be disgraced by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions. Let the reader diligently peruse our quotations and judge for himself. We differ on this subject from those who imagine that no previous preparation, no meditation, nor digesting of the subject of prayer is necessary; and also from those who think it expedient to use *set forms* of prayer. But we beg leave to observe that the Directory uses great moderation here. There is not the least intimation that set forms are unlawful—it is only said, “We do not approve of *confining* ministers to set forms.” They may be used without any breach of Presbyterian order; they are *sometimes* used, without offence. But it is the limitation, the prescription that is disapproved. We do not think that the Lord of conscience has bound

his disciples to the use of any particular words in prayer, and therefore we do not feel bound to use a form.

1. What is called the Lord's Prayer does not appear to be intended as a form for unvaried and perpetual use; because in two records that are given of it, there is a variety incompatible with this notion. This will appear by a quotation.

"Our Father which art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done *in earth as it is in heaven*. Give us *this day* our daily bread; And forgive us *our debts* as we forgive *our debtors*; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*"—Matt. vi. 9—13.

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done *as in heaven, so in earth*; Give us *day by day* our daily bread; And forgive us *our sins*, as we forgive *every one that is indebted to us*; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."—Luke xi. 2—4.

The variations are marked in italics; and on considering them, it appears to us that if our divine master had intended to prescribe a particular form to be invariably used, he would have employed in both cases precisely the same words. By not doing this, we think it clearly intimated that the Lord's Prayer was designed for a pattern or model, according to which we are to frame our petitions.

Again, in this prayer there is no mention made of the Holy Spirit, nor any direct petition for his influences. Neither are the petitions offered in the name, and for the sake of Jesus Christ; according to the command of our Saviour delivered in another passage, (John xvi. 23, 24.) "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name*: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Let the reader consider the remarks that have been made, and the declaration of our Saviour just quoted; and he will be convinced, we think, that while the *Lord's Prayer* is a model after which we are, in general, to frame our petitions, it was constructed with a particular adaptation to the disciples as Jews, before they were fully instructed as to the nature of Christ's kingdom, and before the church was organized under the christian dispensation.

The words used by our Saviour in Matthew, seem to support our argument. "*After this manner* therefore pray ye." The celebrated Grotius, in his commentary on the place, says "That Christ did not command the *words* to be recited: but that thence we should take the materials of our prayers." And he assigns this reason; "That though it may be used with great profit as a form, or in the very words, yet we do not read that the apostles ever used it so." On the contrary, their prayers, as far as they are recorded, appear to have been extempore prayers, adapted to the particular occasion. See an example of this in Acts i. 24, 26. We add that the primitive church interpreted these parts of scripture just as we do. Augustine expressly declares, "That Christ, in the delivery of these petitions, did not teach his disciples *how they should speak, or what words* they should use in prayer; but to whom they were to pray, and what things they were to pray for."

It is true that Luke in entering his record uses these words, "When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c." But it is easy to see, that a rigorous interpretation of this phraseology would confine our petitions to the very words of this prayer and no other. On this none insist. We, comparing this passage with that in Matthew, say that the words of Luke are to be interpreted elliptically, thus, "When ye pray, say after this manner. "Our brethren, judging from their practice, interpret the passage thus, "After ye shall have used prayers of your own composition or selection, say, Our Father" &c. We leave our readers to judge between these different interpretations. Let this matter, however, be decided as it may, our argument is not affected. For, still, it is true that here is no mention of the Son or Holy Spirit; no offering of prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, &c.

We repeat, that the Presbyterians, so far from thinking the use of the Lord's Prayer as a form, unlawful, often do use it; they teach it to their children; and in their Shorter

Catechism there is given an exposition of this prayer as a form, which for distinctness and brevity of illustration has never been surpassed. Yet, for the reasons assigned they do not think themselves bound to repeat the very words.

2. It has been before observed, that we have no evidence that the apostles used this prayer as a form; and in like manner we have no evidence that they used any form whatever. The reader may take his Concordance, and examine every passage that occurs in the New Testament, and judge for himself. And so also of the primitive christians. They were bound to no forms. This appears from the following quotations. Justin Martyr, giving an account of their manner of praying in the church says, "He that is president offers prayers and thanksgivings *according to his ability.*" That we may understand his meaning here, let us look to another passage, where he uses the same phrase. He wrote an apology for christianity, and towards the conclusion says, "Having exhorted you *according to our ability*, we shall be blameless if you do not believe." Justin here manifestly has reference to the structure or composition of his Apology; and so in the former passage, to the ordering or composition of prayers. Origen uses similar words in reference to prayer. "We worship one God, and his one Son, who is his word and image, with supplications and honours *according to our ability*, offering to the God of the universe prayers and praises, through his only begotten Son"—And again, "But the Grecian christians in Greek, the Romans in Latin, and every one in his own proper language, prays to God and praises him *as he is able.*" Tertullian says, "We christians pray for all emperors &c. looking up to heaven with our hands expanded, because guiltless; with our head uncovered, because we are not ashamed; *lastly, without a monitor (or any one to prompt us) because our prayers flow from our own minds.*" Basil, Ambrose, Epiphanius, also used free prayer without a form. Indeed there is no evidence that in the primitive

times, any christian churches were confined to uniform, precomposed prayers.

3. It does seem to us that it is not expedient to limit christian exercises in this way. Because, the continual repetition of the same prayers, familiar as they must be by constant use, does not appear so well calculated to arrest and fix the attention, as what is called free prayer. And because, the method adopted by us seems likely to make ministers and private christians more diligent in cultivating a spirit of prayer. For as prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, *for things agreeable to his will*, it is necessary that we diligently read the word of God, that we may know what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought.

For these reasons, we do not require those who officiate to use any set form of prayer. We do not condemn our brethren who differ from us, and we do not think that in this respect they ought to condemn us. We are sure that God accepts every sincere petition offered in the name of Christ, whether presented with or without form. And God forbid that we should condemn what he receives. We think it the duty of every one, to examine the subject carefully for himself, and use that method in prayer, which is found best adapted to the cultivation of a spirit of true devotion, a habit of mental prayer and constant communion with God.

As to that part of public worship called, *preaching of the word*, as there is no material difference of opinion among christians of different denominations, and no controversy that need be noticed we shall quote without remark the chapter in our Directory which relates to it,

Of the Preaching of the Word.

“The preaching of the word being an institution of God for the salvation of men, great attention should be paid to the manner of performing it.—Every minister ought to

give diligent application to it; and endeavour to prove himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed: rightly dividing the word of truth.

The subject of a sermon should be some verse, or verses of scripture; and its object, to explain, defend, and apply some part of the system of divine truth; or to point out the nature, and state the bounds, and obligation of some duty. A text should not be merely a motto: but should fairly contain the doctrine proposed to be handled. It is proper also that large portions of scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the sacred oracles.

The method of preaching requires much study, meditation and prayer.—Ministers ought, in general, to prepare their sermons with care; and not to indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues; nor to serve God with that which costs them nought.—They ought, however, to keep to the simplicity of the gospel; expressing themselves in language agreeable to scripture, and level to the understanding of the meanest of their hearers; carefully avoiding ostentation, either of parts or learning.—They ought also to adorn, by their lives, the doctrine which they teach; and to be examples to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

As one primary design of public ordinances is to pay social acts of homage to the *Most high God*, ministers ought to be careful, not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with, or exclude the more important duties of prayer and praise; but preserve a just proportion between the several parts of public worship.

The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray, and return thanks to almighty God: then let a psalm be sung; a collection raised for the poor, or other purposes of the church; and the assembly dismissed with the apostolic benediction.”—Chap. VI.

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We next proceed to the administration of the Sacraments, and first we think it expedient to quote that part of our Confession which treats of the Sacraments in general.

Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, (a) immediately instituted by God, (b) to represent Christ and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him; (c) as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; (d) and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word. (e)

I. (a) Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. Gen. xvii. 7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.

(b) Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xi. 23. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

(c) 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Cor. xi. 25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ver. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

(d) Ex. xii. 28. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 1 Cor. v. 21. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

(e) Rom. vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? verse 4. Therefore we are

II. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one, are attributed to the other. (*f*)

III. The grace which is exhibited in, or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, (*g*) but upon the work of the spirit, (*h*) and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorising the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers. (*i*)

buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? verse 2. But were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

II. (*f*) Gen. xvii. 10. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you, shall be circumcised. Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.—For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Tit. iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

III. (*g*) Rom. ii. 28, 29. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. 1 Pet. iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(*h*) Matt. iii. 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

(*i*) Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. See in letter (*f*) Matt. xxviii. 19. See in letter (*b*) verse 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen.

IV. There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained. (*k*)

V. The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New. (*l*)

Confession of Faith; Chap. XXVII. §. i. ii. iii. iv. v.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Of the nature of this ordinance, we have discoursed at large in our first number. To that we refer for a general exposition of our views. We quote here, only a few articles from our Confession.

“Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or more believing parents are to be baptized.

IV. (*k*) Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 23. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For I have received of the Lord Jesus, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread. 1 Cor. iv. 1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Heb. v. 4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

V. (*l*) 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;—and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and eat in the sea:—And did all eat the same spiritual meat;—and did all drink the same spiritual drink: (for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them—and that rock was Christ.) 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

“ Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are, undoubtedly, regenerated.

“ The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in his appointed time.”

Confession Chap. XXVIII. §. 4, 5, 6.

Q. Unto whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized.

Larger Catechism, Quest. 166.

In the *Directory for worship*, it is forbidden that Baptism should be unnecessarily delayed; or that it should be administered by a private person. This is intended to put down two hurtful mistakes; one, that the ordinance is a mere ceremony for giving a name, and that it may be administered at any time; the other, that baptism is so necessary to salvation, that in cases of great urgency, when a minister cannot be had, a lay-person is authorised to baptise. The one is an undervaluing of the ordinance of God; the other, is a superstitious notion of the Roman Catholics.

It is also required that in ordinary cases, the ordinance should be administered in presence of the congregation. The reason of this requisition is, that private baptism has frequently been abused by rendering it a mere occasion of

merry-making and frolic. And this is certainly incompatible with the administration of an ordinance, in which a solemn acknowledgement is made of our original guilt, of our dreadful apostacy from God, and of our need of the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. But there is another reason. This will appear from the following passages in the Directory for worship.

“ Before baptism, let the minister use some words of instruction, respecting the institution, nature, use and ends of this ordinance: shewing,

‘ That it is instituted by Christ; that it is a seal of the righteousness of faith; that the seed of the faithful have no less a right to this ordinance, under the gospel, than the seed of Abraham to circumcision, under the Old Testament; that Christ commanded all nations to be baptized; that he blessed little children, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven; that children are federally holy, and therefore ought to be baptized; that we are by nature, sinful, guilty and polluted, and have need of cleansing by the blood of Christ, and by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God.’

The minister is also to exhort the parents to the careful performance of their duty: requiring,

‘ That they teach the child to read the word of God; that they instruct it in the principles of our holy religion, as contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; an excellent summary of which we have in the Confession of Faith of this church, and in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, of the Westminster Assembly, which are to be recommended to them, as adopted by this church, for their direction and assistance, in the discharge of this important duty; that they pray with and for it; that they set an example of piety and godliness before it; and endeavour, by all the means of God’s appointment, to bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’

Directory, Chap. VII. Sec. iv.

Instruction, and exhortation like this, is calculated to edify the congregation, and make the ordinance extensively beneficial. Especially when thus administered it is calculated to have a powerful effect on the great concern of religious education. And surely this ought by no means to be neglected. Yet the ministers of the church are not tied down to a public administration. Circumstances may occur to render it expedient to administer in private; and this latitude is allowed.

After the exhortation, this direction is given.

“Then the minister is to pray for a blessing to attend this ordinance; after which, calling the child by its name, he shall say,

‘I baptize thee, in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’

As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize the child with water; by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony: and the whole shall be concluded with prayer.”—lb. Chap. VII. Sec. v.

We do not use the *sign of the cross*, we do not employ *sponsors in baptism*, we do not make use of *confirmation* in relation to it, because *we find none of these things in the scriptures*. Our brethren then will surely not regard these omissions as of such a nature as to invalidate our administration of baptism. Nay; it gives pleasure to speak confidently on this subject. For we know that *all* except the Baptists, receive our members without re-baptising them. And thus far they acknowledge that our *orders* are valid. Would it not be consistent, if they would make such acknowledgment *in full*?

OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The nature of this ordinance is thus explained in our Confession.

“ Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord’s Supper, to be observed in his church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.(a)

“ II. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead,(b) but only a commemoration of that once offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross,

I. (a) 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread.—And when he had given thanks, he brake *it* and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.—After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, 21. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we *being* many, are one bread, *and* one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

II. (b) Heb. ix. 22, 25, 26. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others: (For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. verse 28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same.(c)

“III. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common, to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants;(d) but to none who are not then present in the congregation.(e)

“IV. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest or any other, alone;(f) as likewise the denial of the cup to the people;(g) worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.(h)

(c) Matt. xxvi. 26, 27. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. Luke xxii. 19, 20. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

III. (d) See the institution. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24. Luke xxii. 19, 20. and 1 Cor. xi. 23, to 27.

(e) Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight. 1 Cor. xi. 20. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

IV. (fg) Because there is not the least appearance of a warrant for any of these things, either in precept or example, in any part of the word of God. See all the places in which the ordinance is mentioned—the most important of which are cited above.

(h) Matt. xv. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

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“V. The outward elements, in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; (i) albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.” (k)—ch. xxix. sec. 1, 5.

The proofs from scripture subjoined to these explanations, so confirm the doctrine that arguments are needless; and the statements are so clear that explanation is not required. The manner of administration is pointed out in the following words.

Of the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

“The communion, or supper of the Lord, is to be celebrated frequently; but how often, may be determined by the minister and eldership of each congregation, as they may judge most for edification.

The ignorant and scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper.

It is proper that public notice should be given to the congregation, at least the sabbath before the administration of this ordinance, and that, either then, or on some day of the week, the people be instructed in its nature, and a due preparation for it; that all may come in a suitable manner to this holy feast.

When the sermon is ended, the minister shall shew,

V. (i) Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. And as they were eating Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

(k) 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink ~~this~~ cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

‘That this is an ordinance of Christ; by reading the words of institution, either from one of the evangelists, or from 1 Cor. xi. *chapter*; which, as to him may appear expedient, he may explain and apply; that it is to be observed in remembrance of Christ, to shew forth his death till he come; that it is of inestimable benefit, to strengthen his people against sin; to support them under troubles; to encourage and quicken them in duty; to inspire them with love and zeal; to increase their faith and holy resolution; and to beget peace of conscience, and comfortable hopes of eternal life.

He is to warn the profane, the ignorant, and scandalous, and those that secretly indulge themselves in any known sin, not to approach the holy table. On the other hand, he shall invite to this holy table, such as, sensible of their lost and helpless state by sin, depend upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God; such as being instructed in the Gospel doctrine, have a competent knowledge to discern the Lord’s body; and such as desire to renounce their sins, and are determined to lead a holy and godly life.

The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, the bread in convenient dishes, and the wine in cups, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting around the table, (or in their seats before it) in the presence of the minister; let him set the elements apart, by prayer and thanksgiving.

The bread and wine being thus set apart by prayer and thanksgiving, the minister is to take the bread and break it, in the view of the people, saying in expressions of this sort,

‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the same night in which he was betrayed, having taken bread, and blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples; as I, ministering in his name, give this bread unto you; saying, (here the bread is to be distributed) Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.’

After having given the bread, he shall take the cup, and say,

‘After the same manner our Saviour also took the cup; and having given thanks, as hath been done in his name, he gave it to the disciples; saying, (while the minister is repeating these words let him give the cup) This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins: drink ye all of it.’

The minister himself is to communicate, at such time as may appear to him most convenient.

The minister may, in a few words, put the communicants in mind,

‘Of the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, held forth in this sacrament; and of their obligation to be the Lord’s; and may exhort them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called; and, as they have professedly received Christ Jesus the Lord, that they be careful so to walk in him: and to maintain good works.’

It may not be improper for the minister to give a word of exhortation also to those who have been only spectators, reminding them,

‘Of their duty; stating their sin and danger, by living in disobedience to Christ, in neglecting this holy ordinance and calling upon them to be earnest in making preparation for attending upon it, at the next time of its celebration.’

Then the minister is to pray and give thanks to God.

‘For his rich mercy, and invaluable goodness, vouchsafed to them in that sacred communion; to implore pardon for the defects of the whole service; and to pray for the acceptance of their persons and performances; for the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, to enable them, as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him; that they may hold fast that which they have received, that no man take their crown; that their conversation may be as becometh the Gospel; that they may bear about with them, continually, the dying of the Lord

‘Jesus; that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in their mortal body; that their light may so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father, who is in heaven.’

The collection, for the poor, and to defray the expense of the elements, may be made after this; or at such other time as may seem meet to the eldership.

Now let a psalm or hymn be sung, and the congregation dismissed, with the following or some other gospel benediction—

‘Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*’

Directory, Chap. VIII. Sec. 1—5.

In this mode, we differ in no essential respects from all christian churches. We assume the customary posture at table for the following reasons. 1. Because our Lord and the apostles when this sacrament was instituted, took the posture that was usual; and we think that none can be wrong who imitate this example. 2. Although this reason is sufficient, yet we add another; namely that when the folly of transubstantiation was introduced, and the credulous multitude believed that the *bread* was, by priestly power, changed into the “real body and blood, the soul and divinity” of Jesus Christ, they were required to kneel in acknowledgment of the divinity, and to adore the *Host*; (the sacramental offering that was made.) This absurdity is renounced by all Protestants; but some retain the posture of kneeling as most expressive of humility. We condemn them not; but claim the like for ourselves, inasmuch as we follow scriptural example. The insinuation sometimes made, that we symbolize with the Socinians does not become those who make it, and is unworthy of notice. We symbolize with Christ and his apostles.

The custom of explaining the nature of this ordinance, and of reminding christians of the mercy of God in Christ, and exhorting them to walk worthy of their vocation, as also that of warning and exhorting spectators seems so to commend itself to the understanding of all, that we are persuaded none of our brethren will object to it.

We have now shown, in No. 1, that they who baptise believers, and their children, by sprinkling or affusion, do so conform to the scriptures, that they ought in this respect to be acknowledged as members of the church of Christ; and in the present number we have proved as seems to us, that * *ordination* by presbyters or parochial bishops is *scriptural* and therefore *valid*. We have also shown that in the various parts of public worship, that is, in singing, reading the word, prayer, preaching, and administration of the sacraments, the Presbyterians so follow the scriptures and the example of the primitive church, that other brethren ought to receive them.

The disposition of the Presbyterian church in relation to other societies will now, in few words, be exhibited. And for this purpose, we cannot do better than resort to the book already so often quoted, their Confession of Faith. From this it will be seen, that although they are fully persuaded that their *form* and *order* are warranted by scripture, yet they are ready to acknowledge as brethren, those who differ from them, and to join in communion with them. And in this we may be permitted to say, they have set an example to other societies. Inasmuch as no other Confession in the world, as far as we know, contains such declarations as we are about to quote; no society has made such *advances* to other denominations. If this appears like boasting,

• We wish it to be understood that when we use the words *Episcopalians*, *Presbyterians*, and *Congregationalists*, we mean to include all the denominations, that ordain ministers. *Methodists* are *Episcopalians*, and *Baptists* are *Congregationalists*, as far as the present controversy is concerned.

we hope to be forgiven. The remark is extorted by the repeated insinuations to the contrary, of those who know us not, and who will not take the trouble to enquire into our tenets.

Our first extract here contains the *declaration* of the Presbyterian church respecting

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

“God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.”

Confession of Faith ch XX. sec. II.

The next extract contains a declaration against all

RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

“Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging, every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth, should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of *any* denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and

belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

“It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience’ sake. Infidelity or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.”

[Confession of Faith, ch. XXIII. Sec. 3, 4.

Again, a quotation is made, for the purpose of showing the doctrine of Presbyterians respecting

THE COMMUNION OF CHRISTIANS.

“All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory:(a) and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others’ gifts and graces,(b) and are obliged to the

(a) 1 John i. 3. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Eph. iii. 16, 17, 18, 19. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner-man;—that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. John i. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Phil. iii. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

(b) Eph. iv. 15, 16. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.—From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of

performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.(c)

“ Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;(d) as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.”(e)

Confession of Faith, ch. XXVI. sec. 1, 2.

The following extract repeats some of the former declarations, and urges the necessity of forbearance and charity in relation to those who differ in unessential matters.

That “ God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men,

every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

(c) 1 Thess. v. 11, 14. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. Gal. vii. 10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. 1 John iii. 16, 17, 18.

(d) Heb. x. 24, 25. And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works:—Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. Acts ii. 42, 46. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer—And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking of bread, from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Is. ii. 3. 1 Cor. xi. 20.

(e) 1 John iii. 17. But whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him; how dwelleth the love of God in him? Acts xi. 29, 30. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. 2 Cor. 8 and 9 chapters.

6

“which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship.” Therefore, they consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal, and unalienable: They do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, equal and common to all others.

That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Saviour’s rule, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are. On the contrary, they are persuaded, that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise, it would be of no consequence either to discover truth, or to embrace it.

That while under the conviction of the above principle, they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as Teachers, be sound in the faith; they also believe, that there are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ: And in all these, they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other.”

Declaration prefixed to Form of Government, Sec. i. iv. v.

Having given these views of the polity of the Presbyterian church, and made these exhibitions of their spirit in relation to other denominations, we hasten to a consideration of the last subject which we proposed to ourselves to take up in this number, namely that of

UNITING ONE’S SELF TO A PARTICULAR CHURCH.

It is clearly required of all who hear the gospel, that they join themselves to the church of the Lord Jesus. The

christian religion acknowledges our *social* constitution; and makes use of it for the promotion of our greatest good. It is manifestly our duty to cultivate a brotherly spirit, and shew acts of kindness, to be forbearing, and ready to communicate. Now nothing seems better calculated to induce us to do this, and assist us in the work, than union in one society under the blessed Saviour, and in the same religious exercises;—offering together solemn songs of praise to the Almighty—mingling vows before the throne of the Eternal—presenting mutual prayers for blessings on ourselves and on one another—and receiving the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our common Lord. But not only our *social* affections are improved by social religious exercises: the fervour of piety and zeal is enkindled, by associating with the fervently pious. And indeed so powerfully, yet mysteriously are human souls united by the law of sympathy, that every grace is invigorated by joining in the solemn devotions of a religious assembly. Accordingly, our Saviour sent his apostles out to gather a church in the world; and we frequently find the disciples, in the history of the Acts of the apostles, assembled, *that with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Such assemblies too are continually mentioned and encouraged in the epistles. And christians are commanded, *not to forsake the assembling of themselves together*. It is to be remarked too that wherever the apostles of Christ made converts, there they ordained elders or bishops, appointed other officers, and in a word organized churches. There, too, they required that worship should be supported, ministers maintained, discipline exercised. And it seemed to be the universal requirement and practice that all, *who gave themselves to the Lord, should join themselves to the church*.

This being the case, they who refuse to connect themselves with the church, disregard the institution of Christ, and deprive themselves of many very important advantages. At the same time, while they refuse to unite with the

society of christians; whatever their inward feelings may be, they *openly* take their place with the world, and by their conduct and the influence of their example, declare against Christ. They ought therefore to become members of the church.

But here an important question occurs; With what particular church shall I connect myself? It is a question of great magnitude to the individual, and requires most careful examination. Some suppose that they are under obligation to join the church, in which they were baptized—We say, no: because baptism was instituted before there were separate denominations. It introduces the subject of it into the visible church of Christ, and was never intended to be a badge of party distinction. Some suppose that they ought to be members of the church, in which they first received the Lord's supper. We think that this does not bind them; for a reason just assigned. Others suppose that they are born in particular churches, and therefore are under obligation to continue in them. But this is a notion utterly unscriptural; and it is high time that it should become obsolete.

The question before us is of very great extent, and we cannot now discuss it fully. We would however offer a few remarks for the purpose of putting our readers to think on the subject, and giving what we suppose a right direction to their thoughts.

1. One great object of joining a church is, as we have seen, the cultivation of benevolent affections, of warm, expanded, fraternal love. We ought then to examine the principles and practice of all societies, and ascertain in connection with which, this important object can be best obtained.

2. Another great object is, learning the will of God, and the cultivation of right affections towards him. We ought then to examine in what society we can gain the best instruction; that is, where we can best be taught what God

is, and what duty God requires of man; and obtain the best helps to enable us to practise what we know. The ascertaining of this, will be an important step towards the determination of the great question.

In a word, the enquiry with all ought to be, in what connection shall we enjoy most communion with God, be enabled to render the most exact obedience to all the rules of holy living laid down in the gospel, and most successfully make our way to heaven? For as respects ourselves, the grand object, and that with which nothing else ought to be allowed to interfere, is the salvation of our souls. And in proportion as our souls prosper, as we are growing in grace and divine knowledge, we shall be prepared for rendering every service required of us in this life.

No church ought to wish any to join it, unless they have examined the subject, and are convinced that thus they can be best taught, and most fully assisted in working out their salvation. But this is a point, which no one ought to presume to settle for another. It is the duty of all to afford such helps as they can to guide the enquirer, and then leave him to ask counsel of God, and determine the matter for himself.

But there is an objection in the minds of many to connection with any particular church, which ought to be removed: and this especially as the removal of it will throw light on the general subject of this essay. The objection is this—"I fear that, should I join any particular society, I shall have narrow views and feelings, and become after a while, a bigot to the particular tenets of that society." To this we would answer. 1. By standing unconnected with any denomination, you run the risk of losing your interest in the prosperity of the church, and becoming indifferent to those things which ought to engage your warmest zeal, and call forth your best exertions. The extreme of lukewarmness ought to be avoided as well as that of bigo try. 2. The objection is founded on a mistake. The

practice of different churches, we are sorry to say, countenances this mistake—and it is high time that it should be rectified. For this purpose we observe, that a body of religious doctrine has been handed down from the days of the apostles to this day, and has been received by all who acknowledge that “the bible is their religion,” and are disposed to submit to its dictates. These persons, by whatever name distinguished constitute the church of Christ—In other words, “The church consists of *all who profess the true religion*, with their children.” Now when you join any particular orthodox church, you do not shut yourself out from the universal society of christians. On the contrary, you bring yourself into connection with them, and have a right to all the aid they can afford you in your christian pilgrimage. Their gifts and graces are for your benefit, as you have an opportunity to enjoy them; their ministers are your ministers, and whenever you can satisfy them in a judgment of charity that Christ has received you, they are bound to receive you also. All are your brethren, and you are the disciples of one common Lord. “All things are yours—Whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas”—Whether Romaine or Watts, Hervey or Witherspoon, Newton or Doddridge, Scott or Davies, Cooper or Hall.—The case may be illustrated by the constitution of our country. We are citizens of *Virginia*. As such, we are citizens of the *United States*. Our citizenship here, gives us a right to all the privileges which accrue, at home or abroad, to citizens of the union. We prefer a residence in *Virginia*: her laws, institutions and manners are upon the whole most agreeable to us, and we find that we can live here more comfortably than elsewhere. Now, although we feel this preference, it does not lessen our regard to the honour and interest of the other states. They, too, are a part of our common country. You prefer a home in the south, the west, or the north—Be it so. You have your choice. When, however, you come here, we acknowledge you as a countryman, and bid you welcome to

all our privileges—And when we pass into your state, we expect the same. Besides, should any enemy attack us; let the invasion be in what part it may, we will all unite to repel our common foe—Such is the state of our country; and he who foments division and jealousy ought to be regarded as a public enemy.

We think this an apt illustration of the condition of the church; and of the conduct and feelings becoming the different denominations of Christians. An individual may very well prefer a connection with one denomination; because with them he can best make his way towards heaven. But after all, there is but one church; and all who belong to any branch of it, belong to that one universal church; of the Lord Jesus. The various societies that exist, constitute, if we may so express it, *the Union*: together they make up the visible kingdom of our blessed Lord. Do you, because you are a Virginian, dislike your countrymen in New England, Kentucky, or Georgia? Surely not—So then, there is no reason why you, as the member of a particular church, should have narrow feelings and jealousies in relation to your brethren of other societies.—Because some contracted persons give way to local prejudices, and cherish local jealousies; and because bad men make use of these feelings to accomplish their purposes, would you therefore renounce your citizenship as a Virginian, a New Yorker, a Georgian? Surely not. Neither then ought you to cut yourself off from the benefits of a religious connection, because there are perhaps in all societies, zealots and bigots whose views and feelings cannot go beyond the pale of their own church.

This subject ought to be more carefully investigated than it has been. Christians in this country, where the church is free from sinister worldly and political influences, are in the happiest condition for a cool and impartial examination. And we owe it to that gracious providence, that has placed us on the elevated ground of perfect religious liberty, and given to all churches a perfect equality

of privileges, to set an example for the edification of the world. Here it ought to be made apparent that the genius of christianity is LOVE; the truly liberal spirit of the gospel ought to be exemplified; its disdain of mere forms and ceremonies, of outward show and circumstance, ought to be exhibited. If feelings connected with religious establishments, and with the political disputes of foreign countries and former times, should be allowed to possess all the force of long received tradition, and exert their influence among us, it will prove that we are not yet emancipated from our intellectual bondage to the old world; and that we do not yet know how to appreciate our privileges. Our modes of worship are not, here, connected with worldly interests, and political institutions; they are not on the one hand a badge of royal favour, or of civil degradation. We have no concern in them, except as they are modes of expressing and cultivating humble and pious affections— In that regard alone are they to be valued. And when we see, as far as we can judge, equally humble and pious professors among all denominations, we ought to take heed how we condemn any. Lest peradventure we should reject those, whom Christ has received.

We repeat, that we do not wish, in the present state of the world, to see an amalgamation of different societies— Nor are we advocates for the *spurious liberality* of the present day, which breaks down all distinction between different principles, and overthrows all the barriers of discipline, and makes the Christian, the Deist, and the Mahometan fraternize in a vague undefined religious feeling. But among professed disciples of the Lord, who hold the same fundamental doctrines, who give tokens of their having felt his saving power, and who are honestly endeavouring to walk before him in love, we do wish to see prevalent a spirit of concession and forbearance, of brotherly kindness and active charity. We wish them to acknowledge one another both *publicly* and *privately* as brethren, and suffer no emulation to exist among them but in doing good.

We have no objection at all, as said before, that there should be a free discussion of all points of difference, between the churches. In the judgment of all, much, as to the ordering of worship and the details of discipline, is left to human discretion, to our judgment of expediency— With only this limitation, *that we do not violate the great principles laid down in the gospel.* Now as there are wise and good men in every denomination, a free intercourse, and liberal discussion will enable the several societies to profit by the experience and observation of each other; and by their various gifts and graces. None are perfect—none too wise to learn—and none ought to be too proud to be taught. As for us, we should hold ourselves forever indebted to that individual, or society, who would teach us any (and doubtless there are many) truths, of which we are ignorant; or point out to us any way in which we might better serve God; or show us how we might more effectually regulate our own hearts, more successfully wage war against an insnaring world; or in a word, more prosperously pursue our journey to heaven,

But while we wish to promote liberal enquiry and amicable discussion, we are utterly opposed to angry contention, and the fierceness of controversy. On such occasions we are reminded of the affecting words of the Patriarch adopted by us for a motto. And when we observe the combatants drawing up their ranks, and preparing for a battle, we are ready to exclaim in the language which the poet puts into the mouth of a peace making old man,

Parcite jam, Rutuli; et vos tela inhibete Latini,

Or rather to adopt an eminently beautiful and happy application to this subject of a passage in Milton, made by the late pious and learned bishop Horne in his commentary on the Psalms,

— Let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each others' burden, in our share of woe.

P

In conformity to the feelings thus expressed, we close this number, declaring that it was not our intention by any single word or sentence in this whole work, to wound the feelings of an individual of any denomination. And if this has unintentionally been done, we hope that our offended brethren will forgive us; and that God will forgive us also.

Our object is to advance the interests of that religion in its purity, which gives glory to God, and promotes peace among men.

NOTES.

Additional evidence that the old Episcopal church acknowledged the validity of Presbyterian ordination. Referred to p. 115. [NO. II. 15.]

We wish that this subject should be put beyond all doubt; and therefore present to the reader the following historical notices, in addition to what he has already seen on this subject.

“About the year 1538, was published by authority, *A Declaration made of the Functions and Divine Institution of Bishops and Priests*, subscribed by Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex and lord vicegerent in ecclesiastical affairs, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, eleven bishops, and many other doctors and civilians, by whom it is thus resolved,

‘That in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops: Burnet’s Hist. Ref.

‘*The Erudition of a christian man*, a book made by the whole clergy in their Provincial Synod, Anno 1537, set forth by the king and parliament, and commanded to be preached to the whole kingdom, mentions but two orders, bishops (or presbyters) and deacons.’

‘John Alasco, a noble Pole, with his congregation of Presbyterian Germans was settled in England; and assisted in reforming the ecclesiastical laws.’ Burnet, p. 154.

‘Several Presbyterian ministers had preferment in the church in queen Elizabeth’s time, without reordination.—William Whittingham, head of the non-conformists of Frankfort, upon his return to England, was made dean of Durham, about the year 1563,—Mr. Travers ordained by a presbytery beyond sea, was seven years lecturer in the temple, and had the bishop of London’s letter for it.’

In the English Statutes, there is a law which shows, most decisively, what was the practice in the time of which we speak. It is a law of the 13 Eliz. chap. xii. In this it is enacted that all who are, or pretend to be, ministers of God’s holy word and sacraments, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth by parliament in the time of the late king of most worthy memory, king Edward the sixth, or now used in the reign of our most gracious sovereign lady, before the feast of the nativity of Christ next following shall, in the presence of the bishop &c. declare his assent, and subscribe to all the articles of religion, which *only* concern the confession of the true christain faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments, &c.’

Here it is evident that ministers ordained presbyterially, are allowed to officiate without re-ordination, on subscribing the doctrinal articles of the English church.

To this it may be added that the leading men in that church, before the days of archbishop Laud, manifested great regard for the foreign Protestant churches; and were careful to avoid giving them offence. “Dr. Laud, in a disputation for his degrees, asserting the superiority of bishops, was publickly checked by Dr. Holland, the king’s professor of divinity in Oxford, telling him, he was a schismatick, and went about to make a division between the English and other reformed churches.”

The following list of the churches in which ordination was performed by presbyters is given from an old work on this subject, and may show why the illustrious reformers of England were so careful to avoid the doctrine, which cuts off from the church of Christ all who did not adopt their discipline.

ORDINATION PERFORM'D BY PRESBYTERS.

In the kingdom of Sweedland, Denmark, and Norway, of Prussia and Brandenburg.

In Holland, Zeland, &c. and some part of Brabant and Flanders.

In Geneva.

The four Swiss Protestant Cantons, being three times as big as the Popish ones.

The country of the Grisons.

Vallies of Piedmont.

The Reformed churches in Poland, Hungary, Transylvania.

In France *before the late persecutions.*

In Germany, as Brunswick and Lunenburg, Saxony, Wirtenburg, Mecklenburg, Dantzick and *some other* Hans Towns, Pomeran. Hesse, Leipsick, Anhalt, Palatine on the Rhine, Silesia. Bohemia, Moravia, *as Protestant.* Scotland, New England.

In England and Ireland *by Protestant Dissenters.*

NOTE II. Referred to pa. 125. [NO. II. 25.]

On the impossibility of tracing a regular ecclesiastical succession.

“This principle of lineal succession from *Rome*, destroys all churches in the world: for there's no church this day can produce such a succession, as hath met with no canonical interruption.

The *Greek, Latin, and African* churches bid fairest for it, and all of 'em pretend to derive their succession from *St. Peter*.

Thus the most considerable part of the gentile world that's christianiz'd, wou'd be reputed the offspring of the chief apostle, as they term him.

It seems *St. Paul*, the great apostle of the gentiles, either left no successor behind him, or no body knows what's become of him.

Peter, the apostle of the *Jews*, must be the universal head of all the gentile churches, and *Paul* the apostle of the gentiles, has left no body, it seems neither Jew nor Gentile, to derive their claim from him. Thus poor *Paul* and the other apostles must be written childless, or be the progenitors of an offspring that's long ago extinct, or so very obscure that their names are written in the dust.

But upon the unhappiness of it is, the *Greek, Latin and African* churches, who pretend to be the three patriarchal successors, can't agree about the inheritance. The *Pope*, who reckons himself the eldest brother, claims to himself the whole, and condemns the other two as spurious. Thus *Bellarmino* speaking of the Greek church, says, that she has no succession; and that there has been no succession in *Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem*, since those places fell into the hands of the *Persians and Saracens*; and if ever there was any, the same was very obscure. *De Not. Eccl. cap. 8.*

On the other hand, the *Greeks* condemn the *Roman succession*, and, according to *Bellarmino*, were the first who heartily oppos'd the *Primacy of Rome. Lib. de Pontif. pref.*

Even *Barlaam* the monk denies it. *What Law*, says he, obligeth us to reckon the bishop of *Rome Peter's* only successor, that must rule all the rest? He goes further, and denies *Peter* to have been *Bishop of Rome*; as many of our Protestant writers do. *De princip. cap. 3. in Bibl. patr. vid. Func. Chron.*

Now, of all these pretended successions, the *Roman* is most suspicious, as being often interrupted by *Simony*, *Heresy* and *Schism*.

By this principle none can tell whether they be ministers of Christ: How shall they know that all the predecessors of that bishop who ordain'd them were canonical bishops? that none of 'em were guilty of *Simony* or *Heresy*, or any other acts or things that make canonical nullities? Can any mortal know who was the bishop that was the root of his succession?

Let it be further consider'd, that the antient catalogues of the apostle's successors were made by conjecture. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 4.*

This succession is no where so evident as to demonstrate the thing intended. A list wou'd be expected of apostolical successors, not only in the great patriarchal churches, but in all others planted by the apostles, as *Philippi*, *Corinth*, *Cesarea*; and not only in *Ephesus*, but in all the seven churches of *Asia*, which has not been yet produc'd. In the patriarchal churches, the beginning of the line is inscrutable.

At *Rome*, 'tis not certain, whether *Linus*, *Cletus*, *Anacle-tus*, or *Clemens* are to be reckon'd first.

As for *Antioch*, 'tis not yet agreed whether *Peter*, *Euodius* or *Ignatius* succeeded *Peter* or *Paul*, or the one and the other *Paul*: At *Alexandria*, where the succession seems to run clearest, the original of the power is imputed to the presbyters, as was observ'd already.

If there be any certainty in this succession, the fathers ascribe it to presbyters as much as to bishops. *Ignatius*, a man of indisputable authority with prelates, saith, *That the presbyters succeeded in the place of the bench of the apostles.* τῶν πρεσβυτέρων εἰς τόπον ἀποστόλων *ad Mag. p. 33. Ves. Ed.*

Irenæus, another supposed champion of the party, affirms the same. *Traditionem, ab Apostolis, quæ per successionem Presbyterorum. adv. hæc, l. 5.*

The apostles ordain'd as presbyters, and in that capacity presbyters succeed 'em; but 'tis the succession of doctrine and not of persons that the fathers principally insist upon.

The succession of persons without the orthodox doctrine is no mark of a true church; as among the *Arians*, where they had a succession of bishops, and yet no true church. *Nazian. in laud. Athan.*—*Owen's Plea.*

NOTE III. Referred to pa. 159, [NO. II. 59.]

The most ancient Episcopacy was Parochial.

“It was the bishop that *baptized* all the catechumens in his diocess, took their examination and confession in the presence of the *whole church and clergy*; as appears at large in *Dionysius's Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.

It was the bishop that administered the *Eucharist* to the whole diocess at *one altar*, attended with all the *Ecclesiastical orders*, especially the *priests and deacons*, who stood round about him, and assisted him.

It was the bishop's proper office to *preach* to the whole diocess, as the pastor of it. And therefore it is observ'd by the author of the *Ecclesiastical Hierachy*, that it was proper to the bishop to have at his ordination a bible laid on his head, which the inferior orders had not.

We are bishops for their sakes, saith *Austin*, to whom we minister in the Word and Sacraments. The *fathers* of the sixth council in *Constantinople* at *Trullum* decreed, that the bishops who preside in the churches, shou'd every day, especially on the *Lord's days*, teach all their clergy and people the words of piety and true religion, gathering the judgments of truth out of the Holy Scriptures.

The eleventh council of *Toledo*, enjoyns bishops to preach constantly, and not to be hinder'd by any worldly cares from the study of the scriptures, nor suffer those committed to their care to perish with the famine of the word of God.

The ancient diocesses were like our parishes, because the whole diocess met together in one place, which a diocess of the present extent cannot do.'

There was but *one altar* or communion-table in the whole diocess. Thus *Ignatius*, ‘If any one be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God: for if the prayer of one or two have so great power, how much more the prayer of the bishop and the whole church?—In another place; Run altogether as into one temple of God, as to one altar as to one Jesus Christ.

‘*Justin Martyr* saith, that on *Sunday* all that lived in the city and country met together in one place, and the bishop (ὁ ἀποστολῶς) preached and administred the Eucharist to them.

It is granted, by the most learned advocates for Episcopacy, that anciently the bishop’s diocess was so small, that *one altar* was sufficient for it. So Mr. Mede *Proof for Churches in the 2d cent. p. 29.* Dr. Hammond, *Dissert. 3. cap. 3. s. 15.*

All the people of a diocess were present at church-censures. Hence *Clemens Romanus* exhorts the *Corinthian Schismaticks* to depart, and *submit to the determination of the multitude.*

Cyprian speaks of a decree made by himself and 66 bishops more, ‘That the lapsed ordinarily shou’d not be admitted to communion without the request and knowledge of the people.

They all met together to chuse a new bishop. *Cyprian* saith, ‘the people chiefly hath the power of chusing worthy ministers and rejecting the unworthy.

Thus *Fabianus* elected bishop of *Rome* by all the brethren assembled together in the church; and *all the people* cried with *one consent* that he was worthy. Here all the *Roman church* met together in one place.

As numerous as the clergy and christian people at *Rome* were at this time, they were no more than could assemble in one place to hear *Cyprian’s* letters read by *Cornelius* unto them.

The whole *Roman church* was concern’d in the epistle which the *Roman clergy* wrote to the clergy at *Carthage* in *Cyprian’s* retirement, which ends with salutations to the

brethren of *Carthage* from the confessors, presbyters, and the whole church at *Rome*.

All the diocesses were obliged to communicate with the bishop at *Easter*, and other principal festivities. Thus the fourth council of *Orleans*, 'Let the chief citizens keep the great festivals in the presence of the bishop. The council of *Agatha* requires the greater solemnities to be celebrated in the city or parish church.

The ancient diocesses were parochial, because *there were diocesses in villages and lesser towns as well as in cities*.

Sozomen observes that in *Scythia*, tho' there were several cities, there was but one bishop: in other countries there were bishops in some villages, as in *Arabia* and in *Cyprus*, as also among the *Novatians* in *Phrygia* and among the *Montanists*.

In *Egypt* there were bishops in several villages, as in *Hydrax* and *Palebisca*, two villages belonging to *Pentapolis*: *Olbius*, a village in the same region, had its bishop.

In other parts of *Africa* the ancient custom of setting up bishops in lesser villages and other obscure places was continu'd unto *Leo's* time, who wrote to the bishops of *Mauritania Cæstariensis* to forbid that practise, as contrary to some canons, and the dignity of bishops.

There were several bishops in small villages in *Palestine* under the patriarch of *Jerusalem*, as appears by *Guliel. Tyrius* his catalogue. This is confess'd by *Mr. Fuller* an Episcopal divine, who observes that '*Lydda, Jamnia, and Joppa*, three Episcopal towns, were within four miles one of another. He adds, neither let it stagger the reader, if in that catalogue of *Tyrius* he light on many bishop's seats, which are not to be found in *Mercator, Ortelius*, or any other geographer, for some of them were such poor places, that they were ashamed to appear in a map,—For in that age bishops had their sees at poor and contemptible villages.

Q

“*Chrysostom* judged 150 persons a sufficient charge for one person. *It's*, saith he, *a very laborious undertaking for one minister alone to preside over 150 men.*

So that according to the sentiments of this great man, who had just ideas of the pastoral charge, a congregation of 200 persons needed a bishop to preside over them with one or more presbyters.

The ancient diocesses were originally parochial, if we consider how numerous they were in a province.

In *Africa* bishopricks lay very near one another, that vast assemblies of bishops met together on several occasions. A council of 48 and another of 100 *Donatist* bishops deposed *Primianus*, and substituted *Maximianus*; and a council of 310 bishops of the same faction condemn'd the *Maximians*, and not long after receiv'd him into favour again.

In the famous conference at *Carthage*, *Austin* mentions about 279 bishops on the part of the *Donatists*, and 286 Catholick bishops, besides 20 more who came to *Carthage*, but had not subscribed their names in the public list, and 120 more who could not be present; to which number *Austin* adds sixty vacant seats, not filled.

The whole number of bishops and bishopricks on the catholick part amounts to 486.

The first council of *Carthage* appoints three neighbouring bishops to hear the cause of a *deacon*, six bishops that of a presbyter, and twelve bishops to pass judgment on a bishop. If every deacon now were to be judged by three bishops, and every presbyter by six, the prosecution would be impracticable. But in the *African* provinces, where bishopricks were small and near one another, the bishops might easily determine all causes in their provincial councils, which were held twice a year.”

Owen's History of Ordination.

And now, as we are ready to acknowledge our brethren as members of the church of the Lord Jesus, and to give

them the right hand of fellowship; and as we have proved that parochial bishops or presbyters were appointed by the apostles, that they administered ordination, that they were to be found every where in the primitive church, that the great and good men of the English church acknowledged them, that most if not all of the reformed churches retain them, and that there is no reason in this country why there should be any jealousies or disputes among different denominations—May we not hope that we shall be acknowledged by our brethren, as fellow workmen in the vineyard of our Lord?

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

- Page 111 line 6 for *gloriosissimam* read *gloriosissimam*,
 116 6 from bottom, for *religious* read *reigning*,
 117 4 do for *Epicopal* read *Episcopal*,
 130 8 do for *ordinace* read *ordinance*,
 138 16 do for *most the* read *the most*,
 148 bottom line for *similr* read *similar*,
 160 8 from bottom for *has* read *had*,
 167 4 do for *remacked* read *remarked*,
 174 10 do for *term* read *terms*,
 211 13 erase ; at the end of the line.