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On Gifts And Offices In The Church

Editor's Note 1

It is far more happy to be occupied in considering the riches of the grace of God and of the love of Christ than to be discussing questions of offices and of institutions. It is however at times necessary to speak about these also, when they are put forward with a view of troubling the peace of Christians and of exciting their minds, as if their Christianity were defective, as if they were walking disorderly, and as if, before God, something were lacking to them. It is, then, in order to clear up these contested points, and to tranquillize the minds of Christians, that I would say a few words upon offices and gifts. I do so, however, with the most fervent desire that each one, after being really enlightened upon the subject, may turn from these questions and leave them entirely alone, so as to be occupied with Christ, and His exhaustless love and immeasurable grace. For it is that which nourishes and edifies, while questions tend to dryness and barrenness of soul.

There is a great difference between gifts and charges. Gifts flow down from the Head, which is Christ, among the members, so as to assemble, by their means, the Church outside of the world, and to build it up so far as thus gathered together.

Those to whom charges were entrusted, were as such “overseers,” or “servants,” established in each locality by the apostles, and who received from them their position and their authority. They might have gifts, and it was desirable that they should; but very often they had none. In either case, when they were faithful and

devoted to their service, they were blessed of God. We will now examine the instruction of holy scripture concerning gifts.

Everything which is good is a gift, and comes from God. But here we speak of gifts in a rather more restricted and more limited sense; namely, the gifts bestowed by God for the gathering together of His Church and for its edification, according as it is written: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,” Eph. 4:8. That is, the gifts of which we speak are those which, according to scripture, Christ received from the Father, after having ascended up on high to be Head over all things to the Church.

Man, through sin, has brought many a thing to a close in ruin. Without law he was lost in dissoluteness, in independence, in towering violence and corruption. Under the law he became a transgressor and despiser of the authority of God. God visited man in mercy there where he was lying in misery, vile and disobedient; and man has rejected God. He was a sinner, driven out of the earthly paradise. God came down into this miserable world of man’s; but, so far as it lay in man’s power to do it, he drove God out of the world. There remains thus for man—as altogether the servant of the prince and god of this world—nothing but judgment. God will not however, in any, even the least respect, fail to accomplish His own designs. Every hope for the first man, as such, is lost. But God has glorified the second Man, Adam, even Him who was obedient (the Lord from heaven), and has taken Him up into the heavenly place predestined for Him. Yet He still acts in grace upon the hearts of the children of men to give them a new life, and to gather the objects of

His grace outside of the world, uniting them to Christ glorified, so that they may enjoy, together with Him, all blessings, and, which is more precious than all else, that they may rejoice together with Him in the Father's love. Thus those that are born again are also members of Christ, of Him who is the Head of the body. But there is still another truth which connects itself with the object we have in view; namely, that Christ has won that position by the accomplishment of the work of redemption. We were captives of the devil and of sin: now we are set free. Christ has led captivity captive, and He fills those whom He sets free with the power of the Holy Spirit that they may serve Him. Having overcome Satan and finished the work of redemption, He is ascended up on high, and, as Head of the Church, He has received of the Father the Holy Spirit of promise for the members of His body.

The Christian being redeemed receives the Holy Spirit in two manners. He is sealed with the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance, and thus is one with the Lord, and united to Him; then he has received the Holy Spirit as power for service to Christ. Such is the way the gifts connect themselves with these truths. The work of redemption is accomplished; and believers are perfectly purified from their sins, so that, by virtue of the blood of Christ wherewith they are sprinkled, the Holy Spirit can dwell in them. Christ, having glorified God, His Father, upon earth, has sat down, as man, at the right hand of God, as Head of the Church, whose everlasting righteousness He is. As such, He has received the Holy Spirit for His members, that is to say, for those that believe in Him; Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:8. We are the righteousness of God in Him; 2 Cor. 5:21. Already the

Holy Spirit—sent by the Father in the name of the Son—and come down from the Son, dwells in believers as the witness of His glory and the Spirit of power, as the Spirit of liberty and adoption, on behalf of the Father, and as coming from the Father, in order to communicate to them the certainty of salvation, and also to accomplish on the earth, as power and wisdom, the work of the Lord, in the members of the body.

All important and precious as is the first-named point, we will for the present leave it in order to say a few words on gifts. The Holy Spirit is upon earth, in virtue of the finished work of redemption, and of the session of Christ at the right hand of God. There He acts, by means of the gospel, so as to proclaim the love of God, to gather together the elect, and to form of them one body, the body of Christ. Every converted soul, which has received the life of Christ and been sealed with the Holy Spirit, is a member of Christ, of the heavenly Head. We can consider then the gifts as either the gifts of Christ, or as the operation of the Holy Ghost now upon the earth. The holy scripture gives us both of these aspects. In Ephesians 4 it speaks of the gifts of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 it speaks of the unity of the body, and of the gifts as produced by the Spirit in the different members. In each case, the gifts are in connection with the unity of the body, as may be easily seen by reading Ephesians 4.

Before going farther, let it be remarked, that the gifts are of two kinds: first, such as serve to awaken souls, and to gather the Church; and, secondly, such as are signs to the world, signs of the presence of God in the Person of the Spirit in the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians speaks to us only of the former; the Epistle to

the Corinthians speaks of both. The word of God itself makes the above distinction, when it says that tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, and prophesyings are for believers (1 Cor. 14:22). This distinction is important, because it is impossible that anything should fail which is necessary for the conversion of souls, and for the building up of saints; whereas it is easy enough to conceive that God should withdraw that which was an ornament to the Church, and a token of its acceptability, when the Church is unfaithful, and when, instead of honouring God, she has grieved the Spirit. Nevertheless this external testimony remained, according to the wisdom of God in the Church, so long as it was needed, in order to confirm the preaching of the truths of the gospel.

All gifts proceed immediately from Christ the Head, and have their existence in believers by the energy of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 present to us these two important truths very clearly and very explicitly, while at the same time they give us their principle and their development. Ephesians 4 treats exclusively of the gifts which serve for the gathering and edification of the Church. Christ is ascended up on high, and has received gifts for men, who, in the enjoyment by faith of the work of Christ in redemption, by the which they are completely delivered from the power of Satan, to which they were previously subject—having also been made vessels of the grace and power, which flows down from on high, of Christ, who is the Head—become instruments of the Christ who is absent, by means of the gifts which are communicated to them. The Lord laid the foundation by the apostles and prophets, who are (says the apostle Paul, Eph. 2) the foundation, Jesus Christ

Himself being the chief cornerstone. There yet abide evangelists, pastors, and teachers; and, so long as Christ loves the Church, and is the alone source of grace—so long as He desires to nourish the members of His own body—these same gifts will remain for the edification of the Church. But whereas—while the healthful action of these gifts is by means of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit—Christians are unhappily often unfaithful, and neglect His rebukes, it comes to pass that the development of the gifts, and their public efficacy, are little apparent, and their activity is diminished. This is true in general; and that both as to individual Christian life, and as to the practical state of the Church. But it is not the less true, that Christ always faithfully cares for His own body. On that care we can always count, though as to details we may be humbled on account of our own unfaithfulness. Also the Lord has said, The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few; and that we should pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers.

Every one who has received a gift has thereby become servant of Him who communicated it to him. In every case we are the servants of Christ, who alone is Lord of our souls; but every Christian, in particular, is His servant, as to any gift He may have conferred upon him; and, because He has conferred it on him, each one is responsible both to use it and to trade with it—I mean to trade with it, with the view for which Christ communicated it. Without doubt, each Christian is subject to the general discipline of the Church, or of the assembly, both as to his whole life and as to his service. But he serves Christ, and not men. He brings forth fruit for the assembly, because he serves Christ; he renders

service to Christians, because he is the servant of Christ the Lord. Also, he must needs serve, because he is the servant of Christ, and has received, for that end, a part of his Lord's goods. Such is the doctrine of the parable of the three servants, whose lord went into a far country, and gave unto them of his goods; to the one more, to the other less. With what view? that they might be idle and listless? No; he committed to them the talents in order that they might trade with them. We do not commit materials and tools to men, in order that they may do nothing. Not only is such a thought senseless, but, if the love of Christ and His love to souls energize in our hearts, idleness and inaction are altogether impossible.

The presence and the activity of Christ's love in our hearts is thus, in truth, tested. If the love of Christ be active in my heart, would it be possible for me to remain inactive in any case in which I could be of use to one soul beloved of Him? Certainly not. The power to act thus, the wisdom needful to do it, in a way which would be agreeable to Him, comes always and directly from Himself, while the love of Christ in the heart is that which keeps the heart lively. In order to have courage for action, I must have confidence in Christ: otherwise the heart will say, "Perhaps He will not accept what I do"; "it may be He will not be content with me"; "would not this be too rash, too hasty?" "it might be proud to attempt that." The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the way"; whereas love is not inactive but intelligent, because it confides in Christ. Love apprehends what love wishes; it yields itself to the will of Christ, and follows the example of Christ, its guide. Such is the action of that very love which is in Christ, and which acts with humble and true wisdom. It is obedient and intelligent,

understanding from grace its duty, and drawing out of the love of Christ courage to fulfil it. And whose conduct did Christ approve of and accept? Was it his who, out of a heart's confidence, laboured without any other commandment, or his who was afraid to do so? We all know the answer. The approbation of Christ suffices for the heart of the Christian, and suffices for his justification in his deed.

Brethren, when we have His acceptance manifest and declared, we may leave all the rest alone. This is just what to be faithful to Christ means. Let us have patience. He will judge everything ere long. Till then let us walk by faith: His word is enough for us. At the time appointed He will justify us before the world, and will put full honour upon His own word and our faith.

The Lord Jesus has, then, received these gifts as Himself a man, and has given them to men, for the effectuating the work of the gospel and of the Church; those therefore who have received these gifts must needs turn them to their full profit, according to God, to win souls, to edify Christians, and to glorify their Lord and heavenly Master. In Ephesians 4 we have seen the gifts of edification represented as being trusts made here below by Christ Himself ascended up on high, while the members of His body upon the earth are being gathered, and while, by means of an activity which acts the one upon the other, the body grows, and is at the same time kept from every wind of doctrine, until it come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The gifts are looked at in 1 Corinthians 12 rather according to the energy of the Holy Spirit upon earth, who distributes them to each as He will. Therefore we

find here, not only gifts of edification, but all those which are the result of the power of the Spirit and signs of His presence. This chapter examines everything which can be considered as a spiritual manifestation; and while it distinctly speaks of the action of the power of demons, it shews us the means of distinguishing these from divine gifts. It sets forth, in the very clearest manner, the doctrine of the body and members of Christ, drawing our attention to this: that there is but one only Lord, by whose authority those who have gifts labour—whether in the world, or in the assembly of saints—to accomplish the work of God by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Each member is dependent upon the action of the others, because all have been baptized by one and the same Spirit.

In Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4:10 the gifts are briefly enumerated. In Romans, again, as the members of the body of Christ, and, in general, with the object of exhorting those who possess gifts not to go beyond that which has been given to them, but to keep within the limits of their gift. In 1 Peter 4 the Holy Spirit exhorts Christians to use the gifts which have been bestowed upon them, as the immediate and faithful stewards of God Himself; to speak as the oracles of God; to serve as by the ability received of God. In all this teaching, we find nothing about office; the subject is simply the members of the body of Christ who all take their part in the edifying of the body, and who are held responsible to do so. All do not speak—all do not preach the gospel—all do not teach, because all have not these gifts; but all are obliged, according to scripture, to do (according to the scriptural order of the house of God) that which God has given them to do. When once it is understood that all

Christians are members of Christ, and that each member has his own proper work—his own service in the body, all becomes simple and clear. We have all a duty to fulfil, and that in the strength of God; and the less seen is perhaps the most precious, while exercising itself before God and not before man. But all have something to do. To say that all have office is to deny that there are special offices. Nothing can be clearer, if we examine history and the instruction of scripture upon this point. We see in it that, in that which concerns either the preaching of the gospel in the world, or the edification of Christians in gathering, the question is never about office, but that all depends upon gifts.

Let us turn to a few passages in proof of this assertion.

We have already called attention to Matthew 25. In the parable of the talents committed to the three servants, the Lord lays down this principle, that two of them are worthy of praise because they had traded, without being otherwise authorized than by the fact itself that their lord had committed to them his money; while the third is blamed and punished for having expected a warrant, because he had not confidence in his lord, and had not dared to trade without some further obligation. This means, that the gifts themselves are, for the workman, a warrant or authorization fully sufficient to trade with the gift which he has, if the love of Christ constrain his heart; but, if this love is not there, he is under responsibility; and the proof that the love of Christ is not in action in him is, that he has not served by means of his gift—he is a bad and a lazy servant. Christ gives not gifts with the object that we should not turn them to profit; He gives them, rather, that we may use them with energy. We find also, that, in point of fact, so it was

among the early Christians. When the persecution which ensued upon the death of Stephen had dispersed the Christians, they went everywhere preaching the gospel (Acts 8:4). And we read (chap. 11:21) that the hand of the Lord was with them. But is it possible that if I know the means by which a soul may be saved, I ought not to announce that way, though God may have rendered me able to do so? In private anyone can do such a thing; but the ability to preach in public is precisely the gift of God in this respect.

Paul finding himself in prison at Rome, many of the brethren in the Lord waxed bold on seeing his bonds, and fearlessly dared to preach the word; Phil. 1:13, 14.

When false teachers go forth to seduce the Lord's people, the receiving them or the not receiving them in no wise depends upon any office they have, or upon the absence of an official character. Even a woman is directed to judge for herself by doctrine (2 John). It did not for an instant come into the thought of the apostle to use such a means as the possession of office, in order to guard a woman on the occurrence of a time of difficulty; he simply writes to her to judge each according to his doctrine. It does not even come into his head to counsel this woman to ask of him who presents himself as preacher whether he has office, or is consecrated or ordained. On the contrary he praises the beloved Gaius, because he had received the brethren who were gone forth in the name of Christ; and he exhorts him to bring them on their way in a manner worthy of God. In so doing Gaius would become a co-labourer with the truth (3 John 8).

So far as the preaching of the gospel is concerned, the word of God then confirms this doctrine, that each, according to his capacity, and the opportunities which God in His grace affords him, is obliged to announce the good news.

The scripture is quite clear also as to the edification of believers. Not only does it present us with this general truth, that Christ has given gifts, and that the Holy Spirit acts thereby, in order that we may fulfil the work of God in every way (Eph. 4 and 1 Cor. 12); but, moreover, it speaks with exactness and clearness of the duty of those who possess gifts. The Holy Spirit says by the mouth of Peter (1 Pet. 4:10), “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Then in 1 Corinthians 14 we find the order according to which the exercise of gifts should take place, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” James shews us distinctly the true limits of this service, without reference to office, when he says that believers should not be many teachers, because that the responsibility thereof would be all the greater, and that (since we all in various ways offend) they would suffer a so much the greater judgment. It is, then, perfectly certain that gifts, and the service which believers render by gifts, are completely independent of the possession of office; and that those to whom God has communicated these gifts are obliged to use them for the edification of the saints. The scripture gives the rules according to which the exercises of the gifts ought to take place; it

requires that the spirits of the prophets be subject to the prophets, and that all be done unto edification, in such wise that there be no disorder in the assembly. As to office, the scripture says not one single word upon this subject in this respect.2 Now, on this subject, we beg that it may be remarked, that between gift and office there exists a great difference, and that this difference depends upon the nature of the two things. The gift has its course, it is available everywhere. If I am an evangelist, I shall preach the gospel wheresoever God may call me. Am I a teacher? I shall teach believers according to my ability, wheresoever I may chance to find myself. Apollos teaches at Ephesus; he is also of use to believers at Corinth. But if any one has received an office, he fulfils the service which is connected with it in the determinate place where he has been nominated thereunto. Is he an elder, or a deacon at Ephesus? he ought to fulfil his office at Ephesus; his official authority is valid at Ephesus. At Corinth he would have none. The possessors of office are not, as such, members of the body of Christ; though those who are installed therein are themselves individually such. The gifts, as gifts, are the various members.of the body (see Eph. 4, 1 Cor. 14, and Rom. 12), who ought to render their service according to the will of God, wheresoever they may find themselves. The scripture never says that an evangelist is the evangelist of an assembly or of a flock; neither does it recognize a teacher or a pastor of a flock; but God has put such gifts in the Church, in the body of Christ. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge

of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they he in wait to deceive; 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 every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love," Eph. 4:11-16. There were, without any question, at the commencement, offices in the assemblies; we find two kinds of them in the holy scriptures; overseers and servants, and if any one is pleased to make the distinction, sisters in service. The first-named were ordinarily (presbuteroi) what are now called elders. The others were deacons or deaconesses. We do not find, however, that elders were established in any determinate manner among the Christian Jews. Among the Christians who had been called by grace, from among the heathen, we see very clearly, that they were chosen and installed in their charge by the apostles or their delegates. We read in Acts 14:23 that Paul and Barnabas choose, in each town, elders for the assemblies; and in Crete the apostle left Titus, in order that he might establish elders in every town. As to Timothy, although that was not his service, having been left by the apostle at Ephesus, to watch as to doctrine, yet he received from Paul instruction as to the qualities suitable for an overseer. Nevertheless, the apostle did not enter into conference upon this point with the assemblies; but he did everything himself personally, or

else he entrusted this service exclusively to his delegate; even there where assemblies were already formed.

We find but little in scripture about the servants (or deacons). In Acts 6 we read that the apostles, not wishing to have any more to serve tables, require the Christians to choose seven from among themselves, who should fulfil the duties of deacons, though they are not called by the name; and, to say the least, they had in many respects the suited qualifications which are enumerated by the apostle Paul to Timothy and to Titus.

It may be asked, Now that there are no apostles, what ought we to do as to elders? Our God, who has in all times foreknown the wants of His beloved Church, has given us the answer in the word, and has taken sufficient heed of these wants. We read, “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves,” 1 Thess. 5:12, 13. At the same time, the apostle distinctly sets forth the common responsibility of all the saints. “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men,” 1 Thess. 5:14, 15.

In Hebrews 13 he speaks of the real leaders of the assembly. “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,” Heb. 13:7. The word is the same as that used in Acts

15:22 of “Judas and Silas, chief men among the brethren.”

Such ought to be esteemed among them. We see in the same chapter, verse 7, that some of them were dead, and we learn here what had been their disposition; but the rest still lived.

The duty of elders is that of oversight. In Acts 20 the apostle gives them this name (in our language, bishop; in Greek, episkopos). We find this title again in the Epistle to the Philippians. In Acts 20:28, 31, we see in what their duty consisted—to nourish with sound doctrine, to be watchful against false teachers, and attentive to everything. The passage in 1 Peter 5:1-3 speaks the same thing.

The duty of deacons is also, as for the elders, expressed in their name. The Greek word diakonos signifies servant. They served the assembly as its servants; there were also sisters (as Phoebe) with the same title. If we examine Acts 6, the seven who cared for the poor widows as deacons had this service specially allotted to them for their portion.

These were the offices then in the various assemblies, which the apostles, and Paul in particular, established when all was yet in order. There were in each assembly several elders.

Nevertheless all the elders had not gifts. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine,” 1 Tim. 5:17. The deacons, like all other Christians, had to exercise them when they possessed them. The deacons, where they fulfilled their charge faithfully and carefully, found also their own spiritual profit therein. “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. 3:13); as we may see most fully made good in the cases of Stephen and Philip; Acts 6, 7 and 8.

We see too elsewhere how Christians, without losing their proper responsibility according to grace, had to be subject to those that were at the work. "I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints), that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helpeth with us, and laboureth," 1 Cor. 16:15, 16. The Christian can never lay aside his individual responsibility. The discipline of the assembly recalls to a walk according to that responsibility, when the Christian has forgotten so to walk. Brethren, then, who by the Lord's grace are called to the work, labour to maintain the Christian walk, to strengthen the feeble, to instruct the ignorant, to exhort and to encourage all, to nourish by the word and to render all able, by that divine nourishment, to honour God and the doctrine of the Saviour— in short, to be in every way a help, the common responsibility being in view.

The Christian can say: All things are mine—the activity of the workman of God, as much as his efforts to. remove every kind of evil. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. The apostle says, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor. 4:5.

These two public offices then are now entirely wanting to us; no one can restore them officially according to holy scripture, after a divine sort, because no one has received, in order to do so, authority or commission on the part of God to do so. But the scripture provides morally for subjection to those whom God raises up to service: and inasmuch as Christ is infallibly faithful toward His body, and inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is always in the Church upon earth, the gifts necessary to the edification of the assembly are always there. The feeble state of the Church of God shews itself, it is true, in this respect as in every other; but Christ ever remains faithful, and cannot cease to nourish His members.

The doctrine of scripture as to gifts has been almost forgotten; or else it is altogether set aside by assigning the right to edify men to those who have been placed by men in their positions—positions which men have for the most part invented for themselves. And when even it is conceded that God furnishes the gifts, it is not any the more permitted to those who possess them to exercise them without a sanction from man.

The confusion arising from the mixture of gifts and offices, which men have invented, has resulted in what is ordinarily called “clergy,” and even worship; and it is carried so far as to maintain, that, if this confusion is not recognized, the service due to God is denied. But the true service to God is there, where each member of Christ serves God also (be it in the word, or be it for the edification of the brethren, and thus of the whole body of Christ) with the gift which Christ has communicated to him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If in the existing state of the Church the public re-establishment of the offices which scripture recognizes is not possible, God has nevertheless previously ordained all that is necessary, all that is good for such a state, sad as it may be; as also He will infallibly give all that is useful to those who ask it of Him.

As to the imposition of hands to authorize the exercise of gifts, the scripture owns no such necessity. When hands were laid on the apostles Paul and Barnabas, they were simply recommended to the grace of God for the work which they then fulfilled. But both of these had now for a long time exercised their gifts; it wras not then, on the part of the prophets at Antioch, anything else than a commendation to the grace of the Lord for a special work. The twelve apostles laid their hands on the seven who are ordinarily called deacons; and (though that is nowhere said) it is likely enough, from analogy, that the apostle Paul, or delegates, laid hands on the elders. But as to the exercise of gifts, it is spoken of everywhere as exercised without that ceremony, even in such a manner that (if it were necessary) all Christians ought to have the imposition of hands. It is as clear as the light of the sun, that, as all might “prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted” (1 Cor. 14:31), all, in effect, might preach; and that, many having spoken with divers tongues, the imposition of hands for the exercise of gifts was completely impossible.

The scripture is ignorant of any official ceremony for the administration of the Lord’s supper, as men speak; and God nowhere therein declares, that it is the privilege of a person consecrated, or set apart, to administer it. “The disciples came together to break bread,” Acts 20:7. Probably those who were esteemed among them began

the breaking of bread with prayer before distributing it, because it is evidently comely as a general principle that such should have this place and not a service, and charity does not behave itself unseemly: nevertheless scripture has said nothing upon the subject. The blessing used in worship is but a giving of thanks, as we see in 1 Corinthians 14:16, “Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? “Even the Lord gave thanks before breaking the 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,” 1 Cor. 11:24.

1 Originally written in German.

2 It is remarkable that in the epistle to the Corinthians elders are never once mentioned; and there, where there existed so much trouble and evil, the apostle nevertheless does not propose to the assembly to nominate or establish elders; but he acts upon the conscience of Christians by the word, in order that they may be roused to remove the evil.

The House Of God; The Body Of Christ; And The Baptism Of The Holy Ghost

You have asked of me some account of the historical development of a false notion on which I have often spoken, and already written briefly in the “Present Testimony.” The practical importance of this notion had caused my mind to be occupied with it, and led me to entertain the thought of pursuing its history. The false notion which I refer to is the confusion of two distinct aspects of the Church, given us in scripture: that of the house of God, and that of the body of Christ. Since I first proposed treating this point, the subject has been taken up in the “Bible Treasury.” But, having the wish to go farther into the statements of scripture than is there done, and, having long had my mind occupied with it, this does not hinder my pursuing it myself. The ground of the view there given, and of the following paper, I apprehend to be the same; but it will easily be seen how entirely independent they are one of another.

The thought that admission into the house conferred the privileges of the body has been the root of the systematic corruption of Christianity, which has acquired the reverence of ages, was not shaken off at the Reformation, and is now corrupting the Protestant systems, which were thought to have freed themselves from its fetters. All the members of the body of Christ are living members, quickened of the Spirit, or born of God; they are forgiven all their sins, and perfected for ever by His one offering of Himself; they have received His Spirit, and are heirs of the inheritance of glory. If the

body and the house are the same thing, then all that are admitted into the house, be they adults or infants, have part in the privileges which belong to the body. On the other hand, being true members of the body of Christ secures nothing; for its true members may perish. The very idea of being born of God is destroyed; for, after having been born of God, they lose what they had, and have to be born over again, without the alleged means of being so, or they enter the kingdom of heaven, as they say, without life; the abiding efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is annulled—for they that are sanctified are not perfected for ever; and the sealing of the Holy Ghost for the day of redemption is applied to those who will never be there, and has no effectual value in this respect.

The first general idea, that of which we are to speak, is the Church (e ekklesia). The word, however, I shall at once drop, and employ the literal rendering of the Greek word so translated: the Assembly. Technical words obtain a conventional meaning, which introduces great confusion into people's minds; for, though the local growth of thought produces language, in moral education, words become names, and create rather than express ideas. Take, as an instance, this word Church. It is applied, as all know, to buildings appropriated to ecclesiastical services. But the church is the house of God; and the building is treated as the house of God, though God has expressly declared that, under the Christian system, He will not dwell in temples made with hands; that where two or three are gathered together in His name—the true church so far, and so called in the passage—there Christ is in their midst.

I shall speak therefore of the Assembly, the real meaning of the word. Only this is God's Assembly. Take the

passage which I have referred to, and see the effect of this. If a brother trespassed against another, he was to tell it to him alone; if that were useless, to take two or three more; if that failed, to tell it to the Assembly. What has not been made out of this passage? And how many delusions are dispelled by its plain and simple language, when it is taken as it stands? It is related, that king James forbad the translators of the Bible into English to change this word “church,” which, in the previous Geneva translation, had been dropped. The bearing of such a prohibition is evident enough.3 The word Assembly is one known to Old Testament language and thought. Yet it had there a very different character and foundation. Two words are there employed, which, it seems to me, give somewhat different ideas, hedah and kahal. The former seems to me to present rather the corporate unity of the congregation; the latter, the actual gathering, pretty much the difference which we might understand between an Assembly and an Assemblage. Moed is another thought; the meeting, the tent of meeting; because there they met God, and, indeed, one another; but the thought in the word is an appointed place of meeting. Israel was the assembly of God, but they were it by birth; though excluded, if not circumcised. All this for the time was set aside we may say, by the death of Christ, though the patience of God lingered, by means of the intercession of Christ upon the cross over the beloved people (compare Acts 3). The prophets had indeed spoken of all this beforehand, and he among them who unfolded the destinies of Israel, and their several causes more fully than any one, Isaiah, tells all through of a remnant that should be spared, the children and disciples given to Messiah, when all was darkness in the nation, and the testimony of God shut

up, save to that remnant, thus separated from the people, while God Himself hid His face from them. This remnant would in future days return; and for their sakes Israel be spared, and the glory of the nation be established in them (see Isa. 6:9-13; ch. 8:15-18; ch. 10:21, 22; ch. 65:8, 9, and ch. 66). Chapter 8 shews us that, when the nation was set aside, this remnant came distinctively on the scene. They were for signs to both houses of Israel.

There were two grounds for Israel's rejection; one, viewing the people as witness of the unity of the Godhead against idolatry; the other, as visited by Jehovah in the Person of the Lord Jesus. In chapters 40-57, these two points are treated. The captivity of Babylon was the judgment of their failure as to the former: hence we have Cyrus mentioned in connection with their deliverance. Their present state is the result of the rejection of their Messiah, the time the unclean spirit, after the Babylonish captivity, was gone out of them. Still it was but a remnant, preserved and brought back. That God would not look merely at the fact that they were His people, but would distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, is also clearly stated in chapter 48:22, where the pleading on the question of idolatry closes; and chapter 57:21, where the pleading as to the rejection of Christ closes. And their wickedness, and the Lord's coming in power, and the intervening gospel-times, are then spoken of. At the end of their history, the unclean spirit, which had gone out, returns with seven others, worse; they are idolaters; and not only is Messiah negatively rejected, but they accept one who comes in his own name. The last state is worse than the first, and wickedness ripens up into terrible

judgment, which will yet be deliverance for those who will have called on the name of Jehovah, who will have refused the idols, waited for Jehovah, and, in looking on Him whom they had pierced, see Him come in infinite grace for their deliverance.

But our enquiry now refers to the condition of this remnant, spared from the judgments of Israel, while God is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. The first witness we have is only the binding up the testimony, and sealing the law, among His disciples, and waiting on Jehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and looking for Him. But this, though all blessing be founded on the death of Christ, does not bring in His death as a matter of knowledge. The instructions in Matthew, such as the sermon on the mount, and still more, chapters 10 and 24, answer to this; though, of course, increased light is thrown on their position, both as to spiritual apprehension, and the introduction of the Father's name, which Christ as Son, as in the sermon on the mount, could do, and by the prophetic light afforded them by the Lord. Besides this, the introduction of the thought of the coming King does cast a special light on all the instruction given.

In Psalm 22, however, where the circumstances of the blessed Lord's death, and the immense truth of His enduring the forsaking of God, are brought before us, we have more definite light as to the position into which the remnant enter in virtue of it. The Lord had borne the forsaking of God, and was now heard from the horns of the unicorn. All the unspeakable and full blessing of the inshining of God's delight, when sin was put away—a delight, which, though everlasting, was enhanced by the value of that sacrifice—expressed in the names of God

and Father—enjoyed as man, as Son—all burst unclouded upon His soul. This He declared to His brethren, to put them, these poor disciples that followed Him, into the same place with Himself. He can now call them His brethren, for the work of redemption is accomplished. Go, tell my brethren, He says to Mary Magdalen, that I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. But this was not all—He raises the song of praise in the midst of the assembly. Thus, the remnant already manifested, the disciples are set on redemption-ground, and gathered with Christ in their midst. The assembly, composed (as yet) of the remnant of Israel, takes a definite and true ground. The assembly of God was there, His presence there. We have the remnant, the brethren, gathered into an assembly (kahal, that is the actual gathering of them together), and the gathering founded on the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, and the power of His resurrection as to life. God was a Saviour-God in the power of eternal fife; He was known in peace, and grace, and glory—was rejoiced in in hope. The instructions of the New Testament will carry us farther than all this; but this much was laid as a foundation. For Christ died, not only to save, and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

The first great element promised in scripture, and given after the exaltation of Jesus, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The assembly being now formed, the Lord added to it daily the remnant of Israel whom He was sparing from judgment. Hereafter they will form the body of Israel itself—now they were added to the assembly. The hundred and twenty were, by grace, together in

practical kahal, though as yet they had no definite object which rallied them, save the consciousness of a common faith, strengthened doubtless by Jesus visiting them the day of His resurrection and following first day of the week. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost constituted them a real hedah, a corporate body, a true ohel-moed, a tent of meeting, where the Lord was. He owned it formally as His assembly on the earth. A temple there was which God yet bore with, but it was not where He dwelt. It was somewhat as when the tabernacle was at Gibeon without the ark, and the ark, by delivering grace, in Mount Zion. The title of "Assembly" became the generic name for this assembly formed amongst men. Its state or privileges, relationship with God or with Christ, be they one or various, and the dealings of God and Christ with it, remain to be searched out. We shall find that it had more than one aspect and relationship, to which God's dealings with it corresponded.

But the assembly of God was formed. It was not yet brought out in the faith of its members, though it were so in the counsels of God, and in that on which the assembly was founded and formed—that Jews and Gentiles should form one body without distinction. Nor did other truths connected with it make a part of their faith; but there was an assembly of God formed on the earth.

I will now consider some of the aspects in which it is presented in scripture.

First, the Lord's prediction that He is going to build it, and on what, in Matthew 16. Christ, to the end of Matthew 12, had presented Himself preaching repentance and the kingdom to Israel, not hiding

Jehovah's righteousness in the great congregation; above all, He had presented Himself as Jehovah-Messias to Israel, and sought an answer and fruit in His vineyard. Then He breaks entirely with His relationship with Israel after the flesh. His disciples are His mother and brethren and sisters. The nation is judged: its state worse than all before (Matt. 13). He sows; He does not seek fruit: and, when the kingdom of heaven is set up, the field is the world, not Judaism. All this is very significant; but it only leads us on to one further point (chaps. 14, 15). He unfolds many moral points on which the rejection is founded, as indeed predicted, and shews grace bearing with and rising above the evil, as to Israel.

But in chapter 16 He elicits from Simon the confession of His own Person; which indeed the Father had revealed to him. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this rock He would build His assembly in the world, in the power of divine life itself in Him as the Son of God. He existed, as Son, in the power of the life which is in God. And what should he who had the power of hades, or death, be able to do against it? Christ was the very expression of the power of the living God, and that in life, as Son: what could the power of death do? This was shown in resurrection— "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead." It was no longer to be announced that He was the Christ in Israel. This was closed: but as He was going to build the Church, He must, as Son of man, suffer and die, but rise again; and then, in the power of that resurrection which was beyond the power of death, build it. Some would see (in the transfiguration—hereafter, fully) the Son of man

coming in His kingdom. Now He was to suffer, relinquishing His then Christ-relationship with Israel, and, before finally taking the kingdom in power, build the Church on the title of Son of the living God. Thus we have His three titles in this respect: Christ as Messiahship in Israel no longer announced; Christ, the Son of the living God—a title He was never given elsewhere—on this He would build His assembly: Son of man—in this He would now suffer, but afterwards be seen coming in His kingdom. He announces His death, but builds His assembly on the acknowledgment of His Person. For Son of man see Psalm 8, Daniel 7, and Psalm 80:17. The kingdom of heaven is another subject, mentioned in the chapter, but not one which occupies us directly at this moment: I may speak of it farther on. Christ then declares, that upon this—that is, the truth of His being the Christ, the Son of the living God—He will build His assembly, and the gates of hades should not prevail against it. This is a remarkable statement. Over Adam innocent, over men consequently everywhere, over Israel under the law, the gates of hades had prevailed. Death and ruin had come in. Satan had gained the upper hand, as having the power of hades; but this was on the ground of human responsibility. But Christ, who, perfect in Himself when responsible, went there in grace for us, could not, as the Son of the living God, be holden of the power of death. He went there, not that the prince of this world had anything in Him, but in love and obedience to His Father; and He not only was not holden of it, but He totally broke its power, rendered wholly void the power of Satan in it. This was grace then and power —the resurrection, the completion and witness of that power, though not the full result in righteousness. It was the great proof of this grace and

power in Christ, on which the assembly was built; not on responsibility and failure, as human hopes were, but, in grace and power, on the Son of the living God. Not that there is no responsibility; but the safety of the assembly, its being carried to its divinely-purposed result, is not in question in it.

We shall see aspects in which what is called the assembly is cast off; but not the assembly as built by Christ, that is, His own house; and He builds it for His own purposes, for our blessing, according to His own heart and His glory. This is all we have of the Church or assembly here. Remark, there are no keys to it. Christ builds it—builds—the keys are of the kingdom of heaven. Not only has Peter not the keys of the Church, but there are no keys to it. It has no keys; nor has anyone any keys of it. There are none. It is what Christ is building. Building is not done with keys. The whole thought of keys of the Church, in any and every sense, is a delusion. There are none.

But, to return. The assembly, viewed as built by Christ Himself, is built in grace and power. It is founded on the Rock of Jesus being the Son of the living God; and till that power be subdued by the power of Satan, as having that of death, it cannot be shaken; but that power of life in resurrection has been proved entirely triumphant over Satan, over the gates of hades. Hence, whatever phases, through false brethren come in, the assembly may go through, in its outward state be it so corrupt that Christ will spue it out of His mouth, His building is as secure as that on which it is built, and this is Himself. He carries His work on through all that comes from man; and this is the carrying on the work and purpose of God on earth.

But, remark here, we have not the smallest notion of the body or bride of Christ, nor of the indwelling of God by the Spirit. All this is foreign to the view here taken. It is life; that is, Christ, as having, as Son, life in and from the life of the living God, life divine, life in Himself (proved in resurrection), which is the foundation and security of the assembly built by the heavenly Architect, against which he who has the power of death, Satan, cannot prevail. The result will be in assured victory over him, whatever the vicissitudes of the combat in man, according to the purpose of God. Hence, also, though there is an assembly, yet it is an assemblage of individuals, not a body, the Holy Ghost forms. Thus Peter, in full unison with this revelation, declares we are "begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"; and then, "unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood." They are together as stones in a building, and as a priesthood; but it is not a body growing in itself with joints of supply.

Thus far, however, we have the assembly as built up by Christ on the earth (though for heaven; but it is not built in heaven, nor presented as connected with a head there), in contrast with the presenting Messiah to the Jews, on the ground of their own promises, as come in the flesh, the seed of David according to the flesh. Peter (in Acts 3) proposes, indeed, to the nation to come in and enjoy the promises on this ground, and Christ would return on their repentance. This is founded on Christ's intercession, "Father, forgive them"; but they resist the Spirit, as their fathers had done; and this part of their history closes.

The assembly was formed and publicly inaugurated by the descent of the Holy Ghost: the Jews, as a nation, reject its offered blessings in the persons of their chiefs. Another truth now shines out: God accepts in every nation. There is no word of the unity of the body here yet; but Gentiles could be received. The reception of the Samaritans seems not so much to have surprised the disciples. That we can understand; they had been there with Christ: they pretended at least to Jewish privileges. The witness of the Spirit in Jerusalem is finally rejected; a saint takes his place in heaven; and Christ now can definitely sit down till His enemies (alas! the word) are made His footstool. Hereupon the assembly outwardly is dispersed. The Jewish mission of the apostles (of going from a city where the persecution assailed them) disappears; they are the only ones who remain. The action of the Holy Ghost takes a free course by whom He will in all this scene, and carries the testimony to the Gentiles. Meanwhile an event of the utmost importance takes place in connection with the ways of God. What had scattered the assembly, formed as we have hitherto seen it, brought out upon the scene, in connection with the death of Stephen, the bitterest of those rejecting enemies; and he, through sovereign grace, by a distinct and new revelation, which did not connect him with Christ after the flesh, nor make him dependent on the apostles previously called, sees Christ in heaven and supreme glory, and learns that all the saints are one with Him—are Himself. Confounded, converted, taken up by power, he becomes a witness of the great truth that Jesus is the Son of God (which Peter is never recorded to have taught, but that He was made Lord and Christ), not conferring an instant with flesh and blood. After a salutary setting aside—which man ever needs, if

he is to serve—he comes forth, as we have all read, not from Jerusalem, not of man nor by man, but sent forth by the Holy Ghost from Antioch, a Gentile city, dependent on Him alone who sent him under the authority of Christ, and by the moving power of the Holy Ghost, to preach the gospel of the glory to every creature under heaven, and to be a minister of the assembly, to complete the word of God. But that assembly, he had learnt in his conversion, was one with Christ Himself in glory.

Hence we find, in the writings of the apostle Paul, very distinct additional light on other important aspects of God's assembly (Eph. 1:22). It is the body of which Christ is the Head, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. True Christians, viewed as a whole, are "the body of Christ, and members in particular." This is fully unfolded in 1 Corinthians 12; "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." We are taught also how this most important truth is made good: f(For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The apostle unfolds and insists on this in the following verses of the chapter. In Ephesians 4 we learn, that the body makes increase of itself to the edifying of itself in love. The mutuality of membership is dwelt on also in Romans 12. In a word, the assembly (which, remark, already existed, for Jesus had spoken to him of the saints he was persecuting) is looked at in its true living character, the body of Christ; and it is so through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In the Ephesians, however, when the body is fully spoken of, the apostle refers to the elect saints, who are created again in Christ Jesus, and are sealed for the day of redemption; that is, he sees

the assembly, when speaking of it as the body of Christ united to the Head, as God knows it; quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places in Christ the Head. That which has wrought this unity is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, under which the elect and manifested remnant were brought on the day of Pentecost. Of course, all since called of God have their part in it; and, when the body is fully formed, will be found in it with heavenly glory. God's mind as to the assembly is, that it is Christ's body, and Christ its Head: whatever is not this is the fruit of man's work; who, when blessing from God has been committed to him, has always marred it. This my readers will have often seen insisted on. All entrusted to man, Satan being unbound, has been lost and spoiled; all will be taken up in perfection in the last Adam. Still the assembly—viewed as God's assembly, and so in the first instance it is, and ought to be, in its normal state, and as it will be hereafter—is the body of Christ. But in that body all are living indefectible members. Christ has no dead members, nor a mutilated body. The same power that wrought in Christ—this is the express doctrine of Ephesians 1—in raising Him up, and setting Him at the right hand of God, has wrought in them. They believed also and were sealed. This it is which is always spoken of when the body is spoken of. No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as the Lord the assembly, for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones-. The assembly is the gathering of the children of God on earth into one, the assembling them; but, viewed in its reality, this assembly is Christ's body; they are quickened with Him raised up, sitting in Him in heavenly places. As it is said, man is the image of God, speaking of what he is as from the hand of God, in the epistle of James, as in Genesis 1. But the

state and position of man was entrusted to him on his own responsibility; and he is at enmity with God, and ruined.

Israel is the object of divine favour, God's firstborn in the earth; and, as touching election, beloved for the fathers' sake, yet, outcast and enemies, the branches are broken off; that is, besides that which God has set up being viewed as in His mind and thoughts, it must be viewed also in the result produced under the responsibility of man. Israel were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink; evidently referring to baptism and the Lord's supper, the outward ordinances by which Christian association, the assembly, is distinctively maintained. But, with many of them, God was not well pleased; they were not Israel, though of Israel, as the apostle expresses it. We must examine this character of the assembly too—that is, the assembly as it is formed on earth under the responsibility and by the activity of man. And here we return to the image of the house and building, even in the writings of Paul. The members of the body are members of Christ, and livingly secured in Him. Indeed, even in the other point of view, that is, looked at as the house as established of God, the assembly cannot fail; only, as Israel did, it will give place, on the earth, to another order of things. We have already seen, that Christ declared, He would build His assembly, and the gates of hades should not prevail against it. Nor will they. When the due time is come, what He has wrought will be transferred to heavenly habitations, and be the house and city of God there, as the remnant of Israel were-transferred to the assembly, and the apostate body, who had made profession to be

Christians, cut off, just as the body of Israel were cut off: only that with the assembly, the Holy Ghost having been there, it is a final thing (heavenly, or entire and final excision and judgment), while Israel is reserved for future dealings of grace.

This house we will now consider. The Lord speaks of His own building, and Peter of the stones coming to Jesus, and as living stones being built up a spiritual house. In both we get the real work of grace and of Christ, without allusion to any human failure and dispensation^ dealings, save the fact that the assembly has taken the place of Israel on the earth. It is viewed in its natural normal state; and so it is as to discipline in Matthew 18, where the without and the within, the heathen position, is referred to the assembly, not any longer to Israel— if he neglect to hear the assembly, he shall be to thee as a heathen man and a publican. But Paul takes us higher, and hence forces us to distinguish, and in a certain sense to descend lower. He has seen, not merely an assembly formed by Christ on earth, to which souls were adjoined and built up as a house (and holy priesthood), here on earth, which is the view of Matthew 16 and Peter, but Christ in heaven and the saints one with Him, members of His body, and a vast ingathering here below. Of these he is to tell us, as minister of the assembly, on one side, the wondrous privileges in every respect, and, on the other side, its actual earthly history as in the hands of men. Hence, in building, man is introduced in the work; he does not speak of Christ’s building. It is the actual fact before him in blessing and in responsibility of which he will teach us— facts which abide in the widespread scene of Gentile profession to this day.

Ephesians I may first draw our attention. The individual saints are the first and primary object: what they are in relationship with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, the purpose of God being revealed, what they are as sealed by the Holy Ghost, and heirs of the inheritance to come. The power that sets them in their place with God has been exemplified in the exaltation of Christ. This introduces a further point, the counsels of God in their union with Him. Christ, thus exalted, God has given to be Head over all things, but to the assembly which is His body. We get thus, in the second place, the union of the assembly with Christ, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. It will be remarked here, that the assembly is viewed in its normal condition with the divine eye. The doctrine in hand is the exercise of the same power in a believer's quickening, as was exercised in Christ, when raised and set at the right hand of God; a power by which He shews they were quickened together with Him, raised up together (Jew or Gentile), and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him—created again in Christ Jesus; not only so, but what more directly and immediately shews it.

It is the assembly, seen as the individuals previously, as they are in the thoughts and counsels of God in full future result. The individuals are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before God in love, and predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. Hence, we (believers), it is said, where present time is referred to, have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; and the saints (Gentiles) are, after they believed, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, for and until the redemption of the purchased possession. So as regards

the assembly, God, who has exalted Christ, has given Him to be Head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. Now this, though faith seizes it now, is the full counsel of God as to it, when the whole body complete shall be united to the Head in His then dominion over all things—the true Eve of the heavenly Adam; Lord, not only of this lower, but of the whole, creation. It is a citation of Psalm 8. It is not yet fulfilled. He is now sitting at the right hand of God, till His enemies be made His footstool; and, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, citing the same Psalm, we see not yet all things put under Him. We see Him crowned with glory and honour. Meanwhile He is gathering the Church; and those who are sealed with the Holy Ghost, brought into the unity of the body, appropriate, justly, all the privileges that belong to union with Christ, which is effectuated; though the outward results are not yet accomplished, and Christ has not yet received in fact this dominion as man over all things, while all things are His of the Father. They know they are reconciled, but that the purpose of God to reconcile all things in heaven and earth is not yet accomplished. As regards the passage, then, which occupies us, it presents to us the full result of the counsels of God on this point, when Christ shall exercise His universal dominion as man, and the whole assembly be complete; and hence looks at it as in the mind of God, not in its administration on the earth in the hand of man.

Allow me to present a general truth as to God’s ways; not a new one, I dare say, to many of my readers, but important to notice here. That all the glories which are to meet in Christ—that is, glories which He is to take as man, not the essential glory of His Person—and all

connected with them in us, have been first tried in the hands of the first Adam, and his failure proved. Adam, as man, failed: the last Adam is true Head over all things. God is glorified in Him victorious over Satan in trial, as the first succumbed. Man in Israel is tried by the law given as a proving rule of life; hereafter the law will be written in their hearts, and the statutes of God kept by them. Priesthood was set up in man, and failed: Christ will present all saved to the end by His. Royalty in David's son failed, and the kingdom was broken up. It will be set up, never to fail, in Christ. Sovereign power in rule over the Gentiles and the world failed in Nebuchadnezzar, who set idolatry up for unity of religion's sake, and consequently persecuted God's saints. It will be set up in Christ in perfect-ness, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust. The assembly has been set up in its responsibility, that God might be glorified in it, and a glorious Christ fully known. It has failed in this; but when Christ comes, He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. True redemption is accomplished; and we know the whole counsels of God founded on them, as they never were known before, because the Lord Jesus has come and laid that blessed foundation. But it is not the less true that the assembly has been set to glorify God and the Lord Jesus by the present power of the Holy Ghost, and that it has failed in its responsible place here below, and has taken a place in flesh, out of which it has been called; but the sure counsels of God will be accomplished in the assembly united to Christ in glory.

It is in this last way the assembly is viewed in Ephesians i, as is the case in respect of the subjects of the whole chapter, though that which the true heirs and members

of Christ possess meanwhile is doubtless stated, but only in view of this ultimate purpose of God, and not what refers to the sphere of their earthly responsibility: of that there is nothing in the chapter at all. The thoughts, purpose, and counsels of God are its subject. The beginning of chapter 2 shews that by which those once dead in trespasses and sins are brought into the blessed place which these counsels have bestowed on us. From verse 11 of chapter 2, though still addressing saints, he speaks of their actual condition and position in fact down here on the earth—their present actual place. The Gentiles were made nigh, the middle wall of partition broken down in the cross, that Christ might reconcile Jews and Gentiles in one body to God; then the message of peace sent to both, so that we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. They are fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, Christ being the corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom they also were builded together for a dwelling-place of God through the Spirit. Now doubtless the thought here presented is the normal state of the assembly upon the earth: scripture would thus, speaking of it in principle, so describe it (it could not do otherwise); but we are here on quite other ground than in the first. We have not the purpose and counsel of God, but facts wrought and a system established upon the earth, in which men have their part, such as they are here below. Those whom he addresses were builded together to be a dwelling-place of God on the earth. The temple had been such in another way. Now it is another, a Christian dwelling-place, which God has by the Spirit.

The more Ephesians 1 and 2 (to the end of verse 10), is examined, the more it will be seen that the view there taken on every point is God's counsel and God's work, and its blessed result in us: no trace of dependence on man, or connection with man's responsibility, is found. First, His purpose as to us individually in Christ; further, we are accepted in the Beloved, and we have redemption through His blood; then His will is made known to us; and in this place, for Christ's glory, we have an inheritance according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. This, with the revelation of that will, characterizes the whole passage. He prays for them that they may know it, and the power that brings into it. This is according to the power which wrought in Christ, raised Him from the dead, and set Him at the right hand of God. The same has wrought in us (before that dead in sins), and raised us up too, and set us sitting in heavenly places in Christ. Now it is evident, that all this is, as expressed at the end of the passage, a work of God, forming the real members of the body of Christ. We are God's workmanship, sealed, after believing, by the Holy Spirit of promise, earnest of the inheritance which belongs to us in Christ through grace.

Now our union with Christ, as His body, forms a definite part of this work, and, indeed, that in which the positive work and power of God operating in us, as in Christ, when it raised Him and set Him at His right hand. Thus the body is composed of the true members of Christ, united to Him by the power of God and the effectual presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, while He is sitting at the right hand of God; and they are sitting there in Him.

In verse n, as we have seen, the apostle begins with the dispensation of this mystery on earth. But some passages must be referred to before we enter on this. Were this all, the doctrine (current from Augustine downward) of an invisible Church would have to be admitted as the thought of God, and, consequently, no recognized body on earth, or the whole system of corruption introduced by Satan recognized as the body of Christ, and its outward administration accepted as the channels, and only legitimate channels, of grace, and all the privileges of the body itself admitted to belong to it. But this is not the case. We have still to consider the body as presented in i Corinthians, that is, in its outward manifestation on the earth in unity. Here we shall find the recognition of the power by which unity is formed on earth. The sign which constitutes the visible expression of that unity, and the distinct declaration that we may partake of the signs of Christian profession, or of unity and spiritual life, and yet be rejected. When he treats men as saints, he treats them as one body on the earth; but warns them, they may be outwardly incorporated into this in every way, and God reject them after all. Nor, indeed, would participation in outward power prove the contrary.

In chapter 12 we have the power of unity— “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” In chapter 10 we have the outward sign of it — “For we being many are one bread [loaf], and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf.” The baptism of the Holy Ghost forms the body in unity. The Lord’s supper is the external sign of it. It may be

remarked here, consequently, that the apostle addresses the sanctified in Christ Jesus—all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus, theirs and ours. Thus the unity here spoken of embraces the universal body of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, yet it recognizes the local assembly of Christians—saints by God's calling—as representing locally this unity.

"The church [assembly] of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints [that is, saints by calling]." They are distinctly addressed as having the testimony of Christ, and that confirmed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. They were waiting for Christ's coming, who would confirm them to the end, so that they should be blameless (chap. 1). So he treats them all through, though warning them (chap. 10) to see that it was real. At the end of chapter 5 this body of called saints are to put out the wicked person from among them, that they may be a new lump (in fact), as they are unleavened in their place and standing before God. There are those without, and those within; those within, judged; those without, in God's hands. The one assembly of the place, looked at as unseparated from the whole company of saints, acts as the body of Christ. In chapter 12, after clearly speaking of the whole body, he says, "Now ye arc the body of Christ, and members in particular." They arc placed corporately in this position, while all in Christ are included in it. There is no body but one, that of Christ; a local assembly acts as such, and can exclude none of His members.4 The verse which follows clearly shews that the whole assembly is in view, as apostles and all gifts are placed in it. God hath set them in the assembly, first apostles, then prophets, etc. Apostles and prophets are clearly not in any particular

assembly, as such; locally, at any given moment, they may be. Paul was acting as a member of the assembly at Corinth, yet not apart from his position at that time.

Further, it is proof that it is the assembly on earth. Healings are not in heaven, nor the exercise of gifts either. That of which they are members, as exercising their gifts, viewed in the true light of their place according to the thought of God, is the body of Christ; that in which they are placed is the assembly, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints.

Further, the apostle supposes the possibility of a person possessing tongues, prophecy, miracles, and being still nothing. He does not say, such are members of the body. We have thus (Eph. 1) the body according to the counsel and work of God; and (i Cor.) the body, as formed in this world by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and publicly manifested in its unity in partaking of the Lord's supper. In the first, Christ is Head to the assembly, which is His body; in the second, the various members of the body are wrought in by the Holy Ghost to perform their various functions, and God is said to have set them in the assembly. That is, the. assembly is called the body, in Ephesians i, in the full result of God's counsels; and the members of the body, as seen on earth, are set in the assembly, in 1 Corinthians. In the perfection of both, the assembly is said to be Christ's body. On earth, in God's mind, they are practically identified, but one is not said to be the other. But those addressed are the sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, and always viewed as such.

Other passages shew that false brethren could creep in among the rest, and apostatize from among the rest; but

this, though there are warnings and hints which lead to the possibility of it, is not contemplated here. We have nothing to do here with sowing tares among the wheat. It is the kingdom which is there spoken of, and in the field—the world. In Romans 12 we have the same general idea as in 1 Corinthians. All are assumed to be true saints; the members are looked at, not in union with the Head, but in their mutual relationship and individual service. “We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” It is not necessary more particularly to refer to that passage. In Ephesians, the true saints, quickened with Christ, are the body of Christ, Head over all things; in i Corinthians, “so also is Christ,” seen on earth in us; in Romans, “we are one body in Christ.”

I now turn to the second aspect in which it is viewed in the Ephesians. In a dispensational way, Christ builds an assembly, secure in result from the prevailing of Satan’s power. In the counsel of God, the saints raised with Christ by divine power form His body. This body is formed and manifested on the earth by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the apostle who has given God’s counsel and work, as to it and its outward formative power, will also give it to us in its actually ordered condition, and what it will become in the hands of man as existing here below. Having taken the general fact which existed in the dispensations of God, he is given of God to reveal it as it stands in the counsel of God, and as formed by His workmanship, and what it becomes in the hands of man. And here he enters upon the domain of facts, not views—facts, in the first instance, happy and pure enough, answering to God’s mind; still facts taking place in the sphere of man and his condition and state

here below, though God may be working in and through it, and in result securing the accomplishment of His own counsel. But we are in the sphere of facts and circumstances, not of the counsel and thought of God; nor (however, at first, the work may answer by grace, by His working in and by man) to His mind is it simply and absolutely His work. Hence, though in general the subject be the same, in general what is spoken of is not called the assembly any more than the body.

Such a way of treating leaves room for the work being by grace most blessed, and much according to God's mind; but also, man being the workman, for awful departure from it too. Still we shall see, in most material respects, God has a place in it, but another and a distinct one; we shall find no members of a body, but the sphere of work is God's in the world, and His presence is found to be there in what is built up. The apostle, in Ephesians 2, states the facts. Thus, the Gentile believers at Ephesus had, once afar off, been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, for Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition, abolishing in His flesh ordinances, to make of twain (Jews and Gentiles) one new man, and reconcile both in one body by the cross, and having slain the enmity, preached peace to the Gentiles afar off, and to the Jews nigh. Through Him by one Spirit Jew and Gentile (believers) had access to the Father. All this brings out the great principles on which the work was founded.

Verses 19 and 20 further describe this new position. In Christ all the building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Thus Jew and Gentile are brought together to be the temple or dwelling-place of God; they grow up to this. In this sense, it will be perfect

—a holy temple. But beside this, there is the present work which was going on. They were then builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. God dwelt there by the Holy Ghost. Now the thought of God, founded on the death of Christ, was to have a holy temple, in which He should dwell; and so He will. But there was a work going on now upon earth which corresponded to this. Jews and Gentiles were builded together to be God's habitation by the Spirit. That which is definitely presented here is the dwelling of God there in the Person of the Spirit. There is no head, no union, no body. What God has to say to it is, not to animate the members and unite them in one body to the Head and one another, but to dwell there.

No doubt the house, in the mind of God and in result, will be a holy house of true Christians; nor is there a doubt that at the first it was practically so, when the Spirit took up His abode in it. The apostle addresses them as saints: the body and the house were in fact the same. They were built on the foundation; but who had built them? Of this nothing is said. Although the present fact is assumed, that the building is in its normal state, yet we do not find the work of God perfecting His counsels, but a warning following, founded on the responsibility of man, of which we read nothing whatever in the first chapter and first ten verses of the second. "I beseech you," says the apostle, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called… endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." On this the triple unity spoken of in a former paper; one Spirit, body, and hope; one Lord, faith, and baptism; one God and Father of all, above all, through all, and in them all. When we turn to the actual

accomplishment of the work on earth presented to us in 1 Corinthians 3, it takes an aspect characterized wholly by man's responsibility, not to the exclusion of the truth that all the true work is of God, and man nothing; but that, in the work actually wrought on earth, man's working enters with all its consequences. Paul had laid the foundation as a wise master-builder. The true foundation was laid: none other could be; but every one was to take heed how he built thereon; he might build gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. The enduring of the work depended on the materials. It would be tested. The teaching brought in souls according to its own character; and the superstructure of the building, of that which was raised up on the foundation of Christ in the world, was according to the materials. Here we have the outward result in the world; yet God's building, as to its standing and position in the world, but man building it, and his responsibility in play, and the result according to the materials employed. It has been sought to justify the evil result of man's bad building; but of this there is not the smallest trace: the very man that had so built was himself saved only as through the fire, and all his labour lost. Here I need hardly say we have nothing of the body.

But the instruction of the word goes farther. God has allowed and ordered, since evil was to be, that the principles of that evil should work before the eyes of those that scrutinized it with divine sagacity were closed; and if the coldness of the saints towards Christ, and the working of the mystery of iniquity pressed upon the heart of Paul; and if the flowing in of iniquity under the garb of Christianity roused the glowing indignation of Jude and Peter; and if the departure of some to take

an antichristian position awakened the warning voice of John, they have afforded us a divinely-given inspired judgment, in the word, of all that did so. False brethren crept in unawares; wickedness came in; and those not really of the Christian commonwealth went out. But Paul —that wise master-builder, who above all had the ministry of the Church committed to him—would, above all, judge by the Spirit, the bearing of this work of the enemy, and give the needed warning and direction to the saints. And so he does. One passage in particular will attract our attention, because it refers directly to our subject, and gives explicit direction for the conduct of the saints in a state of things which has so ripened since he first, by the Spirit, spoke of it; 2 Timothy 2:17, 22. Heresy had come in, and the faith of some was overthrown. Here the apostle brings out distinctly the difference of the two aspects of God's people now on the earth, of which we have spoken. The sure foundation of God standeth. And these are the two devices of the seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His (this is the sure security of God's purpose); then man's responsibility—as naming the name of Christ, they should depart from iniquity. But this is not all. The actual condition of the house, the Lord's house as confided to men, not merely its nature, is looked at. "But," the apostle continues, "in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour." We are to expect vessels to dishonour in the house. The direction of the apostle is to purge oneself from these, and to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. The general result will be found in 2 Timothy 3, the form of godliness, but not

the power; and, 2 Thessalonians 2, the falling away which introduces the man of sin.

These various passages of scripture give us a pretty clear insight into the way in which the assembly is contemplated in scripture. We have, first, the body according to the purpose and work of God. Its members quickened with the Head, raised up and sitting in heavenly places in Him. This, in full result, will be the body of Him who is Head over all; the fulness thus of Him that filleth all in all. Next, we have the body manifested on the earth by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and outwardly expressed by union in partaking of the Lord's supper. Hence those doing this together are so far looked at as the body, all saints being however associated in thought. With this water-baptism has nothing to do. We are one body with an ascended Christ. Baptism never reaches ascension; it is confined, in its signification, to death and resurrection. Thirdly, we have the house in the thought and purpose of God, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets of the New Testament. It grows up a holy temple to the Lord. This embraces the whole assembly, and is not yet complete. But the union of Jews and Gentiles under the gospel in the assembly formed the habitation of God on earth through the Spirit. This is treated as a fact; but it is not said in Ephesians, what would become of it. It is—not a work of divine power, quickening individuals out of death, and then uniting to Christ by the Holy Ghost; but —new relationships formed by a divine work, which are entered into. The assembly takes the place of Israel as the dwelling-place and habitation of God. Now, doubtless, at first those who entered did so by the power of God. But it was a position on earth in which man was

responsible, not union with the Head in heaven. Fourthly, we have the building of this house in fact by the labours of man; Paul, the wise master-builder; and the danger of others not building with good materials. Fifthly, we have a great house with vessels to dishonour in it, from which the faithful have to purify themselves; along with this, perilous times, when professing Christians would have the form of godliness and deny the power of it, and were to be turned away from; and, lastly, the actual apostasy (the true saints being caught up to heaven), and so the revelation of the man of sin, judgment closing all.

Two passages should be referred to here, 1 Timothy 3:15, and Hebrews 3:6. The latter passage refers to the care of Christ over His house, and looks on to the house being owned in its true sense, and according to the divine purpose hereafter. God would have a house, a dwelling-place, and, though the heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain Him, yet dwell with men. This dwelling of God with man reposes on redemption, by which they are made His own in a divine right, and unalterable title, not merely by creation. He did not dwell with Adam, or with Abraham; but, when Israel was redeemed out of Egypt and become His people, He dwells there— redeemed them in order to dwell there. See last two verses of Exodus 29 (compare chap. 15). When the house was empty, swept, and garnished, the Blessed One came and could say of His body “this temple.” Then the Lord formed the assembly for a dwelling-place; nor does this blessed truth cease even now, any more than the other fruits of redemption. In the new heavens and the new earth, the tabernacle of God (the assembly) will be with men. Meanwhile it was

formed on earth, a habitation of God, through the Spirit. In Hebrews 3, the apostle, as in all the epistles, was warning the Jewish professors against turning back and giving up the beginning of their confidence. If they did, they would form no part of Christ's house, over which He Himself was. He had indeed built all things as God, but, in a closer relationship, He had His own house; and of this, as a divine building, those who abandoned Him of course formed no part. I Timothy 3 views it in a somewhat different light. The point on the apostle's mind is not Christ over His own house, but the servant's responsibility in God's house. The assembly of the living God is that house. There is the place where the truth is professed, and its profession maintained in the world and nowhere else. If anything calling itself the assembly of God loses the profession of fundamental truth, it ceases to be an assembly of God. On the other hand, the servant of the Lord has to learn, when the truth is professed, how to behave himself as in the assembly of God (that is, the house of the living God). This is its character, and our responsibilities are according to this character.

What has been said will, I apprehend, by drawing his attention to the passages, sufficiently introduce my reader into the thoughts of scripture on this subject. Many most important consequences may be drawn; but this, as yet, I reserve. We have the general idea of the assembly of God upon the earth. This assembly, founded consequent on the exaltation of Christ on high, has a double aspect, considered in its normal state. It is the body of Christ, looking at it in its union with Christ on high; the house of God, if we consider it as the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost sent down consequent on

Christ's exaltation. In these characters the Epistle to the Ephesians presents it to us; in either case it is first of all viewed as composed of true believers, and will in result be composed of such. In general the building of the assembly, viewed as going on to its ultimate result, is Christ's work founded on the power of His resurrection; and Satan's power cannot prevail against it. It is never called Christ's assembly but here (Matt. 16) (particular assemblies are, Romans 16:16), and is viewed as one built by Himself, and in result secured by His power. He considers it in its reality, without dwelling on its privileges, or what the outward temporary form of it remains in man's hands. The body of Christ is spoken of as being on earth, but always assumed to be composed of living members in whom the Holy Ghost works in power. Scripture does not say that a man may not have this power, without being a member of the body (for the scriptures, 1 Corinthians 13, Hebrews 6, and many passages analogous in the Gospels and even in the Old Testament, suppose that he may); but, in speaking of the body, the members are all supposed to be living saints. The house is first viewed according to its institution and result in blessing; but, at the same time, human building is spoken of, and in result on earth a great house, in which vessels to dishonour have their place, as well as vessels to honour; though we are called to purge ourselves from them.

I would refer the reader, in order to complete this review, to Ephesians 5; where the love of Christ towards the assembly, viewed as the object of divine counsels and the bride of Christ, with allusion to Eve's relationship with Adam, is unfolded: first, in its whole character and results He loved it, gave Himself for it

that He might cleanse it for Himself by the word, and present it to Himself (as God did Eve, when formed, to Adam), glorious and spotless: secondly, in His tender care over it, He nourishes and cherishes it as a man would his own flesh. In chapter 4 we find the gifts coming down from Christ as Head; these gifts being represented as the members themselves ministering, first, to the perfection of the individual members; and, then, with a view to the work of the ministry and the edifying the whole body by the supply of every part. I would recall the triple unity heretofore spoken of: the body, the Spirit, and the hope; the one Lordship of Christ to which faith and baptism correspond; then, one divine being, God and Father of us all, who is above all, and everywhere, and in us all. Wonderful privilege! There remains the question, What has historically become of the assembly thus formed? and what form did the thoughts connected with it take in the minds of Christian men? Of this in another paper, the Lord willing.

In essaying to accomplish the task which I had undertaken, of giving, in its main element at least, an historical view of the doctrines progressively held regarding the Church, the assembly of God, I was, I confess, hardly aware of the poverty of the resources to which I should be reduced when once I left scripture. As doctors, I had no great confidence in the Fathers; I had consulted them, at any rate, too much for that. But I thought that, on the subject of the Church, I should find (not surely what had the truth and depth of scripture, it would have been alike unjust and wrong, but), at any rate, an energy of thought and apprehension, which, if flowing in a channel traced out by human thought, and

occupied with an earthly establishment of divine things, would still rise above temporary questions and difficulties, and have an elevation not to be reached by views arising out of them; and, by which the actors of the moment sought to meet them. I judged that a corrupt and human state of things had been clothed, by a discoverable process, with titles and privileges which belonged to a divine creation. My faint recollections of Tertullian5 and still more of Cyprian,6 and in general of church history, coloured, perhaps, by habit and general opinion, led me to this; and to suppose that there existed at first a mere practical apprehension of the Church, as seen before them; and thereafter a gradual corruption, and larger use of now-collected scripture; a positive (soon an habitual, and, at last, a doctrinal) application of divine prerogatives to human failure, such as we see in full display in Romanism. But the Fathers are petty even in error. There is in general nothing to relieve the poverty of their local and occasional preoccupations; and when divine life had seized, as in St. Augustine, some deep and blessed truths, which could not mingle with corruption, and gave some enlargement of view even as to ecclesiastical subjects, practical corruption was now at such a height that the whole produced a confusion, which has, at least, the moral dignity of not passing over evil, or, still worse, not seeing it so as to maintain a hierarchical system which gives importance to self, or which habit has made respectable.

Still, the Fathers will give us their own history, which I will briefly follow, and in it the opinions of active men in their day.

The present system of Romanism must be sought elsewhere. It is simply, as regards our present subject,

the use made of general principles met with in these fathers, and forged passages added to their writings, to carry out, by political ability, a scheme which has connected the exclusive appropriation of the claims and privileges of Christianity with the most constant opposition to its truth, its spirit, and its practice; and made, what claims to be exclusively the Church of God, the seat of Satan's power. As to catholicity, it is well to remember that it is a simple fable. As, when the royalty of Israel became corrupt, the kingdom became divided; so, when the professing church became entirely corrupt, and the papal pretension became a definite matter of history, God took care that the Church ceased to be catholic, and the very term "Roman Catholic," for anyone who knows the use of words, carries falsehood on its face. The pretensions of the papacy revolted the Greek patriarch. What set up Rome destroyed catholicity. The most ancient churches and the imperial city became an antagonistic body to it. Roman pretensions, the political influence of Rome, were greater; its evil and unscriptural antagonism to, and supremacy over, civil power, which is ordained of God, marked it more distinctly as the seat and throne of wickedness; but Rome never was catholic. The act by which it was born, its dawn of supremacy, destroyed for ever catholicity. The providence of God has not allowed catholic corruption. At this moment the majority of professing Christians and most ancient churches are outside the so-called catholic (that is, universal) Church. No such thing exists as a catholic (that is, universal) Church. The claims of each portion of Christendom to be a church or assembly of God, must be tried, not by its own pretensions, but by scripture, and then they are

easily disposed of, unless corruption and Christianity are identical.

But I return to the history of the doctrine. The Fathers may be divided into three classes, Apostolic, Grecian, and Western. We may also distinguish the Alexandrian, though they write in Greek; but they hardly enter into the sphere of our enquiry, though one considered such comes under the class Apostolic, Barnabas, who, however, affords us no light on the subject of enquiry. He, with Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas, constitute, what are commonly called, the Apostolic Fathers; but, since the publication of the canon of Muratori, Origen's supposition that the latter was the Hermas mentioned by Paul is maintained by none; I shall speak of him, therefore, after Justin. Justin and Irenseus will give us those next succeeding the post-apostolic age. Tertullian, Cyprian, and, later, Jerome and St. Augustine, may furnish us the doctrine of the Latins; and Chrysostom, instar omnium, the views of the later Eastern churches; Origen and Clement of Alexandria, philosophical Christianity; Leo and Gregory the Great, Roman views of the matter.

As regards any spiritual or elevated view of the Church of God, as we see it portrayed in the Ephesians, or even the earthly manifestation or development of it in the power of the Holy Ghost, as in 1 Corinthians, it must not be looked for. The declaration, that salvation is not to be found out of the Church, and that if a man were not in the body, he could not be connected with the Head, and the application of this necessity to a large corrupt hierarchically governed body on earth, in order to condemn all who were not subject to it, and all who separated from it, through conscience or self-will—this

will be found, as schisms flowing from will, or a conscience tormented by the horrible corruption that characterized the Church, took place. But the thought of the presence of the Holy Ghost animating living members, or His unfolding the riches or fulness of blessing, flowing from living union, never crossed their minds.

Of the Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas, as I have remarked, furnishes us with no light. His object is to spiritualize Moses. All the ordinances of the law are mere figures; their taking even circumcision literally was all wrong. Clement does not help us much more. He refers to the Old Testament hierarchy as a motive for order in the Christian services; but does not apply the analogy to a Christian hierarchy. Still, we see how already the mind of the Church was sunk below the urgent taking, by contrast, these analogies out of earth, and raising the thoughts of saints up to heaven and heavenly things, which we find in the Hebrews, the object of which is to detach from all earthly Jewish hierarchism, and shew its fulfilment in Christ in heaven, to which the partakers of the heavenly calling belong. This is the more remarkable, as Clement was familiar with the Hebrews, to which he refers, and the present form of it in Greek was by some attributed to him.7 His epistle, the best of those of the apostolic fathers, serves to shew the sudden and utter declension from spiritual apprehensions which followed the departure of the apostle of the Gentiles. It helps us thus to understand the state of the Church, though it teaches nothing doctrinally about it. It is an amiable effort to make peace at Corinth, where they had turned off some of their elders. But a heavenly, spiritual, and elevating use of Jewish forms is unknown to it. He

brings us back to earth where the Hebrews had taken us to heaven, though he refers to Hebrews. I have dwelt thus much on this, because it is the true key to all that follows.

Ignatius next draws our attention; and some important elements of history are here afforded us to consider. And, first of all, what a proof of the propensity of the orthodox in these early days to commit pious frauds! What a mass of toil has been imposed on sagacious Ushers, very orthodox and much read Pearsons, and keen Dailies, to unravel what is genuine and is not genuine of the martyred bishop! We have universally acknowledged forgeries, longer interpolated editions, shorter stoutly defended ones, and then Syrian MSS adduced to prove that five more out of the eight, admitted by many to be genuine, are also forgeries, and that the greater part of the three genuine ones has been added by the forging hand. It is a poor foundation to build on. It is curious enough, and is to the credit of his sagacity, that Usher declared the letter to Polycarp, which is admitted to be genuine, to be spurious; the style was so very different from the others then supposed to be genuine. He saw the difference, and that both could not be from the same author; and, assuming the others to be genuine, rejected this. What the Syriac leaves of the others, as far as matter and style of thought go, does not militate against that to Polycarp. For myself, while not pretending to be learned in such matters, I do not doubt, in spite of Hefele and Jacobson, that Cureton has come to the right conclusion. The plea made, that what is found in the Syriac MSS was an abridgment made for the use of the monks of the convent for pious uses, seems to me without the

smallest foundation, as there are three distinct letters and not the substance of eight or of three either, and nothing monkish in them. They are parts of the three larger, not the substance of three made a pious treatise of. I take therefore the Syriac edition as genuine. Their local origin confirms this; but for my present purpose it is not very material. In Ignatius's letters, even in those as I believe not genuine, or in the interpolated portions of the genuine, the catholic Church is not the subject, nor catholic unity, but local unity in subjection to the bishop—unity with him. He is to be viewed as God, the presbyters as Christ, the deacons as the college of the apostles. I take the strong expressions of the whole eight in the form defended by many. The point insisted on is the union of one local flock with one local bishop, and in everything. He who leaves that is outside everything. Diocesan episcopacy does not appear in Ignatius; in truth, it was unknown in that age.

In the epistle of Smyrna, on the martyrdom of Polycarp, the holy catholic (universal) Church in every place is spoken of, the particular Church is spoken of as paroikia paroikoises, sojourning. The catholic Church which is in Smyrna (sec. 16). Christ is shepherd of the catholic (universal) Church in the whole world. Except the fact that the whole existing Church in the world is one universal one, there is little doctrinal to assist us in this epistle. It is received as genuine; how far it is to be considered free from interpolation must rest upon the general confidence which one has in these remains of antiquity, where the system of pious frauds and fabricated gospels and writings was so abundantly at work. I know of no suspicion cast upon it.

This is all the testimony of the apostolic fathers on the point. Polycarp to the Philippians affords no additional light. He was a connecting link in point of time between those who succeeded the apostle and the third generation of Christian writers.

First of these Justin presents himself, but he affords us little light on the doctrine of the Church; he views it as embracing men in one, in contrast with Judaism. He applies Psalm 45 to the Church (Dial, with T., 287 b), saying, that the word of God addresses her as a daughter, as one soul, one synagogue, one assembly. He quotes (Dial, with T., 261 a) Isaiah 53, according to the LXX, to a similar purpose. That all the apostles would be as one body, as is to be seen in the body with many members, all one, however, and are called and are one body, and adds, For, also, the people and assembly, many men in number, as being one thing, are called and named with one name. The “Expositio Fidei” goes farther and quotes Ephesians 2 and 2 Corinthians 6:16, speaking of the temple of Christ. But this is not of Justin. The Church in Justin is the external body or gathering on earth which he sees as one, as he does the apostles. This is the more striking, as he alludes clearly to 1 Corinthians, has it in his mind, but does not go further than the fact of one set of people on the earth called Christians.

In Hermas, in the treatise called “The Pastor,” we find largely developed views on the subject of the Church. I apprehend it is pretty generally agreed that he was brother to Pius II, a.d. 164. He is, it appears, quoted by Irenaeus. His writings were read in many churches, though not exactly as scripture; yet almost quoted as such by some writers, though not of weight on such a

point, as Origen, who says he considers him inspired. But the acceptance of “The Pastor” will shew whereabouts the primitive Church was. The modern professing church speaks of the earlier Christians being a guide to truth, inasmuch as they were nearer the apostolic source, because it believes as little in the need of the Holy Ghost’s power and of His working as the early Church did, or less. Paul had the power of the Spirit of God: he knew by it that after his decease grievous wolves would enter, yea, and that within the Church perverse men would arise. The incapacity of the early Church to discern is plain from the reading of these visions, etc., of Hermas, and the respect in which they were held. I have little doubt that they were well-intentioned, and that there was a personal desire of godliness in the writer’s soul. But they are ill-conditioned and unseemly fables, fostering the most disgraceful practices of commencing superstition and asceticism,8 and teaching doctrine heretical in itself, and unworthy of all the dignity of divine things. But we shall get historically a then accepted view of the Church by their means. Passing over the unseemly introduction, the Church is for him simply a building in the world. It begins by forgiveness, not repentance (Command. 3). After that repentance is allowed once. The name of the Son of God is necessary, but all depends on conduct afterwards (Sim. 9:13, 14), yet he allows.people to be saved who are rejected from the Church (Vis. 3:8). But this is contradicted (Sim. 9:14). He speaks of the Church’s becoming one body when purified, and the evil ones cast out. But there are one understanding, one opinion, one faith, and the same charity. The nations have believed and received the seal of the Son of God (baptism), they have all been made partakers of the

same understanding and knowledge; and their faith and charity have been the same. And they have carried the spirits of certain virgins of whom he speaks, that is, of different graces, together with His name. After they agreed thus in one mind, there began to be one body of them all; however, some of them polluted themselves, and were cast off from the kind of the righteous, and again returned to their former state and became worse than they were before. Angels build the Church.

I do not enter into details of green rods becoming dry, or splitting, or partly dry, getting green again; or, of rich men being round stones who must be squared and lose all their riches to be able to be put into the house, and the casting out of stones from the building, when viewed by the Lord— save to remark that the whole is a matter of outward profession, of present moral state, and of this earth: a heavenly body, or a head in heaven, or the Holy Ghost, who unites us to Him and His work, is wholly unknown to him. His doctrine is as follows. The master of a vineyard confides a vineyard to a servant, who is to stake it, and he will thereupon be set free. But he does more, and weeds it. On the master's returning to visit it, he is very content, and takes counsel with his son and with the angels how he should reward him, and, as the chosen body into which the Holy Spirit which was created first of all served that Spirit, nor ever defiled it, it was made heir with the son. He explains the son to be the Holy Spirit, and the servant to be the Son of God. Yet he explains elsewhere the rock higher than the mountain on which the house (the Church) was built by the angels to be most ancient, and yet a new door which he had become in time.

I apprehend, though not openly stated, that his doctrine as to Christ was the common patristic one of his age, that Christ though eternal, as the word-mind in God, only became a Person (prophorikos) when God was about to create the world.

Some have sought to prove him orthodox. Bad as his doctrine is, I hardly feel it needful to prove such poor and unscriptural nonsense unorthodox.

What is material to us is to see that the Church is for him a mere outward visible thing, built on the earth, into which men are brought, and often afterwards cast out, becoming worse than before. Christ is a foundation on the earth of this outward thing, He is no living head in heaven; this was wholly lost. It was not unnatural that, scriptural spirituality not being there, that wonderful thing—the new thing in the earth produced independently of Jew and Gentile, national difference, and all earthly power—should occupy and possess the mind. They saw the house, viewing it in its origin as built of God; but made no difference between the divine principle of its constitution, God's work to establish that, and man's actual work in it (on which the apostle is so distinct), seeing only the latter, confounding the human with the divine, and, in the case of Hernias, attributing it to angels.

Irenæus sees the Church, in contrast with heretics, as an external thing in this world. That in which the apostles were set, the Church at Jerusalem, is that from which all churches draw their origin (3:12, 5). The Spirit dwells in it: the communication of Christ is in it (3:24, 1). They who do not receive Him, nor are nourished by the Church, do not receive that brightest fountain

flowing from Christ. The Spirit of God and every grace are in the Church; but it is always the external body contrasted with heretics, particularly the Valentinians. In one place he speaks of Christ as caput ecclesiæ, but only as the Father is caput Christi; shewing he has no sense of the union of the body with Him.

In pleading against the heretics, he uses the faith of the sees which the apostle had founded, as a proof of the truth they had taught; the particular churches are witnesses in his point of view. It is on this occasion that he gives the list of bishops at Rome.9 The fullest statement, perhaps, on the subject of the Church, is in 3:25, 1, where he says, the Church has with constancy kept the faith it had received; that this office was committed to it, that all recipient members may be vivified (the Latin is excessively obscure: ad inspirationem plasmationi, ad hoc ut omnia membra vivifiantur); and that the communication of Christ (that is, the Spirit) was there.10 He refers then to gifts (1 Cor. 12); adding, for where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church; and the Spirit is truth. In the Church are the gifts, apostles, prophets, doctors, and the whole remaining operation of the Spirit, of which none are partakers who do not run to the Church, but deprive themselves of life. He says, the Spirit is as an admirable deposit in a vase, always youthful, and making youthful the vase in which it is; and then goes on to speak of the life-giving office committed to it. But all this shews entire confusion on the subject which occupies us. The Spirit is in a vase, of which it maintains the youth: that is intelligible, if true; but he adds, that the recipient members may be vivified. Are they, then, members before they are vivified? And if

he mean the maintenance of life, something gives it previously, not the Church, and the argument against the heretic fails. The fact is, the members have life, not the Church; but this would not do for his argument. The dwelling in a vase is all well, because the vase has not life, and his speaking of its making it youthful is a delusion. That the presence of the Spirit preserves it from decay is a question of which the affirmative cannot be assumed, save through the confusion of the living body and the dwelling-place. In man the breath of life is the life of the whole body and of all the members; and the Spirit may, in a vague way, be so looked at as corporately animating the whole body, when viewed as such in union with Christ; but then it is not that it may give them life, as the heretics cannot, because then they (the so-called members) are looked at as dead, that is, as no part of the body. Hence the figure is changed, and even so is faulty; they are not nourished as by the mother's breast unto life. Where did they get it to be nourished? and is the Church a thing apart from the members who compose it? "Where the Spirit is, the Church is," is not strictly true; for He is in individuals; but for Irenaeus's purpose it may be so taken; and where the Church is, the Spirit is. But the Church, as the body, does not communicate life; it has life, speaking in figure; for, in truth, life is in individuals. Further, the dwelling-place and the body being confounded together, no thought of the Head is in Irenaeus's mind; but the indwelling of the Spirit in the house is life. Indeed, the body, save by comparison with man's creation, is not spoken of; but the external thing taken to have the power of life in it, in virtue of the Spirit's dwelling there, in contrast with heretics. There is the conscious blessing of living faith; but by confusion of all scriptural thought

of life, house, and body, or rather the neglect of this last, the ground is laid for the worst pretensions of Romish apostasy.

That the Holy Ghost keeps young the vessel in which it dwells is never thought of in scripture; indeed, the contrary is taught. That it maintains eternal life in the saints, members of the body in union with Christ, is quite true. But we see that the Church in contrast at first with heathen, and now with heretics—that is, the earthly corporation, is absorbing, in the mind of doctors, the privileges of the body, while the scriptural idea of the body and union with the Head is lost; and as the external thing was already corrupt, and soon became more so, the way was laid for appropriating the privileges to the extreme of corruption. But, as I have said of all, Irenaeus does not get beyond a reference to present circumstances and difficulties; uses what doctrine he has as to the Church to meet them; and does not enter into it for its own fulness and blessing. Hence the thought of the Head is lost. That must have brought truer thoughts and ideas; but when the thought of the Head was lost, the Church had no longer the definite idea attached to it of the body of Christ. The prerogatives and privileges belonged then infallibly to the corrupt external things, and especially for him who had faith in the grant of them; and that Irenaeus, I do not doubt a moment, had. But let the reader note, that the heavenly Head of a living body does not in any way enter into the thoughts of Irenaeus; nor our being in Him, and He in us. Could the pope, for example, be that? Even in speaking of Adam, he makes Adam the Church; and the breath breathed into him is what animates. No Eve is here, no Adam to represent Christ. All these

truths are lost. There is only the Holy Ghost in the external thing, and that supposed to communicate life—as to which indeed, also, all is confusion.

Clement of Alexandria treats little of such subjects: he only tells us, as respecting temples built with hands, that the Church is the congregation of the elect.11 But the elect, with him, means nothing here. In a passage in the “Stromata” (7, p. 885), where he is describing the Gnostic, or Christian according to knowledge, he says, he does not indulge his flesh. The rest are like the flesh of the holy body; for the Church is allegorically the body of Christ—a spiritual and holy choir, of which those who are called only by name, but do not live according to knowledge (ek logou), are the flesh; but this spiritual body, which is the holy Church, ought not to consist with fornication … but fornication against the Church is living like Gentiles in the Church. We see thus the corruption come in, and how theoretical mysticism gets out of it.

In replying to heretics (p. 899), he says, that the most ancient and true Church is the one, the others recent and adulterers from it; that God approves what is only the true catholic Church, founded on the two Testaments, or rather the one in divers times, in which God by His will gathers by one Lord those who are already ordained to it (tetagmenous), whom God has predestinated, having known that they would be righteous before the foundation of the world. Before, his conscience was working; here, he is theorizing against heretics.

The baptized are washed, illuminated, perfect, etc.; and so stated in a passage which shews, as do his writings,

very little respect for, or knowledge of, the Person of Christ. To say the truth, if converted at all, philosophy had far more influence over him than Christianity. In poor, wild, persecuted, but sincere Origen, we see confusion and unbridled imagination indeed; but, in spite of all, marks of genuine living faith. But Origen furnishes us with little which throws direct light on the progress of church opinion, though he may have largely influenced it. He studied scripture, and was not occupied in the government of the Church; indeed, his own diocesan would not ordain him, but drove him away. In interpreting scripture he gives on these points pretty much the contents of the text itself as it is: only the spouse in the Canticles is the Church; the tabernacle represents everything in detail; the ark is the Church; Noah was in the highest story—that is, Jesus, the true rest—at the top; ill-conditioned Christians, like the unclean beasts, at the bottom.

His spiritualizations are elaborate; and, with the simplicity, have the foolishness, of a child. He was a great stickler for free-will. On the other hand, in replying to Celsus, to prove the union of the word with man, he takes up the Church as Christ's body—He animating and giving motion to what was otherwise lifeless and inert, and each member only moving as set in movement by Him, as the life and soul of it as a whole. He calls it also the bride and the body of Christ. He applies even the temple of His body, in John, to the Church; but here he states, that it will be one when it is brought to perfection in resurrection; till then, it is, like the scattered dry bones in Ezekiel, comparatively dry, scattered in persecutions. Here also he calls it the body; and, after Peter, the house built of living stones; and

then goes on to apply the numbers of overseers, builders, etc., of Solomon's temple, and dates connected with it, to mystical senses. In a word, we find a large consideration of scripture by one well versed in it, and hence far more divine thoughts flowing from it; but with this an unbridled imagination, and very little founding in, or even acquaintance with, fundamental truth.

These two last, with Barnabas of an earlier date, are the Alexandrian or intellectual school. We may now turn to more practical Latins, occupied with things—business, not ideas.

Tertullian and Cyprian first present themselves, and bring us back to the history of the dogma. The first, however, helps us but little as to the notion of the Church (all, as I have said, being occupied with their particular difficulties and the evils of the day). He gives no view of the Church. He once says, it is the house of God. But his great and incessantly repeated topic is the churches, not the Church; though he once says, they are one church. He dwells on the succession from the apostles, or apostolic men, securing the truth, asserting they are one in doctrine (he speaks of conferences in Greece maintaining this). When he speaks of passages in Ephesians which relate to the Church, it is only against Marcion; and uses them to shew the Creator was the supreme God, and that flesh was not despised. Some judge this treatise was after he left the body called the catholic Church in that day; as was probably another remarkable statement of his, that the authority of the Church alone had made the distinction between laymen and ordained persons; that all Christians are priests; and wherever two or three are gathered, even laymen, there is a church—they can celebrate the Lord's supper,

and baptize. In sum, his teaching is the value of apostolic churches, as securing sound doctrine: it was merely a Roman legal reasoning against heretics.

Cyprian insists much on the unity of the Church; but it is in opposition to the schism of Novatus and Novatian. Hitherto unity had been assailed by heretics, and the defenders of catholicity had carefully denied their being of the Church, as they had not the faith which could be proved to be that of the apostles. A new thing now arose in the professing Church. Its corruption was so great (as, indeed, Cyprian himself testifies), that rigid discipline was insisted upon; and in default of it, as they judged it was called for, persons admitted to be orthodox separated from it, and the authority of the bishop was called in question. Hence Cyprian's idea of unity is simply local unity with the bishops; and of all bishops as being together one bishop, one episcopacy, he quotes the promise to Peter (Matt. 16:18). Bishops have all like honour and power; yet Christ begins from one, that the Church may be shewn to be one. The episcopate is one, of which a part is held by individuals as a part of the whole. The Church also is one, which grows out into a multitude. He compares it to light and the sun, to a tree and boughs; if one of them be broken off, it is lost or dies. Such is the Church of the Lord exclusively. Her light, her branches, extend far; but there is unity of light and of body. There is one Head, one origin, one body, one mother. ("De Unitate Ecclesiae," 106, seqq.) We are born of her, nourished by her milk, animated by her spirit; the spouse of Christ cannot be corrupted, she is incorrupt and chaste. He cannot have the rewards of Christ, who leaves the Church of Christ; he is a stranger, profane, an enemy. He cannot have God for his Father,

who has not the Church for his mother. There is a great deal more to the same effect. He compares it to Noah's ark, Christ's vest, Rahab's house, the house where the paschal lamb was eaten. God makes men of one mind in a house. In God's house, the Church of Christ, men live in unanimity (see "Epistle to the Lapsed," 33:66). He again refers to Peter; thence, through the course and times and successions, the ordination of bishops and the principle of the Church has had its regular course; so that the Church should be founded on bishops (Ep. 49:93, 95). Cornelius, bishop of Rome, says, in the correspondence, there is one bishop in the Church; the catholic Church is shewn to be one, and cannot be split and divided. The tares are in the Church; we are not to leave, but to seek to be wheat; and he quotes 2 Timothy 2:20, vessels to dishonour, but says nothing of purging ourselves from them. The Lord alone, he says, can break the earthen ones. (On the confessor's return, Cyprian, Ep. 54:99, 100.) They cannot be with Christ, who are not with His spouse and in the Church, referring to Ephesians 5:31. Still all refers to Novatus, who had separated because of loose discipline, as he judged, with the lapsed (96).

As the one Church is divided by Christ in the whole world into many members, so one episcopate is spread abroad by the concordant number of many bishops. Ep. 112 refers to the exhortation in Ephesians 4. The tares, he says, the apostles were not allowed of the Lord to discover; they pretend to separate (2 Tim. 2:20). They pretend to despise and throw away these wooden and earthen vessels, whereas it is only in the day of the Lord they will be burnt or broken with a rod of iron (168). The Church does not withdraw from Christ; and for Cyprian

the Church is the people united to the priest, and the flock adhering to its pastor, even if the multitude go away— when, says he, thou oughtest to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any are not with the bishop, they are not with the Church; since the Church, which is catholic, is one, not split or divided, but connected and joined by the glue of priests mutually adhering to one another. All this, it will be seen, is directed against Novatus at home, and Felicissimus who headed a party against him, and Novatian at Rome. He says, the Church cannot be corrupted; yet he declares, that, morally, bishops and all, it was thoroughly heathenish and worldly; so that the persecution of Decius was only a most gentle dealing of God with it: it cannot be corrupted, but it was full of tares and vessels to dishonour.

I have the rather gone into Cyprian's statements, because he is known as a great writer on the unity of the Church; and his system, for the short time of his own activity, characterized the Church at large pretty sensibly; but it died with the energy which created it. He added the idea of a united diocesan episcopacy, forming a single episcopate in many members, to Ignatius's idea of the unity of the flock to a local president. Though he uses the scriptures, the idea they give of living members united to a Head in heaven does not seem to cross his mind as a truth in itself. But he attaches the importance and claims of that of which the apostle speaks to a body which, he admits, is full of the tares of Satan's sowing, and of vessels to dishonour. But it is to be left so. That is, we have now in view outward unity, that is, really (for the clerical authority of priests who stick together like

glue), the attaching the credit of Christ's spouse and body to a vast mass of admitted corruption and evil.

Augustine will give us another phase. Yet his views of personal religion and election involve him in the greatest contradiction and difficulty. They are, however, important; for if Cyprian has formed hierarchical views short of Romanism, Augustine has in a great measure been the source of reformed doctrines, save in the point of justification by faith, on which certainly the Reformation was somewhat clearer. But his difficulties, if they were not to be wept over for the sake of the Church, would really amuse from the way he is perplexed. Like all the rest, though searching scripture for himself as a godly man, he is occupied in his reasonings with the circumstances of the moment. In his case it was the Donatists. A quarrel having arisen in Africa as to the episcopacy of Donatus's predecessor, a very large party indeed was formed with a very considerable part of the episcopacy. It was alleged, that Cecilianus was ordained by one who had been unfaithful in Diocletian's persecution, having given up the sacred books—a traditor. They chose Majorinus, to whom succeeded Donatus. The others complained of a fanatical love of martyrdom. The Donatists appealed to Constantine; and, after two appeals from the first sentence, they were condemned and violently persecuted, which they returned by violence and, as is alleged, by assassination; so bright is the history of the primitive Church! But another circumstance must be mentioned here. Cyprian and most of the Eastern bishops had re-baptized those baptized by heretics. Rome, and those under its influence, had opposed this. Cyprian and the East, however, held good; but, in the

course of time, the Roman opinion prevailed in the West, and it was orthodox to receive heretical baptism. In the East it was generally rejected for a long while after this.

I refer to this, because it was a great source of Augustine's perplexity; he received the Western view. But then he had to acknowledge, that by Donatist baptism those who were not in the catholic Church received forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost. This, of course, was a terrible difficulty. I will now give his statements, in which the conflict of his views will easily appear. They gave formal rise to the thought of an invisible Church. He is very fond of insisting on one text, and citing it repeatedly everywhere; thus Ephesians 5, as to the unity of the body and Head, spouse and Husband.

Because, therefore, a whole Christ is his head and body; therefore, in all the Psalms let us so hear the words of the head, that we may hear the words of the body (Ps. 57:754, C, D). Hence, all nations in the Church are like the day of Pentecost. It is always with him unus homo, caput et corpus, one man, head and body (Ps. 18:122, C). Hence, when statements in the Psalms do not suit Christ, as God, or even as man, he says, I dare to say Christ speaks, but Christ speaks because Christ is in the members of Christ (Ps. 30:211, A).

He says (vol. 9, Ed. Ben. 587, B) no one ever arrived to salvation itself and eternal life, unless he who has the Head, Christ; but no one can have the Head, Christ, save he who is in His body, which is the Church. Then he does not reject the Donatists for all their deeds: these would be straw, but not hurt the wheat, if they held the Church fast. Nor does he accept the Church for any good, or

opinions of men. What is done right in the catholic [Church] is therefore to be approved, because it is done in the catholic [Church]. We acknowledge, he says, the Church, as the head, in the holy canonical scriptures. He insists on searching the scriptures. They speak of a universal Church. This cannot be the Donatists of Africa. He then seeks to justify persecution, when rightly used. But here, as I have intimated, he was greatly puzzled, because it had been decided that the baptism of heretics was valid. Hence, his adversaries alleged that the baptism of Donatists was accepted, and that, consequently, he must admit that they conferred the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost, as was believed to be the case in baptism, and that their admission into the Church of those baptized by them was owned; that is, the Donatists were the Church too. He replies, many who are publicly outside are better than many, and good catholics. But God also knows His predestinate ones—knows what they will be. But we, who judge from present things, say, His dove does not own them, and the Lord will say, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. I answer, he says again, Do the avaricious or other wicked persons forgive sins? If you regard the sacrament, yes; if himself, no. We own what is of Christ, but it does not profit; but when the evil is corrected, then it will. One baptized in heresy does not become the temple of God, nor is a baptized avaricious man the temple of God either, unless he leaves the evil. (This puts one in mind of the Assembly's Catechism.) Still, he says (9:168, B. C.) they are generated to God, but by that which they (the Donatists) have in common with the catholic Church; separated from the bond of charity and peace, but found in one baptism. And not only they who are in open separation do not belong to

her, but those who are mixed up with her unity are separated by a very bad fife. He takes the case of Simon Magus, and says, he who has no charity (cui defuit) is born in vain, and, perhaps, it were expedient for him not to have been born (!). He is greatiy puzzled, also, by "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and that, as he quotes it, then follows "baptize all nations in the name," etc.; "and whose sins ye remit," etc. He answers by saying, "He who hates his brother abides in death," but schismatics do. And what is being re-born in baptism but being renewed from one's old state? yet he whose old sins are not put away is not so; and if not re-born has not put on Christ; and if he has not put on Christ, he is not to be considered baptized in Christ. But it was replied, as many as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. He acknowledged one baptized in Christ has put on Christ. It was then naturally alleged that he owned their baptism; therefore, that they were regenerate; therefore, their sins put away. He answers them only by Simon Magus; forgiven, yet having no part or lot in the matter. Then (271, B, C. and foil.), in the ineffable prescience of God, many who seem outside are within, and many who seem within are outside. Of all those, he says, who, as I may so say, are intrinsically and secretly within consists that garden enclosed, the fountain sealed, etc.; but he supposes them by heretics or others baptized into the ark (218, B.). The water of the Church is faithful, saving, and holy, to those using it well, but out of the Church no man can. It cannot be corrupted; so the Church is incorrupt, chaste, pure, and therefore avaricious men, etc., do not belong to it, of whom Cyprian himself testifies, there are not only without but within (466, A). If thou groaning seest such crowds (of wicked) around your altars, what shall we say? that they

are anointed with holy oil; and, as the apostle clearly establishes with clear truth, they will not possess the kingdom of God. Discern, therefore, the holy visible sacrament, which can be in good and evil—for those, for reward; for these, for judgment— from the invisible unction of charity, which belongs only to the good. But the true Church (578, A) is not covered or hidden, nor can it be (466, B); hence Donatists are not it. The Lord has compared the Church to a net. The bad fishes are not seen under the waves by the fishers, but on the floor, judgment, are manifested evil ones. So the separation of the fishes was only when the net was drawn out. Thus, before the fan is applied, they are mixed in the Church (48, C). The 7,000 did not separate from Israel.

According to Augustine, the Old Testament saints belong to the Church (6:454, 455, 480, C; 5:25, C, D).

The confusion and contradiction are evident; and the conflict of a mind, which, having learnt what true holiness was, and the electing grace of God, had an outward system to maintain, and made the outward corrupt thing the incorruptible body of Christ, though groaning at seeing crowds of wicked around its altars. Jerome is much more vague; he holds Old Testament saints for members of the Church (Com. on Epis. to Gal. 4:1; 7 (1) 446); applies the tares to the Church, and the ark of Noah as receiving all sorts. So, 2 Timothy, gold, silver, wooden and earthen vessels in church, he uses against the Luciferians, a sect strict against Arians, more strict than the public catholic body (2:195). The day of judgment will settle it. Yet none are saved out of the Church. The Church is universal, and cannot be the Luciferians. He complains bitterly of its state. He applies Jeremiah 23:11, 12, to the Church; assuming it to be

Christ's house (4:999). He takes Christ, our Head, only as a common Lord; so, when he says Christ is the Head, it is Abraham, Phinehas, etc., who are spoken of.

Chrysostom affords us little; he was a preacher, eloquent, a practical man, resisting public evil with earnestness, and died in banishment, deposed from his see. The Church is Christ's body (Hom. 30 on 1 Cor.), and this is clearly developed. According to him, baptized by the Spirit refers to baptism, and so drinking into one Spirit to the Lord's table. The former he refers to regeneration, and by one Spirit, into one body. One by which, and one into which, he says; but he was much more occupied with the actual state of the Church. He complains that they have only signs or symbols of what they had at first, as, two or three speaking.

But, during all this doctrinal discussion, another system had been forming itself. The emperor who first professed Christianity had transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium, from him called Constantinople. This had a double effect. It left the Roman prelate in a position of far greater political consequence, which became still greater when the barbarian inroads made the imperial power evanescent in Italy; though where it remained, in Ravenna and even Milan, there was independence of Rome, with which, through Turin, historians seek to connect the Vaudois. At any rate it was for centuries independent. The other effect was the making the see of Constantinople (which had not been even metropolitan, and was not of apostolic foundation) of such public importance, that it sought to rival Rome—as the city was called Nova Roma. For the reader must understand, that the boasted primitive Church was a sea of raging politics, avarice, and ambition; the general councils—

assemblies of bishops called by the emperor to quiet the violent and seditious disputes of ecclesiastical and doctrinal parties, which disturbed and tore up the empire.

Strange to say, councils, held when the Church was at liberty from the secular power, are not held to be general. In much later years the popes held them. At first the emperors alone called them; indeed, in the council of Nice, the emperor, who had had some experience of ecclesiastics in Donatist matters, managed it all. The holy fathers brought their written complaints, or libels, against their episcopal brethren, and put them into his hands: he took them, exhorted them to peace, and burnt them all; approved, we are told, those that were right; flattered them all, rather grossly indeed; exhorted them, and, bringing all but a few to agree, settled the contest, and then banished the few refractory ones. In this council, the place of Rome is very obscure; she was represented by two presbyters, perhaps by a bishop, Hosius. It is also alleged the pope was absent from old age—I suspect rather from policy; at any rate, as we find in the letters of Leo on the council of Chaicedon it was made a precedent of, but it is not to be doubted she would have had the precedency of rank (alas the word!) had she been there. It is, indeed, for this point, that I have introduced the matter. Alexandria, Antioch, Rome were (till the seat of empire was transferred to Byzantium, then subordinate to the metropolitan at Heraclea) the three great ecclesiastical centres as the chief cities: Antioch, the ancient capital of the great Syrian monarchy; Alexandria, of the Egyptian, or the Ptolemies, and the most famous seat of learning and commerce in existence (Antioch withal, alleged to

be founded by Peter, and to have been his see; and Alexandria, too, through his disciple Mark); Rome still more, being the metropolis of the world, and as alleged, founded by the two apostles Peter and Paul. I am not making myself answerable for all this tradition, which, in many points, is extremely doubtful, but it had full influence at the time we are speaking of.

As long as the emperors were heathen, the influence of these sees was increasing from various causes; but still the independence of the bishops was maintained to a very great degree, particularly in Asia Minor and Africa, where Ephesus (afterwards made metropolitan) and Carthage held respectively a large share of influence. In the matter of re-baptizing heretics these two provinces maintained, in the third century, their entire independence of Rome, and Cyprian used very strong language indeed. But Alexandria swayed practically over Egypt and Libya; and Antioch over Asia, till Jerusalem became, in subsequent times, a patriarchate. Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, I may add, and the British Christians were also free from Rome's metropolitan sway, which extended over the suburbicarian provinces, now the estates of the Church, the kingdom of the two Sicilies, and Sardinia. But there was no great see in all the West to counterbalance Rome; and it gradually extended its influence over Gaul and Spain and Illyricum (which remained, however, a contested sphere till much later times), by appointing some leading bishopric or metropolitan in Gaul, not the regular local metropolitan, as its legate. By this, and some cleverly interpreted and extended canons of a packed Sardican council,12 appended to the canons of the council of Nice, and a forged addition to the sixth of Nice itself, the influence

of princes, and an unceasing practical use of good opportunities, until the West came under its influence. The almost total destruction of the British Churches (which had been founded from the East, as their way of keeping Easter proved) by the Saxons, and the conversion of these latter by persons sent from Rome, brought England under its rule, though the northern Church, which had meanwhile extended itself to middle England, only submitted to Rome after the controversy of Whitby, between Wilfrid and Colman, about 654. It was only at the council of Trent, and with the strenuous resistance of the Spanish prelates, that the bishops were declared to derive their authority from the pope. The supremacy of a general council over him was decreed and acted on in the fifteenth century at Constance.

I have just run through the history of the Western or Latin hierarchical prelacy, to complete it; I return to the general history of patriarchs. The profession of Christianity by the emperor, and establishment of the capital at Constantinople, raised up, as we have seen, a rival to Rome. But the Greeks disputed about words; the Romans pursued unceasingly their end—the establishment of hierarchical supremacy; advancing a claim which no one knew; using opportunities to act in it, which others afforded them; and then making the ancient claim the proof of an ancient right.13 Another circumstance favoured this. Constantinople sought to extend, and did extend, its influence over the eastern empire, by arbitrating in disputes between bishops and between metropolitans. In the council of Constantinople, Rome, as Old Rome, was allowed the first rank; but Constantinople, as New Rome, the second. At that of Chalcedon, Constantinople was given the same rank, isa

presbeia, as being the emperor's city. But this pressure of Constantinople on Antioch and Alexandria, threw these rather into the arms of Rome. Leo speaks of the three sees of Peter in a remarkable manner; and, in the endless theological disputes of the East, the quiet and steady good sense of the Roman west made Rome a continual arbiter as to doctrine. This (as in the case of Leo, a really able man, and, I am disposed to think, with right intentions, but, as a true Roman, always seeking political influence) gave them a decisive weight in all these questions. In Leo's person it took somewhat the form, in his letter to Flavian, of dogmatical authority. Still Constantinople and Rome contended for influence; and one had it in the West, because there was no emperor; the other in the East, because there was. But evil bore its fruits in judgment. Constantinople, in the purpose of John the Faster, put forth the claim of æcumenical bishop, on charges brought against the patriarch of Antioch which were tried at Constantinople. Pope Felagius annulled all the proceedings on this account; but John used it again when he acknowledged the accession of Gregory. Gregory denounced him as a forerunner of Antichrist, and then took the well-known papal title of "servant of the servants of God." Though Rome (he would have it believed, on the authority of the council of Chalcedon) had a title to be called universal pope, he refrained through humility. But it did not end here. Gregory pursued his efforts to hinder the pretensions of Constantinople, and renounced communion with it. Maurice, the emperor, who resisted the influence of Rome, was murdered with all his family, and his murderer was congratulated by Gregory in the most fulsome way. Photius, the new emperor, in return for this made a decree, that, as Constantinople had

claimed to be head of all the churches, Rome should be primate of all the holy churches.

This recalls somewhat to mind the disputes, on a smaller scale, between York and Canterbury; which resulted in York being primate of England, and Canterbury, primate of all England. In Ireland the same question aros; between Dublin and Armagh; the point being, whether Dub tin could have the cross (which preceded the archbishop) carried upright within the jurisdiction of the see of Armagh! Dublin is now primate of Ireland, and Armagh of all Ireland. And this is Christianity!

To pursue the sad history: in the eighth century, the territory, called now the estates of the Church, or the greater part of them, was given to Rome by Charlemagne, though he reserved his imperial rights; and the pope became a temporal prince. At the same time, however, the Grecian or Eastern emperor took away southern Italy, Sicily (the kingdom of the two Sicilies), and Illyricum; depriving the see of Rome of vast estates it held in the former. Hence, of course, bitter animosity. In the ninth century the emperor, refusing to restore the estates and authority, the pope took up the cause of Ignatius, patriarch of Constantinople, whom the emperor had deposed, and they excommunicated each other. The emperor was murdered; and his murderer and successor recalled Ignatius. Meanwhile the pope and the patriarch contended for supremacy over the newly-converted Bulgarians, and then Rome was accused of heresy. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, was restored on Ignatius’s death, the pope agreeing, if Bulgaria was subjected to him, which was agreed to and not executed. A legate was sent from Rome to Constantinople, cast

into prison, and then, becoming pope, said Photius was properly judged and degraded before. In the eleventh century, Cerularius of Constantinople charged the pope with various heresies. Leo IX excommunicated all the Greek churches. The emperor, who needed his influence in Italy, sought to heal the controversy, and papal legates were sent to Constantinople; the Greeks would not submit. The legates excommunicated the patriarch and his adherents; and the patriarch excommunicated the legates and theirs. And thus the final schism of West and East took place.

In this century it was that the popes, who, after the gradual increase of their power, had become infamous in their conduct— so that the Romans had deposed them, and the Emperor of Germany named new ones, and then there had been two fighting for the place—enforced, in the person of Gregory VII, called Hildebrand, universal celibacy on the clergy. It had been long nominally required; but the great body of them being, in fact, married, were now forced to put away their wives: and, though Gregory died an exile from Rome, he succeeded in depriving the emperors of the right of confirming the election of the pope, and established the celibacy of the clergy. Another very important change commenced in this century was the election of the pope by the cardinals, instead of by the whole clergy, nobles, and people. The confirmation by the emperor was however reserved, and of the people; that of the emperor was set aside by Gregory VII, indeed, by Alexander II, in whose time however there was an antipope. Gregory was chosen by acclamation, and confirmed by the emperor, and then began his work of setting the papacy above all human powers. He claimed from all kings their holding

their crowns from him. William the Conqueror and others refused; some were glad to act on it, as Naples, Croatia, and, strange to say, Russia.

I am now arrived at the full establishment of the papal system resisting the imperial right to the investiture of bishops into their sees. The history of the independent Scottish Church is full of interest; it was the great evangelizer of Germany and Switzerland. But Boniface, the apostle of Germany, having put himself under the pope, and become Archbishop of Mayence, it all fell under papal influence; or, by the vast estates attached to the sees, gave occasion to the question of investiture, as they were real principalities, and held as such.

The Greek Church was shorn of its glory by the inroads of the Saracens, before whom Antioch and Alexandria became extinct as to influence; and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the fifteenth century, seemed to close its importance too. But such was not altogether the will of divine Providence: for (the conversion of Russia to Christianity having taken place in connection with the Grecian patriarch, in the tenth century, by the baptism, first of the grand duchess, and then of the grand duke, which was followed by that of the nation) the influence of Russia is now used in favour of the Greek Church. They were first under the patriarchate of Constantinople. In the sixteenth century the Archbishop of Moscow became first a dependent, and then an independent, patriarch; and in the reign of Peter the Great, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Czar made himself the head of the Church as in England; and the patriarch and synod became subordinate to his power. The late Russian war had for

its earliest pretext the rights of Greeks or Latins to the so-called holy places in Palestine.

Such is what is called Christianity and he Church; my object is not to pursue it as a history, or go.arther into detail. The Reformation, in the great and precious mercy of God, brought the bible forth from obscurity, and announced justification by faith, delivering many countries from the yoke of the papacy; but it left, in all the national churches, the germ of the system in baptismal regeneration, from which most indisputably it was not delivered; and a clerical exclusive right to ministry, denying the sovereignty and work of the Holy Ghost, as still carried on in regeneration and gift; and (though many, very many, have freed themselves from the first error, and we see a wonderful energy now at work for deliverance from the second) that energy works to the breaking up of the system. The new wine cannot be put into the old bottles. I have only to speak briefly of the results of this rapid survey.

What I have given is practically the history of the great house, and at the close in its worst and most appalling forms— surely not of the body of Christ; yet this, in its very worst form—the papacy, it pretended to be, and that exclusively. Such was the result of confounding the building of God upon earth, placed under the responsibility of man (1 Cor. 3), with the body composed of living members united to Christ. We have seen, that the urging of unity by the various Fathers was always interested, and bore only on their own position. First Ignatius presses unity of a local assembly with its bishop: episcopal thought went no further then. Then, as the inroad of heresies took place, the same apostolical doctrine, held by all, was proved by the uniform doctrine

of the apostolic sees; and, as the truth proved the Spirit and the Church, the heretics could not be it, for they had not the truth. The order of this argument is to be noted, however; for it is entirely anti-Roman-catholic: they prove the truth by the Church; while the Irenseus and Tertullian school, the Church by the possession of the truth. The truth they find from scripture, or the continuous doctrine of the apostolic sees as a fact. This is not a fact now; for Rome has changed or added in important points, as the addition of Filioque in the doctrine of Procession, and changes of prayers for the dead to prayers to the dead, the addition of purgatory, and in many others. Alexandria and Antioch are Monophysites, that is, they hold only one nature in Christ.

But to return; at this time, if the Church was referred to, it was only to hold their ground against heresy.. In the next struggle it was only to hold it against schism, and maintain common episcopal rights against schismatic Novatians on the one side, and arrogant popes of Rome on the other. This was the Cyprian school. Augustine's was partly the same against the Donatists; but the personal sense of divine truth in him made all confusion, and led to the invention of an invisible Church known to God. After this it was merely a struggle for the destruction of the oligarchical power of the body of bishops, first by patriarchal power; and then between Rome and Constantinople for pre-eminence; the result being, as I have noticed elsewhere, the making a Roman-catholic church a falsehood in fact, as it is in sense. For the setting up of the pope as supreme over the churches (and that by imperial power), which Constantinople had been attempting to be, occasioned

an entire breach; and the Church, as an outward body, ceased to be catholic everywhere when Rome attempted to make it Roman-catholic. It was split into two great camps, the Roman and the Greek, the Roman indeed the larger, but after all dependent on the rulers of the West, as the Greek on the rulers of the East; and now unable to boast even of any superiority of numbers, for the Protestant secession has made the numbers of professing Christians outside the Roman pale greater than those within it. Rome has one thing exclusively—the apostate pretension to power, setting aside the one headship of Christ, and opposing and falsifying His word; but that is all.

But our concern is with doctrine; and here mark another thing. The blessed unfolding of the truth of the Church was thought of by none. Some used the idea, attributing its privileges to the outward body—the house (yet thereby denying them; for wicked members of Christ is nonsense); and they quoted some scriptural passages as to it, but merely as a means of confounding their adversaries. None, that I am aware, ever laid hold on its blessings to unfold them. They walked by sight: that which had been founded on earth was before their eyes. It was indeed the important thing—the great fact of God’s sovereign intervention in the world; what belonged to Him in the earth, His husbandry, His building: but, as they did not distinguish the body from the house, this latter only, which was the visible thing, was before their eyes. The consequence was, first, the allowance of the possibility of evil in the body of Christ, which bound men to the continued walking with evil; practically sanctioning it, or forcing them to break with the body: and, next, the attributing the title of divine

and spiritual power to the evil itself—all under the claim, that the Church was the body of Christ; that, if you were not member, you could not have the Head. Salvation was there alone. This was true; but it is not true that they are that body, or that Christ has dead members. Further, baptism was held to be, as the introduction into Christ's assembly (which it is) that by which we become members of Christ, and children of God. So the Romanist; so the orthodox Protestant; so, in general, even the Baptist. But baptism has nothing to do with the unity of, and admission into, the body even in figure. It goes, even in figure, no farther than death and resurrection— the individual passage into new life, and death to Adam existence. But the unity of the body depends on the exaltation of the Head into heaven; who, when exalted, and not till then (as He Himself said, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come"), sent down the Holy Ghost; and by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. As Peter declares to his hearers in the Acts: "he, being exalted by the right hand of God, and, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, has shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This was the baptism of the Spirit as we see (Acts 1:5); and it is thus by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. In this body there are members in which the energy of the Spirit displays itself in various gifts (1 Cor. 14:11-14). The Spirit does not dwell in the body but in the house; "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." The stones are not as such members of Him who dwells in the building. This was all confounded by the Fathers.

The result is, the claims of popery, and the confusion of Protestants as to baptismal regeneration and

membership of Christ, with which baptism has nothing to do, We have noticed another terrible result—the allowance of evil, connected with Christ. The Church is the ark; no salvation out of it. The unclean beasts are at the bottom story; Christ, like Noah, at the top: this is the Origen and Clement doctrine. In a great house there are vessels to dishonour, wooden and earthen; but, with a rare confusion of thought and scripture doctrine, Christ will burn or break them when He comes: this is Cyprian. The tares are mixed with the wheat in the Church: this is Jerome and Protestantism. At last, the corruption was so great, that, as Augustine expresses it, they were groaning at seeing crowds of wicked persons surround the Church's altar: there they are to leave them! The resource of His Spirit is the predestinating prescience of God, and an invisible Church; many better outside the Church than those in; but God will settle it! They are invisibly united in the bond of charity; while those outwardly within have no real bond; such is often now the resource of high Calvinism, acquiescing in the Establishment—acquiescing in evil, because God will have it all right. Conscience makes men schismatic in form when corruption and evil characterize what is called the body of Christ; and separation from the general mass of Christianity endangers the soul's stability, and its faith in any unity; and often produces, by not seeing the house, an opposition to it, which exposes to wild doctrine and heretical associations.

Such is, alas! the history of the Church, and the process of dogmatical creed as to it, under the exercises which the state of things produced in connection with the current theory. If the outward assembly was in fact the body of Christ, separation from it was schism; and, as

far as man's act went, ruin; but true union of the members with the Head was really not known. If the outward assembly was nothing, then the whole corporate responsibility was destroyed; and the judgment of the evil servant had no place; there was no corporate responsibility of Christendom, in virtue of the Holy Ghost having been given to the assembly on the earth. No spiritual conscience could recognize the corruption as the true body of Christ. Some would reform, some separate; and the very idea of the Church in unity was either lost on the one side, or made perfectly compatible with the grossest corruption and Satan's power, on the other; and what was so corrupt was called His body, and the claim of divine authority attached to the administration of that corruption. The notion of an invisible body was invented to conciliate spiritual conscience with such a state of things. Scripture foretells failure, yea, recounts it, and foretells its becoming yet worse; it tells of corruption and perilous times, it tells finally of apostasy. But it never speaks of a corrupt body of Christ. It does not deny a corrupt general state of things, which it compares to a great house, and enjoins a man's purifying himself from the vessels of dishonour, and walking with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. It tells of a building of God in His purposes; and, in fact, at the commencement, and at the close; but it speaks with equal clearness of man's responsible building. The existing confusion is no difficulty for one who has scripture in his hand and heart, who owns its authority. The word of God makes all clear: the body united to its heavenly Head in sure and richest blessing; the corruption clearly described and judged; and, in the mixture which is to be expected in a great house, the

path for uprightness, and obedience, and purity of walk, clear and distinct: the house, as it should be, well ordered; the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3): when it is filled with vessels to dishonour, as the great house, the distinct command of separation from evil and from them (2 Tim. 2). And the reader will remark, that it is in this last epistle, when the house is thus spoken of, that the word of God, the scriptures, are insisted on as the sure and effectual refuge of the soul in the perilous times of corrupted Christendom.

I add, as a sad but useful appendix, some facts as to the boasted primitive Church. First, as to doctrine, the statements which I have given from Hermas, whose book was read in many churches—quoted by Irenaeus and believed by Origen to be inspired—is the plainest possible proof of the gross ignorance of the primitive Church, and utter incompetency to judge of doctrine.

But, further, the doctrine of the Ante-Nicene Fathers is anything but satisfactory as to the divinity of Christ. Justin peremptorily denies that the one supreme God, the Creator, can appear as a man in this world; and the doctrine of Christ's not being distinct, as a person, till creation was about to take place, though not without an exception, no one acquainted with them can deny to be general, as expressed by endiathetos and prolhorikos. From the desire to meet the heathen's ideas, and the influence of Platonic philosophy, their teaching on the logos, or word, and what is expressed by the word Trinity is extremely loose and objectionable, to say the least. But if loose and unsound on so fundamental a point—on that which is the very truth itself, and foundation of all truth, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ—on what can we trust them? The final judgment

is treated by one as a means of purifying the imperfect. And Augustine speaks of the Lord's supper as thanksgiving for the good, propitiation for the bad, and, though it cannot help the wicked dead, a comfort to the living (that is, by deceiving them): elsewhere he says, it may allay their pains in hell. As to the grace of God, it was hardly known amongst them.

The reader will remember that I am not speaking of souls and their personal faith, but of doctors. None are more untrustworthy on every fundamental subject than the mass of primitive Fathers.

Now, as to practice, Cyprian, in his treatise "De Lapsis," gives the following account of Christian morals, about two hundred years after Christ, while the empire was yet heathen. He says, "that they were treated mercifully in the persecution; so that it was an investigation or trial of them (exploratio), not a persecution; and that they must not be blind to the causes." Whereupon he then describes the state of the Church. Individuals were applying themselves to increase their patrimony; and, forgetful what believers either had done under the apostles or ought always to do, they were bent, with an insatiable ardour of avarice, on increasing their fortunes: no devout religion in priests; no uncorrupted fidelity in ministers (deacons); no compassion in works; no order in morals. The beard was plucked away14 among men; the face painted among women; the eyes adulterated, after God had made them (post Dei manus); the hair coloured with falsehood; cunning frauds to deceive the hearts of the simple; a deceitful will in circumventing brethren; the bonds of matrimony joined with unbelievers; the members of Christ prostituted to heathens; not only rash swearing, but, besides, even

perjury, despising those set over them with proud haughtiness; speaking evil with poisoned lip; mutual discord with pertinacious hatred. Many bishops, whom it behoves to be an exhortation and an example to others—their divine commission despised—become commissioners of secular affairs; and leaving their sees and deserting the people, wandering through other provinces, haunt the fairs and markets, trafficking for gain; no help to hungry brethren in the Church; the desire to have money largely; seizing on estates by insidious frauds; augmenting interest by multiplied usury.

Such is the picture of Christian morals afforded by a bishop who had lived in the midst of them.

I may next give Augustine's account of saints' festivals, after the emperors were Christians. He had resisted, in a very godly and courageous way, the people coming and getting drunk in the church; having preached against it, and only few being present. There were many murmurs in the mass of people against it. Their fathers, they said, were very good Christians, and they did it; and why should it be put a stop to now? He pressed Christian precepts on them: and adds, however, lest those, who before our time either allowed or did not dare prohibit the manifest crimes of an ignorant multitude, should seem to be subjected to some reproach on our part, I laid before them by what necessity those things seem to have arisen in the Church. Namely (after so many and so vehement persecutions, when peace having arrived, lest crowds of heathens, desiring to come under the Christian name, might be hindered by this, that they were accustomed to spend festive days with their idols, in abundant feasting and drunkenness, nor could easily

withhold themselves from their most pernicious and very ancient indulgences) it seemed right to our ancestors, for the time, to wait on this part of infirmity, and that other festive days, instead of those they left, should be celebrated in honour of the holy martyrs, at least, not with the same sacrilege, although with like luxury. And then he shews how they hope, by connecting them with Christ, to wean them off by precepts; that what was granted them that they might be Christians, when they were Christians, they might reject (Aug. Lit. ad Alypium, 29, Ed. Ben.).

It is hard to say whether the fact, or Augustine's excuse for it, is the worse. It was, however, the real motive. So we in England may justly say; as directions were given by Pope Gregory to act on that principle in converting the Saxons. See, for example (lib. 9; ep. 71), his recommendation to Mellitus on going to Britain.

Nor was this way of settling saints' days local merely. Christmas was fixed at the Saturnalia—a word passed into a technical one for unbridled license—because they could not bridle their feasting, and would Christianize (?) it.15 The day of purification was substituted for the Lupercalia, which had this character; and so on.

The following is Eusebius's account of the state of the Church, which had brought on the persecutions that preceded his time: rulers raging against rulers, and people in tumultuous conflict with people; lastly, when unutterable hypocrisy and dissimulation had gone on to the highest pitch, then divine judgment began, he says, measuredly, as it delights to do, and first with trial among soldiers. But when they went on then to act like atheists, and added one wickedness to another; when

our most esteemed pastors, despising the bond of piety, burned in contentions one with another, increasing only in strife and threats, jealousy, enmity, and hatred, one against another; then, he says, according to the saying of Jeremiah, the full tide of trial broke in. Such was the primitive Church of the third century (Euseb. 8:1).

Jerome will tell us if they had improved when the empire became Christian. Here is his account of the clergy. Valentinian had passed a law forbidding the clergy getting inheritances by watching the death-beds of persons who had property. Jerome gives an account of the state of things; he does not complain of the law, but of its being necessary. It shews, in truth, as all such laws do, a general public state of things. “The caution of the law is provident and severe; yet, even so, avarice is not restrained. We mock at laws by means of trusts, and as if emperors’ decrees were greater than Christ’s; we fear the laws and despise the Gospels. It is the shame of all priests to study their own wealth. Born in a poor house and in a rustic cottage, I, who could scarce content the loud cry of my belly with millet and coarse bread, now am nice about fine flour and honey. I know the kinds and names of fishes. I am knowing as to the shore on which a shell-fish is gathered. I discern provinces by the savour of birds, etc. I hear, moreover, of the base service of some to old men and old women without children.” He then describes, in language too disagreeable to translate, the disgusting servile attentions of the clergy at the bedside of the sick, and continues: “They tremble at the entrance of the physician, and with faltering lips inquire if they are better; and if the old person is somewhat more vigorous, they are in danger, and, while feigning joy, the avaricious mind is tortured within; for

they fear lest they should lose their pains, and compare the vigorous old person to the years of Methuselah" (Ep. 52, ad Nepotianum).

Augustine, at the same epoch, complains that in his day, if anyone would live godly, he was mocked, not by heathen simply, but by professing Christians. He complains that the devil had sent so many hypocrites in monks' habits on every side, going round the provinces, sent nowhere, fixed nowhere, standing nowhere, sitting nowhere; others hawking members of martyrs, if they are of martyrs; others, etc. All exact either the expense of a gainful need, or the price of a pretended sanctity (De Opere Monachorum).

These extracts will give an idea of the state of what is called the primitive Church. Greater research and examination would only increase the evidence; and, as to doctrines, in a way calculated to distress every sober and godly mind. This does not prove there was no hidden religion, no true faith; but that the authority of what we possess of the primitive Church is worse than nothing as to doctrine, and its general practice in both clergy and laity a disgrace to the name of Christ. What I have given will give its traits. It is all I seek here, that the consciences of my readers may know what the primitive Church was, and not be under any delusion through the speciously-sounding title. There was no time when there was so little orthodoxy, as before the council of Nice (I speak of the Fathers and doctors), unless in the universal Arianism of the reign of Constans and some other emperors. For the catholic Church, pope, and all, veered round with the emperor like a weathercock. Athanasius died condemned by the council of Tyre; Arius in the communion of the universal Church:

only he perished the night before he took his place—his foes say by the judgment of God, his friends, by poison.

I add a short note, referred to in the body of the paper, as to the epoch of the dogma of papal supremacy. The first I find, in the midst of much vague deference and admission of rank, who formally makes the pope the one and sole centre of unity, is Optatus of Milevi. In his second book16 (not having his works, I quote from the Centuriatores Magdeburgici) he says, “The episcopal chair was first conferred on Peter in the city of Rome, in which he sat as head of all the apostles; whence also he was called Cephas, in whom alone the unity of the chair should be kept by all, nor the apostles lay claim each to one for himself (singulas sibi quisque); so that he would be a schismatic and a sinner who should establish another in opposition to the one single chair.” But this is said in opposition to the schism of the Donatists. When the African synods, in Augustine’s time, had condemned the Pelagians, they sent their decrees as usual to the bishop of Rome. Innocent I tells them they had manifested a proper sense of the submission due to the apostolic see, whence all episcopal power flowed, and must ever flow, as from one single fountain-head, to fertilize the whole world by its manifold streamlets. He had, he said, of his own authority condemned these heresies, and severed their authors from the Church. However, the following pope, Zosimus, approved the statements of Pelagius, as sent to him from Palestine, and condemned all the previous proceedings against Pelagius. But, under Augustine’s influence, a council of Carthage, a.d. 418, condemned and anathematized Pelagius, and decreed that if anyone shall presume to appeal beyond sea (that is, to Rome), “let none among

you receive him into communion." They sent to the emperor, who condemned and banished him from Rome, and then Zosimus condemned too, what he had approved; and the Africans being content, Zosimus claims Peter's universal jurisdiction as before, and all goes on smoothly. Augustine, in his treatise on the Gospel of John, expressly declares that Christ was the rock on which the Church was built—on the rock which Peter had confessed. Elsewhere, if I remember, in his Retractations, he says, people may take it otherwise if they prefer it.

Leo, an able man, connects the two thoughts with much cleverness of manner. I quote them, as they will give an idea of the way Roman pretensions were put forward in his age:—

"For the solidity of that faith which is praised in the prince of the apostles is perpetual; and as what Peter believed of Christ ever remains, so what Christ instituted in Peter ever remains." He then quotes Matthew 16:16 in full. He continues: "The disposition of the truth therefore remains; and the blessed Peter, persevering in the received strength of the rock, has not deserted the undertaken helm of the Church. For he is in such sort placed before the others, that while he is called the 'rock' (petra), while he is pronounced to be the foundation, while he is made doorkeeper of the kingdom of the heavens, while he is set up as arbiter of what is to be bound and loosed, what is defined by his judgments being to remain in the heavens—we might know, by the very mysteries of his titles, what his association with Christ is, who now transacts more fully and powerfully the things which were committed to him, and executes every part of the duties and cares in Him

and with Him by whom he has been glorified. If therefore anything is rightly done and rightly discerned by us, if anything is obtained from the mercy of God by daily supplications, it is of the works and merits of him in whose see his power lives and his authority is pre-eminent. For, beloved, that confession which inspired the apostolic heart ^by God the Father rose above all the uncertainties of human opinions, and received the firmness of a rock, which may be shaken by no impulses obtained thus. For in the universal Church Peter daily says, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' This faith conquers devils," etc. (Ser. 3). Again, on the assumption of Peter (Ser. 4), "All are kings by the sign of the cross, all consecrated priests by the unction of the Holy Spirit," etc. "But Peter was chosen," etc., "that, although in the people of God there are many priests and many pastors, yet Peter should as by proper title belonging to himself (proprie) rule them all whom Christ also rules as prime and chief (principaliter). A great and wonderful community (consortium) of His power, beloved, has the divine esteem (dignatio) bestowed on this man; and if it has willed that anything should be common to other chiefs with him, it never gave but through him whatever it did not deny to others." Then he quotes Matthew 16 again, interpreting thus: "As I am the inviolable rock, I the cornerstone who make both one, I the foundation besides which none can lay any other, yet thou also art a rock (petra), become identified with my virtue (that is, power and strength, as we say virtue of a medicine or herb), that what things are proper to me in power should be common to thee by participation with me." See also Ser. 62 (11 de Pass. Dom.). Again (Epist. 10 ad Episcopos per provinciam Viennensem constitutos): "But the Lord willed that the

mystery of this function should so belong to the office of all the apostles, as placed by Him first and chief (principaliter) in the blessed Peter, head of all the apostles, and as being His will that from him, as from a kind of head, His gifts should flow into the body, that whoever dared to get away from the solidity of Peter should.understand that he was deprived of any portion in the divine mystery; for He (Christ) was pleased that he, taken into the community (consortium) of [His] individual unity, should be called that which He is saying, 'Thou art Peter,'" etc.— "that the building of the eternal temple by a wonderful gift of the grace of God should stand in the solidity of Peter, strengthening His Church by this firmness, that neither human rashness might reach it, nor the gates of hell prevail against it."

Here I close my note. The place given to Peter speaks for itself to every Christian. As to doctrinal claim, it would be needless to pursue the papacy any farther. With its political influence I have here nothing to do; I have sufficiently given its history already.

A most interesting but difficult subject of research in connection with this sketch would be—How far the workings of divine light and conscience were connected with some of the heretical movements of different ages, even though the craft of Satan may have marred and corrupted the movement of these unguarded souls? And this interest would apply to various sects, so-called, which arose from the sixth century onward, at least as much as to earlier heretical bodies. But the facts are very difficult to estimate, and even to ascertain, and the greatest part of the testimony to be sifted as coming from enemies. Take, for example, as obvious instances, Tertullian and the Paulicians.

3 In this and a few other cases the charge of intentional departure from a plain translation, through prejudice, or a fear of doing mischief perhaps, cannot be escaped, in respect to the (generally-speaking) admirable translation which we possess in English. I know of none better, unless perhaps the Dutch, which, made about eight years afterwards, has evidently profited by the English; perhaps by Bengel's of the New Testament, which is done with very great care, but not in use. The reformed German translation of Piscator is a very good one. It has alas! even in the reformed churches, given place to Luther's, which is the very worst translation I know. The French are all very mediocre; Diodati's, the most exact, but old and even incorrect French; but the truth is, that the French language is singularly unfitted for the translation of scripture. It may be exact, and no doubt is; but it is the narrow exactitude of man's mind. Diodati's, being far more exact to the original, is consequently intolerable as French. I may cite as examples, not of mistaken translation, which human infirmity is, of course, exposed to, but of false. Acts 1:22, "Must one be ordained to be": ordained to be, is not the original at all. Acts 3:19, "When the times," instead of "So that." This may have been from not knowing what to make of it; but it is a false translation. 2 Thessalonians 2, The day of Christ is "at hand," instead of "is come," or, "come upon" [you]. The word is used more than once for "present," in contrast with things to come, and always for present. The whole teaching of the epistle, I hesitate not to say, here depends on it. Again, they have been afraid to put "heavenly places "in Ephesians 6:12, in the text. The avoiding the word bishops ("overseers"), Acts 20, is of the same character. I mention only such as occur to my memory at the moment.

4 I am not speaking here, of course, of the exclusion of guilty ones by discipline.

5 Particularly De Prascriptione.

6 De Unitate.

7 The epistle called of Clement is written in the name of the Church of Rome. Yet, afterwards, for three or four centuries, the Roman Church did not receive the epistle to the Hebrews.

8 He is forbidden to live as a husband with his wife, but in a figurative way sanctions the system of pareisaktoi; as devil-devised a piece of infamy and wickedness as ever was called sanctity in the primitive Church, and characteristic of it. I am aware these seem harsh words; but they ought to be used for such things.

9 It may not much interest my readers; but I have not the least doubt that the potiorem principalitatem (till Massuet it was read, potentiorem) is hikanoteran archen, a more excellent origin, because he attributes the founding of the Church of Rome to two apostles. The use of these words in Irenaeus, connected with the context, here puts it, I think, beyond doubt.

10 We have only a wretched Latin translation: according to this, “there” cannot refer to the Church, it may to the vase (the figure he uses for it) or office. I can only give the general idea, which is pretty plain. The inspirationem plasmationi I take to be the breathing into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life; so the Church has the Spirit, the communication of Christ, that all the members may have this communication of life. It is, he says previously, the accustomed operation as to the salvation of men, which is in one faith; it may be

effectual operation, as some read it. It is added, “Wherefore, those who do not participate in Him (the Spirit, who is truth) are not nourished by the mother’s breasts into life, nor receive the bright fountain proceeding from the body of Christ.” Here remark: Irenaeus, who is occupied with the heretics, states, that heretics are not the Church at all, and hence have not what is found in the Church; she alone nourishes into life. The good father reasons in an evident circle. The Church is where the Spirit is, and where the Spirit is is the Church; but there is the honest earnest consciousness of faith. They are not the Church, for they have not the faith; therefore, they have not the Spirit. But the faith was proved by the Church’s traditions too.

11 It has been suggested by Montague, that it should be ekkleton, “called out,” but query.

12 This was a very small provincial council of adherents of Rome, the remains of a larger assembly. Rome published these canons as part of those of Nice. They gave a kind of appellate jurisdiction to Rome. But the council of Chalcedon would not insert them in the received canons of the universal Church; and the African bishops, under Augustine’s influence, reproved and forbade these appeals. The pope’s legate pleaded the canons of Nice; they did not admit it, had authorized copies sent for and refuted it as false, and maintained their protestation.

13 See note at the end of article.

14 I say plucked away, because in Ad Quir. iii. 84 (Testimoniorum) he gives it as vellendam, which in the text in Leviticus 19:27 is corrum-pantur, as here.

15 Nobody knows what time of the year Christ was born. There is some small probability, from the fact of the mention of the course of Abia, that it was in autumn; the Greek Church celebrates it on Epiphany.

16 I do not quote the seventh, though the subject is referred to, as its authenticity is more than questionable, though it is undoubtedly very ancient.

What Is The Church, As It Was At The Beginning? And What Is Its Present State?

We may consider the Church in two points of view. First, it is the formation of the children of God into one body united to Christ Jesus ascended to heaven, the glorified man; and that by the power of the Holy Ghost. In the second place, it is the house or habitation of God by the Spirit. The Saviour gave Himself, not only to save perfectly all those who believe in Him, but also to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Christ has perfectly accomplished the work of redemption; having offered one sacrifice for sins, He is seated at the right hand of God. For by one offering He has for ever and perfectly purified those who are sanctified: whereof also the Holy Ghost witnesses to us, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” The love of God has given us Jesus; the righteousness of God is fully satisfied by His sacrifice; and He is seated at God’s right hand as a continual testimony to the accomplishment of the work of redemption, to our acceptance in Him, and to the possession of the glory unto which we are called. From heaven, according to His promise, Jesus has sent the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who dwells in us who believe in Jesus, and who has sealed us for the day of redemption, that is to say, of the glorification of our bodies. The same Spirit is, besides, the earnest of our inheritance.

But all this would be always true, even if there were not a Church upon earth. That is, it is one thing that there are individuals saved, children of God, heirs of glory in

heaven; quite another is their union with Christ, so as to be members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; and yet another it is to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. We will speak of these latter points.

There is nothing clearer in the holy scripture of truth than that the Church is the body of Christ. Not only have we salvation by Christ, but we are in Christ and Christ in us. The true Christian who enjoys His privileges knows that, by means of the Holy Ghost, he is in Christ and Christ in him. “In that day,” says the Lord, “ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” In that day, that is to say, in the day when we should have received the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Accordingly we are in Christ and members of His body. This doctrine is largely unfolded in Ephesians 1-3. What is there clearer than this word, “He gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body”? Observe, that this marvellous fact began, or was found existing, at soonest when Christ was glorified in the heavens, even though all that is found contained in these verses is not yet accomplished. God, says the apostle, has raised us up with Him, and has seated us together in Him in the heavenly places—not yet with Him, but “in him.” And in chapter 3, “Which [mystery] was not in other ages made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel … that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.”

Here, then, is the Church formed on earth by the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, after the glorification of Christ. It is united to Christ, its heavenly Head; and all true believers are His members by means of the same Spirit. This precious truth is confirmed in other passages; for example, in Romans 12, “As in one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office; so we who are many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

It will not be necessary to cite other passages: we will only call the attention of the reader to 1 Corinthians 12. It is clear as daylight, that here the apostle speaks of the Church on the earth, not of a future Church which shall be made good in heaven, and not even of churches scattered over the world, but of the Church as a whole, represented however by the Church at Corinth. Therefore it is said, at the beginning of the epistle, “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” The totality of the Church is clearly seen in the words, “And God hath set in the church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing,” etc. It is evident that apostles were not in a particular church, and that the gifts of healing could not be exercised in heaven. It is the Church universal on earth. This Church is the body of Christ, and the true believers are its members. It is one by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. “For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of this one body, though many, are one body; so also is Christ,” v. 12. Then, after having said that all these many members work, each in

its own function, in the body, he adds (v. 27), “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each in particular.” Bear in mind that this is come to pass by the baptism of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Consequently this body exists on earth, and embraces all Christians wherever they may be; they have received the Holy Spirit whereby they are members of Christ and members one of another. Oh, how beautiful is the unity! If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it together.

Here the word teaches us besides that the gifts are members of all the body, and that they belong to the body as a whole. The apostles, the prophets, the teachers “are in the Church, and not in a particular church. Consequently these gifts, given by the Holy Ghost, are exercised in all the Church where the member is found, because he is a member of the body. If Apollos taught at Ephesus, he teaches also when he is at Corinth, and in whatever locality he may be.

The Church is, then, the body of Christ, united to Him, its Head, in heaven, and one is a member by the Spirit who dwells in us, and all Christians are members one of another. This Church, which will be by and by made good in heaven, is at present formed on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who abides with us, and by whom all true believers are baptized into one body. The gifts, in the next place, are exercised as members of this one body in the entire Church.

There is, as we have said, another character of the Church on earth; that is to say, it is the habitation of God on earth. It is interesting to see, by examination, that

this had no place before redemption. God did not dwell with Adam even while innocent; nor with Abraham, though He visited with much condescension both the first man in paradise and the father of the faithful. Nevertheless He never dwelt with them. But no sooner was Israel redeemed out of Egypt than God comes to dwell in the midst of His people. As soon as the building of the tabernacle was revealed and regulated, God says, “I will dwell in the midst of Israel and I will be their God; and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who hath taken them out of the land of Egypt to dwell in their midst,” Exod. 29:45, 46. Thus the dwelling of God in the midst of the people was the end of the deliverance: the presence of God in the midst of the people is their greatest privilege.

The presence of the Holy Ghost is what characterizes true believers in Christ. “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. 6:19. “If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Christians taken together are also the temple of God; and the Spirit of God dwells in them; 1 Cor. 3:16.

Not to speak more of the individual Christian, I will say then that the Church is God’s habitation on earth by the Spirit. Most precious privilege! The presence of God Himself, the source of joy, strength, and wisdom for His people! But at the same time there is very great responsibility as to the way in which we treat such a guest. I will cite some passages to prove this truth. In Ephesians 2, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and pilgrims, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly

framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Here we see that, though this building is already begun on the earth, the intention of God is to have a temple formed, made up of all that believe after that God had broken down the partition-wall that shut out the Gentiles; and that this building grows till all Christians are united in glory. But meanwhile the believers on earth form a tabernacle of God, His habitation through the Spirit who abides in the midst of the Church.

In 1 Timothy 3 the apostle says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." By these words we see that the Church on earth is the house of the living God; that this epistle teaches Timothy how to behave himself in this house. We see also that the Christian is responsible to maintain the truth in the world. The Church does not teach, but the apostles taught. Teachers instruct, but the Christian maintains the truth by being faithful to it. It is the witness of the truth in the world. Those who seek the truth do not seek it among Pagans or Jews or Mahometans, but in the Christian Church. It is not authority for the truth, but the word is its authority. The Church is the vessel that contains the truth; and where the truth is not, there is no Church. Such is the Church, the body of Christ, who is its heavenly Head.17 Such is the house of God by the Spirit on earth. When the Church is complete, it will join Christ in heaven, clothed with the same glory as its Bridegroom.

Now it is necessary, before speaking of the state of the Church as it was at the beginning, to notice a difference which is found in the word of God as to the house. The Lord said, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” It is Christ Himself who builds His Church; and consequently the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.18 Here it is not marr who builds, but Christ. Wherefore the apostle Peter, speaking of the spiritual house, says nothing of the workmen, “To whom coming as unto a living stone … ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood,” I Peter 2. This is the work of grace in the heart of the individual by which man approaches Christ. Accordingly, once more, in the Acts it is said that “the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” This work could not fail, being the work of God, efficacious for eternity, and manifested in its time. We read, moreover, in Ephesians 2, “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” This building which grows may be manifested before the eyes of men; but if the effect of this work of efficacious grace is not manifested in its exterior unity before men, God will not for that fail to do His work, gathering His children for eternal life. Souls come to Christ and are built upon Him.

The apostles John and Paul, and more particularly the latter, speak of a unity manifested before men in testimony to men of the power of the Holy Ghost. In John 17 we read, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may

believe that thou hast sent me." Here the unity of the children of God is a testimony borne to the world, that God has sent Jesus in order that the world may believe. Now this truth is, consequently, the evident duty of God's children. All know how the state opposed to this truth is a weapon in the hands of the enemies of this truth.

The character of the house and the doctrine of the responsibility of men are still more clearly taught in the word of God. Paul says, "Ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every one take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Here it is men who build. The house of God is manifested on earth. The Church is the building of God; but we find there not only God's work (that is, those who come to God moved by the Holy Ghost), but also the effect of the work of men, who have often built with wood, hay, and stubble. Men have confused together the exterior house built by men and the work of Christ, which may indeed be identical with the work of men, but it may also differ widely. False teachers attributed all the privileges of the body of Christ to the great house composed of every sort of iniquity and of corrupt men. But this fatal error does not destroy the responsibility of men as regards the house of God, His habitation through the Spirit; any more than it is destroyed in respect of the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit in one body on earth.

I considered it important to notice this difference, because it throws much light on questions of the day. Let us now pursue our subject. What was the state of the Church at the commencement when it began at

Jerusalem? We find that the power of the Spirit of God was wonderfully manifested. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,” Acts 2. And in chapter 4, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need,” Acts 4:32-35. What a beautiful picture of the effect of the power of the Spirit in their hearts! an effect which was too soon to disappear for ever; but Christians ought to seek to realize it as much as possible.

The evil of the heart of man soon appeared; and Ananias and Sapphira, as also the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, manifested that the sin of man’s heart joined to the devil’s work was still working in the bosom of the Church. But at the same time the Holy Spirit was in the Church and acted there, and was sufficient for putting out evil and changing it

into good. The Church however was one, known by the world; and one could say that the apostles, having been let go, went to their own company. One only Church, filled with the Holy Ghost, bore testimony to the salvation of God and to His presence on earth; and to this Church God added all those who were to be saved. This Church was all scattered abroad because of the persecution, save the apostles who abode at Jerusalem. Then God raised up Paul to be His messenger unto the Gentiles. He begins to build the Church among the Gentiles, and teaches that in it there is neither Gentile nor Jew, but that all are one and the same body in Christ. Not only the existence of the Church among the Jews, but still more the doctrine of the Church, of its unity, of the union of Jews with Gentiles in one body, is proclaimed and put in execution. It was the object of the counsels of God already before the foundation of the world, but hidden in God; a mystery which had been bid from the ages in God, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God: which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets19 by the Spirit. So also in Colossians 1:26, “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”

All Christians were known, all admitted publicly into the Church, Gentiles as well as Jews. The unity was manifested. All the saints were members of one body, of Christ’s body; the unity of the body was owned; and it was a fundamental truth of Christianity. In each locality there was the manifestation of this unity of the Church

of God on the earth; so that an epistle of Paul addressed to the Church of God at Corinth arrived at a single assembly; and the apostle could farther add to it “with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Nevertheless, if we speak specially of those at Corinth, he says, “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” If a Christian member of Christ’s body went from Ephesus to Corinth, he would have been equally and necessarily also member of Christ’s body in this latter assembly. Christians are not members of a church, but of Christ. The eye, the ear, the foot, or any other member which was at Corinth, was equally such at Ephesus. In the word we do not find the idea of members of a church, but of Christ.

Ministry, as it is presented in the word, is likewise a proof of this same truth. The gifts, source of ministry, given by the Holy Spirit, were in the Church (1 Cor. 12:8-12, 28). Those who possessed them were members of the body. If Apollos was a teacher at Corinth, he was also a teacher at Ephesus. If he was the eye, ear, or any other member whatever of Christ’s body at Ephesus, he was also such at Corinth. For this subject there is nothing clearer than 1 Corinthians 12: one body, many members; the Church one, in which were found the gifts that the Holy Spirit had given—gifts which were exercised in any locality whatsoever where he might be who possessed them. In Ephesians 4 the same truth is set forth. When Christ ascended on high, He “gave gifts unto men … and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we

all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: 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 every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love."

This unity and the free activity of the members are found realized in the time of the apostles. Each gift was fully owned as efficacious to accomplish the work of the Lord, and was freely exercised. The apostles laboured as apostles, and likewise those who had been scattered on the occasion of the first persecution laboured in the work according to the measure of their gifts. It is thus that the apostles taught (1 Peter 4:10,11; 1 Cor. 14:26-29). And it is thus that the Christians did. The devil sought to destroy this unity; but he was not able to succeed as long as the apostles lived. He employed Judaism for this work; but the Holy Spirit preserved the unity, as we read in Acts 15. He sought to create sects in it by means of philosophy (1 Cor. 2), and of both together (Col. 2). But all these efforts were vain. The Holy Spirit acted in the midst of the Church, and the wisdom given to the apostles to maintain the unity and the truth of the Church against the power of the enemy. The more one reads the Acts of the Apostles, the more one reads the Epistles, the more one sees this unity and

this truth. The union of these two things can only take effect by the action of the Holy Ghost. Individual liberty is not union; and the union of men does not leave the individual his full liberty. But the Holy Spirit, when He governs, necessarily unites brethren together and acts in each according to the aim which He has proposed to Himself in uniting them, that is to say, according to His own aim. Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost gathers together all the saints in one body, and works in each according to His will, guiding them in the Lord's service for the glory of God and the edification of the body.

Such was the Church: how is it now and where does it exist? It will be perfected in heaven. Granted: but where is it found now on earth? The members of Christ's body are now dispersed; many hidden in the world, others in the midst of religious corruption; some in one sect, some in another, in rivalry one with another to gain over the saved. Many, thanks be to God, do seek unity; but who is it that has found it? It suffices not to say that by the same Spirit we love each other; for by one Spirit we have been baptized into one body. "That they all may be one …" says the Lord, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." But we are not one; the unity of the body is not manifested. At the beginning it was clearly manifested, and in every city this unity was evident to all the world. All Christians walked everywhere as one Church. He who was a member of Christ in one locality was so also in another, and he who had a letter of recommendation was received everywhere, because there existed but one society. The Supper was the outward sign of this unity. "We being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. 10:17. The testimony the Church gives

now is rather that of proclaiming that the Holy Ghost with His power and grace is unable to surmount the causes of the divisions. The greatest part of what is called the Church is the seat of the grossest corruption, and the majority of those who boast of its light are unbelievers. Greeks, Romanists, Lutherans, Reformers cannot take the Supper together; they condemn each other. The light of God's children who are found in the sects is hid under a bushel; and those who are separated from such bodies, because they cannot endure the corruption, are divided into hundreds of parties who will not take the Supper together. Neither the one nor the other pretends to be the Church of God, and they say that it is become invisible; but what is the value of an invisible light? Nevertheless there is no humiliation or confession in seeing the light become invisible. Unity with respect to its manifestation is destroyed. The Church—once beautiful, united, heavenly—has lost its character, is hidden in the world; and the Christians themselves—worldly, covetous, eager for riches, honour, power—like the children of the age. It is an epistle in which one cannot read a single word of Christ.20 The greatest part of what bears the name of Christian is the seat of the enemy or infidel; and the true Christians are lost in the midst of the multitude. Where can we find one loaf, the sign of one body? Where is the power of the Spirit who unites Christians in a single body? Who can deny that the Christians were thus? and are they not guilty for being no longer what they were? or shall we call it well to be in a state totally different from that in which the Church was at the beginning and from that which the word demands from us? We ought to be profoundly grieved at such a state of the Church in the world, because it no way answers to the heart and love

of Christ. Men rest satisfied in being assured of their eternal salvation.

Do we seek what the word says on this point? Here is what we read there, in a general way, for what concerns every economy or dispensation, and the ways of God with the Jews and towards the branches from among the Gentiles who were substituted for the Jews (Rom. u). “On them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Is it not a serious thing, when the people of God on the earth are cut off? Certainly the faithful are and will be kept; for God has no thought of failing in His faithfulness; but all the systems in which God glorifies Himself on the earth may be judged and cut off. The glory of God, His real visible presence, was once at Jerusalem, His throne was over the cherubim; but ever since the Babylonish captivity His presence abandoned Jerusalem, and His glory as well as His presence were no more in the temple in the midst of the people. And though His great patience endured long, until Christ was rejected, yet God cut them off as regards that covenant. The remnant became Christians, but all the system was terminated by judgment. Such will be the issue of the Christian system, if it continue not in the goodness of God. But it has not continued in God’s goodness.

Therefore, though I believe firmly that all true Christians will be preserved and caught up to heaven, yet for what concerns the testimony of the Church on earth, the house of God through the Spirit, it will exist no more. Peter had said already, the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And in Paul’s time the mystery of iniquity was already working and

was to be continued till the man of sin appeared; already in the apostle's time all sought their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. The apostle tells us farther that after his departure there should enter among the Christians in the Church grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and that in the last days perilous times should come, men having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; that evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; and that finally the apostasy should come. Now is all this continuing in God's goodness?

And this unfaithfulness, is it a thing unknown in the history of man? God has always begun by putting His creature in a good position; but the creature invariably abandons the position in which God set it, becoming unfaithful therein. And God, after long forbearance, never re-establishes it in the position it fell from. It is not according to His ways to patch up a thing which has been spoilt; but He cuts it off, to introduce afterwards something entirely new and far better than what went before. Adam fell; and God will have the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. God gave the law to Israel, who made the calf of gold before Moses came down from the mountain; and God will write the law in the hearts of His people. God ordained the priesthood of Aaron, but his sons from the very first offered strange fire; and from that moment Aaron could no more enter the holiest with his garments of glory and beauty. God made the son of David to sit on the throne of Jehovah; but, idolatry having been introduced by him, the kingdom was divided, and the throne of the world was given of God to Nebuchadnezzar, who made a great image of gold and cast the faithful into a burning fiery furnace. In every

case man was faithless; and God, having long borne with him, interposes in judgment and substitutes a better system.

It is interesting to observe how all the things in which man has broken down are established in a more excellent way in the second Man. Man shall be exalted in Christ, the law written in the heart of the Jews, priesthood be exercised by Jesus Christ. He is the Son of David who is to reign over the house of Israel; He is to govern the nations. Likewise as regards the Church, it has been unfaithful; it has not maintained the glory of God which had been confided to it. Therefore shall it be cut off as a system on the earth, the order of things established of God shall be closed by judgment, the faithful shall go up to heaven into a state much better to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, and the kingdom of the Saviour shall be established on the earth. All this will be an admirable testimony to the faithfulness of God, who will accomplish all His counsels spite of the unfaithfulness of man. But does this take away the responsibility of man? How then, as the apostle says, could God judge the world? Ought not our hearts to feel that we have cast the glory of the Lord into the dust? The mischief began in the times of the apostles: each added to it his own; and the iniquity of ages is heaped upon us; and soon the house of God will be judged. The blood of all the righteous has been required of the Jewish nation by Jesus, as also Babylon will be found guilty of the blood of all the righteous.

It is true that we shall be caught up to heaven; but, along with that, ought we not to mourn over the ruin of the house of God? Yes: formerly one, a beautiful testimony to the glory of its Head by the power of the

Holy Ghost; united, heavenly, so that the world could recognize the effect of the power of the Holy Spirit who put men above all human motives, and, causing distinctions and diversities among them to disappear, made believers in all countries and of all classes to be one family, one body, one Church, a mighty testimony to the presence of God on earth in the midst of men.

But it is objected that we are not responsible for the sins of those who have gone before us. Are we not responsible for the state in which we are found? Did the Nehemiahs, the Daniels, excuse themselves for the sins of the people? Or rather, did they not mourn over the misery of the people of God as belonging to them? If we were not responsible, why then should God put them aside, why judge and destroy all the system? Why should He say, “I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent”? Why does He judge Thyatira, replacing it by the kingdom? Why does He say, “I will spue thee out of my mouth”? I believe that the seven churches furnish us with the history of the Church from the beginning to the end; in all cases we have there the responsibility of Christians as to the state of the Church. It will be said perhaps that there are none but local churches which are responsible, and not the Church universal. What is certain is that God will cut off the Church as a system established on earth.

Still more to demonstrate responsibility continually from the beginning to the end, let us read in Jude, “There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.” They had already slipt in. “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten

thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all.” Thus those who in the time of Jude had already crept in would bring the judgments on the profane professors of Christianity. In this epistle we have the three classes of iniquity and their progress. In Cain there is purely human iniquity; in Balaam ecclesiastical iniquity; and in Korah rebellion, and then they perish. In the field where the Lord had sown the good seed, while men slept the enemy sowed tares. It is very true that the good seed is gathered into the garner, but the negligence of the servants has left the enemy the opportunity of spoiling the Master’s work. Shall we be indifferent to the state of the Church, beloved of the Lord, indifferent to the divisions that the Lord has forbidden? No;21 let us humble ourselves, dear brethren, let us own our fault and have done with it. Let us walk faithfully, each for his part, and endeavour to find once more the unity of the Church and the testimony of God. Let us cleanse ourselves from all evil and all iniquity. If it is possible for us to gather together in the name of the Lord, it is a great blessing; but it is essential that this be done in the unity of the Church of God and in the true liberty of the Spirit.

If the house of God is still on the earth and the Holy Spirit abides in it, is He not grieved at the state of the Church? And if He abides in us, should not our hearts be afflicted and humbled at the dishonour done to Christ and the destruction of the testimony that the Holy Ghost is come down from heaven to bear in the unity of the Church of God? He who will confront the state of the Church, as it is described to us in the New Testament with its present state, will feel his heart profoundly saddened by seeing the Church’s glory dragged into the

dust and the enemy triumphing in the confusion of the people of God.

Finally, Christ has confided His glory on earth to the Church. It was the depositary of that glory. There the world ought to have seen it displayed by the power of the Holy Ghost, a testimony to the victory of Christ over Satan, death, and all the enemies that He has led captive, triumphing over them in the cross. Has the Church preserved this deposit and maintained the glory of Christ on the earth? If this has not been done, tell me, Christian, is the Church responsible for it? Was the servant, to whom the Lord entrusted the care of His house (Matt. 24), responsible or not for the state of his Master's house? It will be said, perhaps, that the wicked servant is the outward church, which is corrupted and is not really the Church: as for me, I am not a member of it at all. But I reply that, in the parable, the servant is alone; and the question is whether this sole servant is faithful or unfaithful? It may be true that you are separate from the iniquity which fills the house of God, and you have done well; but is not your heart bowed down because of the state of that house? The Lord shed tears of grief over Jerusalem; and shall we shed none over that which is still dearer to His heart? Here the glory of the Lord has been trampled under foot: shall we say that we are not responsible for it? His only servant is held accountable. Even though, individually guided by the word, I may be apart from all the iniquity which corrupts the house of God, nevertheless, as Christ's servant, I ought to identify myself with the glory of Christ, and with its manifestations to the world. It is in this that faith is shewn: not merely in believing that God and Christ possess the glory, but in identifying this glory

with His people (Exod. 32:11, 12; Num. 14:13-19; 2 Cor. 1:20). First, God entrusts His glory to man, who is responsible to maintain himself in his position, and to be faithful in it, without leaving his first estate; by and by God will establish His own glory according to His counsels. But, first of all, man is responsible where God has set him. We have been set in the Church of God, in His house, in the habitation of His glory on the earth: where is it?

17 This is an incontestable proof that the pope cannot be the head of the Church, because if Christ is the Head, one body cannot have two heads.

18 Be it observed that there are no keys for the Church. One does not build with keys. The keys are for the kingdom.

19 Be it observed that the apostle speaks only of the prophets of the New Testament.

20 It is not said that we ought to be the epistle of Christ, but “ye are the epistle of Christ.”

21 In 1 Timothy we have the order of the Church, the house of God; in 2 Timothy we have the rule to follow when the Church is in disorder. For our God has provided for all difficulties, that we should be faithful and depart from all iniquity.

The Church—The House And The Body

It seems to me that a few words now as to the Church, though not bringing forward anything entirely new, will be opportune. The question of the Church is agitated in every sense; and those who favour the popish or high-church view of it profit by certain expressions which some find it difficult to explain. My notice of the subject will be brief.

There are two points to be considered which comprehend all that with which I am at present occupied. The first is one which I have heretofore noticed, and on which the confusion and discord rest that agitate believing protestantism; namely, the identifying the house with the body, or the outward thing here on earth (including all who profess Christianity and all baptized) with the inward thing, or that which is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost. The other is taking the figure of a building (as scripture does), and then confounding what Christ Himself builds with what is the fruit of the work of building externally—here on earth entrusted to the responsibility of man.

Confusion on the first point seems to me to have been the-origin of the whole system of popery, in its leading feature; and the Reformation did not get clear of it. I mean the attributing the privileges of the body to every one who was externally introduced into the outward profession of Christianity—to every baptized person. At the beginning it was so in fact: the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved. There was no principle involved in this. It was the Lord’s own work; and, of course, was done really and perfectly. What He

did with the spared ones at the close of the Jewish dispensation was, not to take them to heaven, as He will at the close of the present period, but to add them to the assembly which He had formed. There can be no reasonable doubt they were added outwardly by baptism, as it was the known regular way of doing so. These as introduced by the Lord, surely, had really part in all the privileges which were found in the body they were added to. The sacramental and the vital system remained undistinguished; and indeed in certain respects undeveloped, for there was no Gentile yet received, nor was the unity of the body taught. All was there that was given; for the Holy Ghost had come down, but was, as a fact, confined to Jews and Jerusalem; so that, if the nation had repented, Acts 3 might have been fulfilled as well as chapter 2. But if here all was developed, if the distinctive characters of the Church, as the unity of Jew and Gentile in one body, were not brought into evidence, all was at any rate real. The Lord, who added to the Church, brought men into the privileges which the Church possessed, and brought in those who were to possess them.

But this soon ceased to be the case. The Simon Maguses and false brethren crept in unawares, and sacramental introduction and real enjoyment of privilege became distinct. All who were introduced by baptism were not members of the body of Christ nor had really eternal life. I do not say they enjoyed no advantages. They enjoyed much every way, but it only turned to increased condemnation, and, according to Jude, they were the seed of judgment as regards the Church: of this scripture is thus witness. Such remains as we have of the primitive Church shew that this question, or

difference, was wholly lost. They contended for truth against heresy, as Irenseus; for unity, in fact, in what existed, as Ignatius (though most of what is ordinarily read of his is clearly, I judge, spurious). Bdth were right in the main, but that doctrine which Paul upheld with difficulty against Judaizers, and, in general, the doctrine or one body (of which Christ was the head, and those personally sealed with the Holy Ghost the members), was lost; and, in general, the rights of the body were attributed to all the baptized. I say in general, for the true privileges of the body had disappeared from their minds altogether. If they kept the great elements of the faith, and Gnosticism (the denial of the humanity, or of the divinity, of Christ) were warded off, they were glad; while Platonisrh (through the means of Justin Martyr, Origen, and Clement) corrupted sufficiently within. But the effect was evident. The outward body became the Church, and whatever was held of privilege was attributed to all the baptized.

This has continued in the reformed churches. Thus, “baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven”; so Luther, so Calvin: only the latter affirming in other teachings that it was made good only in the elect; so the Scotch Church—the degree only of privilege differing. Many important consequences followed from this in Anglicans and Lutherans; such as that a person had really eternal life, was really a member of Christ, yet was finally lost. I do not dwell on these things; but the immense bearing of them is evident. Now there was a double error in thus attributing, to the external sacramental rite, the actual vital introduction into the living possession of divine privileges; and, in the utter

confusion of thought which followed, the attributing the privileges of one sacrament to participation in the other.

I do not deny that the sign is spoken of as the thing signified. Christ could say, “This is my body which is broken,” when it was not yet broken at all, and while He held the bread in His own hand alive; “This is the Lord’s passover,” when God was no longer passing over at all; “I am the true vine,” and so of a thousand others. It enters into all language. I say of a picture: “That is my mother.” Nobody is misled by it but those who choose to be misled. “We are buried with Christ by baptism unto death”; yet we are not buried, and we do not die: that is certain. Hence we find in scripture, in a general way, this use of language as to baptism and the Lord’s supper. Only, singular to say, we do not find the communication of life attributed to baptism, nor eating Christ’s flesh nor drinking Christ’s blood attributed to the partaking of the Lord’s supper. The nearest approach to it is the washing of regeneration.22 There may be passages from which it may be sought to prove it, as John 3 and 6 (which I should wholly and absolutely deny apply to the sacraments); but direct passage there is none. Baptism is used figuratively as our burial unto death, and it may be alleged of our resurrection with Christ. Saul was called to wash away his sins; but no one is said to receive life or be quickened therein.

Scripture recognizes a sacramental system (that is, a system of ordinances) by which men are professedly gathered into a system on earth, where privileges are found. The Jewish and the Christian scriptures have both this character; but scripture carefully distinguishes personal possession of privileges from admission to the place where these privileges are. “What advantages

hath the Jew? Much every way; chiefly, that unto them are committed the oracles of God." And elsewhere we have an enumeration of these privileges which is carried on even to Christ being of them according to the flesh. But all were not Israel that were of Israel, nor were those Jews who were such outwardly.

The same is true in Christianity. In I Corinthians 16 the apostle insists that men might be partakers of the sacraments and perish after all. And this may go very far: a person may have all the external and real privileges belonging to the Christian system and not have life. This is the case in Hebrews 6. One may speak with the tongues of men and angels, have faith to remove mountains, and be nothing. These things may be there, and "not accompany salvation." Hence, in the case of the Galatians, he stood for a moment in doubt of them, though the Spirit was ministered to them; and we have the Lord admitting that men had cast out devils in His name, yet that He had never known them (Matt. 7). And though this (it is true) is directly connected with His sojourn on earth, one may be a branch in the vine, and be taken away.23 I confirm the general truth merely by this. In the Christian order of things, we have admission to the Christian system by ordinances recognized, and even outward privileges enjoyed— and yet no divine life or union with Christ.

But the Anglican system goes farther. It attributes to the baptized that of which baptism is not even a sign. That baptism should be a sign of regeneration, I have no wish to deny. It is according to scripture specifically unto death, and, in general, to the name of Christ. But it is as a sign of death, and coming up out of it may be held as resurrection; but this is individual, and has nothing to do

with the body of Christ. Baptism is not even a sign of being, or being made, a member of Christ. It goes no farther than death, and, at the utmost, resurrection. It is individual. I die there: I rise up again. The unity of the body has no place in it. We are baptized alone, each one for himself. But it is by one Spirit we are baptized into one body, not by water. The Lord's supper is the sign of that; we are all one body, inasmuch as we are partakers of that one loaf. The alleging that all baptized persons have life even is unscriptural and untrue. The ascribing the possession of vital privileges, eternal life, to them is a fatal error, and that which leads to the judgment revealed in Jude. The attributing membership of Christ to them is not even in a figure found in baptism.

The sacraments or ordinances, for there is a sacramental system, are the earthly administrations of revealed privileges, an outward system of professed faith, and a visible body on earth. Life and membership of Christ are by the Holy Ghost. We are born of the Spirit, and by one Spirit baptized into one body. To say we are members of Christ by baptism is a falsification of the truth of God, by confounding (directly contrary to scripture) the external admission to the earthiy profession with life from God; and it is the falsification of the meaning even of the sign. It is the other sacrament, not baptism, which (even externally) exhibits the unity of the body. The Lord's supper is in its nature received in common. The assembly or Church participate. Hence we have (Eph. 4), "one Spirit, one body, one hope of your calling." This belongs to the Spirit and spiritual persons. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism"; such is the outward profession and faith of Christ.

The confounding the outward administration by ordinances with the power of the Spirit of God is the source of popery and apostasy. It is pitiable to see how Augustine (a truly godly man personally, who felt what life and the true Church were, when the outward thing had become grossly corrupt) writhes under the effort to conciliate the two; and quails and is boggled in his answer to the Donatists—which is none. It had been determined that the baptism by heretics was good; it was held that the Holy Ghost was given by it (another egregious blunder at any rate, as the Acts plainly shews): consequently the Donatists had it, consequently were of the true Church. In vain Augustine seeks, flounderingly, to get out of the net he had spread for himself or got into. It required another remedy. In fact the bishops and Constantine had used other means than arguments.

Let me add here, what is not unimportant to remark, that baptism imports, not a change of state by receiving fife, but a change of place. There are two things needed for fallen man. He was at enmity with God, in the mind of his flesh, and he was driven out away from God. Both these had to be remedied. We are born of God, get the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but the fact of having life does not change our place; we become conscious of the sinfulness of the flesh—that there is no good thing in us (that is, in our flesh); but if we bring this into the light of God’s requirements, it is only “O wretched man that I am!” A change of place, position, standing, being reconciled to God, is needed also. But that is by Christ’s dying and so entering as man into a new place and standing for man in resurrection, according to the value of His work. He died unto sin once: in that He lives He

lives unto God. Now it is of this that baptism is the sign, not of His simple quickening power as Son of God. We are baptized to His death, buried with Him unto death, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life. No doubt, if we are risen, we are alive; but we are quickened together with Him. Death has taken us wholly out of our old place; we have died out of it, as Christ died out of the world, and to sin; we are dead to the law by the body of Christ; we are dead to sin, have crucified the flesh, are crucified to the world. Now baptism represents death, and hence, when come out of it, a new place and standing before God—death and not quickening. We have put on Christ as in this new place, and have done with the world, flesh, and law, by death. This would be true, were but one Christian saved in the world. The unity of the body, which follows on it, is another truth. The doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans does not touch on this, though the practical part takes it up as a well-known truth. I now turn to the building. Christ declares (in Matthew 16) that He will build the Church and that the gates of hell (hades)— Satan's power, as having the power of death—shall not prevail against it. The title given to Satan's power clearly shews what the rock was. Christ was the Son of the living God. The power of death (which Satan holds) could not prevail against that. The resurrection was the proof of it: then He was declared Son of God with power. Peter's confession of the truth revealed to him by the Father put him, by Christ's gift, in the first place in connection with this truth. The reader may remark that keys have nothing to do with the Church: people do not, as I have heretofore remarked, build with keys. Besides, the keys, those of the kingdom, were given to Peter. He had

nothing to do with building: Christ was to do that. “I will build,” says Christ. The Father had revealed Christ’s character. On that rock Christ would build; Peter might be the first stone in importance, but no builder. Besides that, Christ has Himself (“also” refers to this: “I also,” that is, besides what the Father has done) an administration to confer on Peter, that of the kingdom whose keys are given to him. But beyond all controversy, the kingdom of heaven is not the Church, though they may run parallel at the present time. Accordingly, when Peter refers to this, he does not speak of himself as building in any way. It was Christ’s personal secret work in the soul carried on by Him, a real spiritual work, applicable individually and only to those who were spiritual, and, though by grace in their hearts, their own coming to Christ. “To whom coming, a living stone disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore, also, it is contained in the scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. To you, therefore, that believe he is precious”; otherwise a stone of stumbling. Now here there are no ordinances, but faith; living stones coming to a living stone. All is spiritual, personal, real. Christ is precious to faith. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious: otherwise it is not true, Peter does not build, nor any other instrument. They come by faith and are built up. Against this, most assuredly, the gates of hades will not prevail; but man’s building has nothing to say to it. The body or membership of the body forms no part of Peter’s revelation. Nor does he speak of the Church or assembly at all.

Let us now turn to Paul. He is full upon this question. He was a minister of the Church to fulfil or complete the word of God. Hence the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ is fully developed by him. In Ephesians 1-4, in 1 Corinthians 10 and 12, in Romans 12, in Colossians, we have large and elaborate instruction on the subject; but of course there is no talking of building a body. Christ is risen to be the Head of the body. In Colossians 1 He is exalted to the right hand of God. And God has given Him, in that position, to be Head to the body which is His fulness who fills all in all. Christ has reconciled both in one body by the cross. And, as to its accomphshment, it is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost: by one Spirit we have been all baptized into one body. And, further, when he speaks of the building in its true perfect adjustment, he has no instrumental builder either. “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.” This, though somewhat differently viewed, is Peter’s building. We may find the same in Hebrews 3, Christ’s house, “Whose house are we.” But Paul speaks in a different way elsewhere, and shews us the house raised by human instruments, a public ostensible thing in the world. “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.” And then he shews the effect of fidelity or infidelity in the work. Now in this we have the responsibility of man, and the instrumentality of man directly engaged in the work. Christ is not the builder. Paul is the master-builder and lays the foundation which

is Christ; others build on it; nor is the building, consequently, fitly framed together. Wood and hay and stubble are not fitly framed in a building with gold and silver and precious stones: the work is, in such case, to be burned up: Christ's work never will. Now this gives, evidently, another character to the Church than that of Matthew 16 or 1 Peter 2.

It is on this confusion and error that popery, Puseyism, and the whole high-church system is built. They have not distinguished between the building which Christ builds, where living stones come to a living stone, where all grows to a holy temple in the Lord (that is, where the result is perfect), and that which man avowedly builds, though as God's building, and where man may fail and has failed. I am entirely justified in looking at the outward thing in this world as a building, which in pretension, character, and responsibility is God's building; yet it has been built by man, and built of wood and stubble, so that the work is to be burned up in the day of judgment which is revealed in fire. Yea, more, I may see that corrupters have corrupted it; and that, if any have dealt with it in this character, they will be destroyed. In a word I have a building which Christ builds, a building in which living stones come and are built up as living stones, a building which grows to a holy temple in the Lord. I have also what is called God's building, as that which is for Him and set up by Him on the earth, but which is built instrumentally and responsibly by man, where I may find very bad building and even persons corrupting it. The foundation well laid, and a good foundation, but all the superstructure to be in question. Thus the whole professing church stands in the position and responsibility of God's building; the

actual building or work is the work of men and may be wood, hay, and stubble, or the mere corruption of the corrupter. It is not that of which Christ says, “I will build.” It would be a blasphemy to say that He builds with wood, hay, and stubble, or corrupts the temple of God. Yet such the apostle tells us may take place; and it has taken place; and he who sets the title of God upon the wood, hay, and stubble, or upon the wicked corruption of His temple, dishonours God by putting (as far as they are concerned) His seal and sanction upon evil, which is the greatest of wickedness. What our path in such a case is, Paul (2 Tim. 2) tells us; but it is not my object to pursue this here, but to distinguish between those admitted by baptism and the body; and between the Church which Christ builds, and what man builds when God’s building is entrusted to him. All that has been entrusted to man, man has failed in. And God has put all into his hands first, to be set up perfect in the second Man who never fails.

Adam himself fails and is replaced by Christ.

The law was given, and Israel made the golden calf; hereafter, when Christ comes, the law will be written in the heart of Israel.

The priesthood failed, strange fire was offered and Aaron forbidden to enter the sanctuary, save on the great day of atonement, and then not in his garments of glory and beauty; Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest even now in glory.

The son of David set up in person wholly fails, loving many strange women, and the kingdom is divided. Nebuchadnezzar set by God over the Gentiles makes a golden image, puts those faithful to God into the fire,

and becomes a beast. Christ shall take the throne of David in unfailing glory, and rise to reign over the Gentiles.

The Church was called to glorify Christ. I, says He, am glorified in them. But antichrists and a falling away are the result: even in the apostle's time all seek their own; and the last days (John), the objects of judgment (Jude), were there. After Paul's decease grievous wolves would come, and from the bosom of the Church those who turned away the disciples would arise, and perilous times and evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, and if they did not continue in God's goodness, they would be cut off: but He will come, for all that, to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. The Church has fallen like all the rest. Grace will produce and perfect its own work. Christ's building will be complete and perfect, but be manifested in glory. Man's building is ill built and corrupted, and will come under the worst and severest of judgments.

22 "Regeneration" is not the same word as "born again," in 1 Peter 1. It is a change of state, as in Matthew 19:28, not a communication of life.

23 "If a man," not if ye, "abide not in me": the Lord knew them, and that they were already clean.

Matthew 16

Whatever may help to make the mind clear on passages used to support the errors of popery and Puseyism, is of use at this moment—at least to supply an answer to those whose minds are less exercised on such subjects, even though their own faith may be settled by positive truth. God's goodness may preserve a soul from popish error; but as to doctrine, where redemption is not clearly know, I have always felt that there was nothing to secure the soul from its inroads. Its positive superstitions and errors may suffice under mercy to lead the mind to reject it, and for this we may thank God; but as to peace and acceptance, a vast portion of the evangelical world is so little removed from the popish faith that one can never be surprised (in the present confusion and prevalence of superstition) if people fall into the snares its agents lay for souls. Even the doctrine of the Reformation, "assurance of salvation," held then by all, and condemned by the Council of Trent as the vain confidence of the heretics, is condemned by a vast body of protestants nowadays as presumptuous, and is possessed by few in simplicity of well-grounded faith, though the number of these be, thank God, increasing. Where redemption is clearly known, where what Christ positively promised is possessed, "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me and I in you," the whole system of popery and ritualism falls to the ground, having no possible place in the mind. Popery and ritualism profess to patch up continually the conscience for those who are still far from God, leaving them to answer for themselves in the day of judgment: the true believer is with a perfect conscience in the

presence of God. He is accepted in the Beloved, and has boldness to enter into the holiest now, and knows that God will remember his sins and iniquities no more.

Where this is the case, all the appliances of popery have no possible place. But how few of those opposed to ritualism are there! A Jew had his sacrifice for every sin; a Roman Catholic has his absolution when occasion arises; the Christian has by one offering been perfected for ever, though he may humble himself and make confession to God for every failure. But the evangelical world will speak of re-sprinkling with the blood of Christ; or, if Calvin be listened to, be taught, where failure has occurred, to look back to baptism, or will account the Lord's supper a means of forgiveness (for forgiveness of sins is attributed to sacraments in reformation-theology). On these subjects the protestant theology is too vague and too inconsistent to meet the positiveness of the deadly and faith-denying errors of popery. The cardinal point of complete redemption, of Christ's having by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified, of our being accepted in the Beloved, of Christ's appearing in the presence of God for us our abiding righteousness, is unknown or feared; and you have the pretension of positive priestly absolution in an uncertain conscience: in both an uncertain salvation; the doctrine of scripture is lost. We cannot insist too much on the godly life of the redeemed, but scripture will never use it to weaken the truth or completeness of redemption. Sacraments are most precious in their place, but not to undo or neutralize the efficacy of that of which they are the signs. Warnings and exhortations are, thank God, abundantly given for our path, as redeemed, through the wilderness, and as to our

dependence every instant on grace to carry us through, but never to make us doubt the faithfulness of Him who exercises it in bringing us to the end of our journey, confirming us to the end that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our sin and condemnation have been learned, but also Christ's substitution for us, and the truth that we are made the righteousness of God in Him; so that the question of our righteousness before God never can be raised again, for Christ is it always, and always before God for us. Our weakness we learn every day, but to know that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness. Failure, alas! may occur, but it gives occasion to Christ's intercession, to His washing our feet; chastening may be needed from our not judging ourselves, but it is applied that we may not be condemned with the world. There is abundant exercise and testing and trying of the life given; but because Christ lives we shall live also.

My object is not now however to pursue the testimony which scripture gives of a complete and accomplished redemption into the enjoyment of which in its sure efficacy we now enter by faith (in itself a far more interesting subject), but passages and subjects which might perplex the mind in reference to forgiveness and ecclesiastical authority. It will lead us into some enquiry as to the government of God and the discipline of His house; the kingdom of God and the so-called power of the keys. We may take the well-known passage in Matthew 16 as our point of departure.

The essential difference of the synoptical Gospels and John's is that the three former shew us Christ presented to the responsibility of man, and especially of the Jews in this world, with the result; while John's assumes the

Jews to be reprobates, and developes sovereign grace and electing love in connection with the person of the Son of God as a man in this world, which, and not merely Judaism, is now seen as its sphere, and the gift of the Holy Ghost consequent on His going away. There is this peculiar to Luke amongst the first three, that in the first two chapters we have the deeply interesting picture of the godly remnant in Israel; then Christ traced up to Adam (not from Abraham and David) and grace comes out as revealed to man in Him more fully.

In the Gospel of Matthew (which especially speaks of Christ as Emmanuel, Messiah), the narrative, which develops great principles more than facts in historical order, is arrived, in the chapter I refer to, at the point where the Jews had practically rejected the Saviour; so that (verse 20) He charges the disciples that they should no longer tell that He was the Christ, and proceeds to shew His disciples that He must suffer; and the substitution of the Church and the kingdom of heaven for the Jewish system (in chap. 16), and the coming glory of the Son of man in His kingdom (in chap. 17) are brought before us by the Spirit of God. The Church and the kingdom of heaven form, consequently, the weighty revelation of the Lord in chapter 16. On this let us dwell for a moment.

All is founded on the revelation of the Person of the Son of God. Various opinions were formed by men as to Him, but the Father Himself had revealed to Simon Bar-jonas that Jesus was the Son of the living God. On this rock Christ would build His Church. The true force of verse 18 is, “and I also say.” That is, The Father had told Simon what Christ was, Christ tells him what he, Simon, is. He is Peter, or a stone. But on the doctrine of His

person as Son of the living God Christ would build His Church. It was on a risen Christ; for this was the public witness that He was Son of the living God, and all the power of Satan, who has the power of death, should not prevail against what Christ thus built. The important thing here to note is, that Christ and Christ only is the builder. No man has anything to do with it, nor is that which Christ builds yet finished. It is a building which continues till the whole temple is complete according to the mind of God. So, when Peter speaks in his epistle (1 Pet. 2:4, 5), he says, Unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house. We have no human builder. So in Ephesians 2, Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In all this we have no builder save Christ, and the building is only growing up to a temple in the Lord. I have spoken elsewhere of the contrast of this with 1 Corinthians 3, where we have the agency and responsibility of man. Paul is a wise master-builder; some might build with wood, hay, and stubble, but be themselves saved; others corrupt the temple of the Lord and be themselves destroyed. Into this I do not enter farther here. But they are looked at here as the temple of the Lord already, and God’s building, not merely growing to it.

What we learn from Matthew 16 is that in the building against which the gates of hell do not prevail man takes no part—it is Christ who builds; while in that in which man’s responsibility is engaged, wood and hay and stubble may be built in and the work destroyed by fire. To confound these two things (a confusion on which the

whole pretensions of popery and Pusey-ism are built up) is most mischievous, and makes God answerable for man's evil work, and bound to maintain and sanction it. It is a very wicked doctrine.

Further, there are no keys to the Church. It and its building have nothing to do with the keys. Christ builds and does not build with keys. The keys are the insignia of the administration of the kingdom. These were in a special manner entrusted to Peter individually; but the passage gives him nothing to do with building the Church at all, nor does he pretend to it when he refers to this passage in his epistle. He partakes in a remarkable manner of that on which the Church is founded. He is a stone, has part in the nature of the living stone, the Son of the living God, the truth on which the Church rests; but that is all. Of the kingdom of heaven he had the administration specially entrusted to him. The kingdom is not the Church, and never will be. In a general way, we may say, those who compose it have a part in the kingdom, and will hereafter reign in it as they now suffer for it. It is the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ now; hereafter the kingdom and glory. Christ, as John the baptist, had preached the kingdom of heaven as at hand, as did the twelve (Matt. 10:7). When at length it was set up, though in no outward power, Peter had in an especial manner the administration of it, as we see in the Acts. The Lord added to the Church daily (then openly) such as should be saved. This was His own work; but we see Peter, whether in testimony to Jews or Gentiles, or ordering the choice of deacons, or dealing with Ananias and Sapphira, having the administrative lead in the work. And what he preaches is the Lordship of the ascended Man as a present thing (in

chap. 2), and His return in power to accomplish the prophecies (in chap. 3). The assembly was there, and the Lord added to it; but the testimony was to the Lordship of Christ, made Lord, and returning in power. In the case of Cornelius the Church does not come in question. Peter never preaches once that Jesus is the Son of God. He is exalted, made Lord and Christ. In this administration of the kingdom, Heaven put its seal on his acts. Whatever he bound or loosed was bound or loosed with an authority which Heaven sanctioned. I will speak of forgiveness in a moment; but in general what was established by Peter's apostolic authority in the administration of the kingdom had Heaven's seal put upon it. But in Matthew 16 the keys have no connection with the Church, and Peter has nothing to do with building that Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Scripture never confounds the kingdom and the Church.

Further, binding and loosing is not confined to forgiveness, even if, in a collateral way, it may include it, and it is only in such a way that it does. Whatever Peter establishes by the authority committed to him was sanctioned in heaven, as was also whatever two or three did as really met in Christ's name. That too was sanctioned in heaven as much as Peter's administrative acts; but only what was within the competency or left to the service of the place he was put in, or of the two or three gathered in Christ's name. Heaven's sanction on what they did does not mean that they could determine all that heaven could. The sanction of all that an inferior authority does is not saying that that inferior authority can do all that its superior is entitled to do or has to do. Many things may not be left to it. It is a question of what

is rightly left. Thus, “What you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven “does not include binding anything in heaven. Whatever in Christianity belonged to heaven itself, whatever was done there, Peter and the Church had no power whatever. He bound things on earth and only there; his commission did not go farther; what he did in these, that Heaven sanctioned; but he had nothing to say to what was bound or loosed in heaven itself. And this is of all importance when we come to certain points. He, Simon Bar-jonas, had the administration of the kingdom confined to him, backed by Heaven’s authority: a most important and solemn charge, but that was all.

The same, in its own sphere, is committed to any Christian assembly—two or three gathered together in Christ’s name, for such is the assembly spoken of in Matthew 18: but no one dreams that such an assembly can bind beyond its own sphere of action, and determine things in heaven. What it does according to Christ’s institution Heaven holds for good, but that does not confer a’ power of binding beyond the reach of its commission. Heaven’s sanction of what is within is not the same thing as giving a power beyond its limits. I come now to the case of forgiveness.

All true Christians are forgiven, have received the forgiveness of their sins; and God will remember their sins and iniquities no more. God has quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses. “I write unto you,” says John, “little children [addressing all Christians], because, your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.” This can neither be bound nor loosed by any one, for God has settled it. Remission of sins is the portion of every one who has the true standing of a Christian. He is accepted in the Beloved. We have

redemption through Christ's blood, even the remission of sins. Through Christ (we read) all that believe are justified from all things. Christ is made righteousness to us of God. In the Old Testament this was not made clear. There was occasional forgiveness, and the full acceptance of the person was not revealed, any more than the full character of sin. A sacrifice could be offered to atone for faults committed: for some there was no remedy. A prophet might be sent to proclaim the putting away of sin. It was administrative forgiveness. The righteousness of God was not revealed. In the gospel it is. There was the forbearance of God, who did know, of course, why; but the end of Romans 3 makes this point quite clear, that the actual remission of sins according to the revealed righteousness of God came in by the gospel: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." This is a most important sentence on this subject. God had been righteous in forbearing as to the sins of the Abrahams and Davids and others, because of the sacrifice of Christ; and that righteousness was now declared, and the ground of it seen. It was by Christianity God's righteousness (we read in Rom. 1) is now revealed; and Christ has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Hence peace and remission of sins were to be preached in His name; all who believed were justified. The prophets witnessed that, through His name, whoever believed in Him should receive remission of their sins, and this was now come and announced in the name of the Lamb slain, with the

blessed testimony for those who received it, that their sins and iniquities would be remembered no more; that, sitting at the right hand of God, Christ was the perpetual witness there that the work was accomplished and owned of God, of which the Holy Ghost testified down here, come forth in virtue of Jesus being up there, and that Christ sits uninterruptedly there, because by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity those who are sanctified.

It is not at all a question as to sins committed to-day or to-morrow, but of a work done before we had committed any, into the present efficacy of which with God we enter, an efficacy which is of perpetual witness before God: that, further, we are in Him, accepted in the Beloved, of which our life will be the practical proof for others, seeing that, if we are in Him, He also is in us. This is not an administrative matter. It is the condition and standing of every true Christian. Peter preached this, and Paul preached this, as we may read in Acts 2,10 and 13, and the passages I have quoted from Romans 1 and 3, and Hebrews 10. They preached it, and so far as causing heathens or Jews to be received by baptism, administered it externally, though the latter act was accomplished by any and every Christian when the occasion presented itself; the apostles did it very rarely indeed. But a Christian was a forgiven accepted person according to the value and efficacy with God of Christ's work, which never varied. He was accepted at all times in Christ according to the abiding value of Christ's work. We have forgiveness: "all that believe are justified" are apostolic words. Once a person was a Christian, Simon Bar-jonas had nothing to do with administering this.

This leads me to another point in connection with this passage. It is a personal matter with Simon the son of Jonas. He was blessed by the revelation from the Father, and the keys of the kingdom were given to him; he was Peter, he only so designated of the Lord. To him, and to him only were given the keys or administration of the kingdom of heaven; what he, Simon, bound on earth would be bound in heaven, what he should loose would be loosed. He was the first confidential and divinely guided servant of the Master of the house. That was wholly personal to him, as the revelation of Christ by the Father to him was.

But the sanction of Heaven on loosing and binding on earth is declared, in another place, to belong to another depository of power where it is not personal, which does not refer to the kingdom but to the Church, and which (if granted of God's grace) may be found at any time while Christianity subsists, namely, wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, because Christ is there in the midst of them. This is no personal authority of any or all the members, but of an assembly because Christ is in their midst. The language of the passage is so plain that there would be no difficulty to any one, if habits of thought had not clothed it with a meaning which its language leaves no room for. If a brother should offend, the offended one was to seek to gain him; if this failed, he was to take one or two more, so that it might not rest on the injured one's statement alone, if it had to come into judgment. If this failed, he was to tell it to the assembly; if he refused to hear the assembly, he was to be counted as a heathen man. The Christian assembly took the place of the synagogue, and, where the assembly had acted, the judgment (till

repentance) was final; the offender was held to be outside as a heathen. First, one was to go, then he with others, then the assembly to be informed of it. It was the discipline of the gathered saints in any given place; and, to make the matter precise, we are told that, wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ is in the midst of them. Nothing really can be simpler. There is not a word of clergy, nor ministers (however useful these latter may be by their gifts for service), nothing even of elders, though these had their local functions also. The point is that, where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, Christ is. This then is the abiding seat of the exercise of that authority in its due sphere whose acts are sanctioned in heaven. The same authority given personally to Simon Bar-jonas was that authority conferred on the two or three gathered together in Christ's name, and exists wherever two or three are so gathered. This is a very important point. The perpetuity of the loosing and binding power is in two or three gathered together. It was personal in the chosen apostle and continued in none. It is a mistake to think that forgiveness alone is binding or loosing. What the apostle wrote was to be received as the commandments of the Lord.

A special case in connection with this is that of forgiving sins, only collaterally connected, after all, with the general authority of binding and loosing conferred on Simon. Forgiveness is much more directly connected with the communication of the Holy Ghost and the mission of the apostles in John 20. Matthew 16 has no direct reference to it. In Matthew 18 it comes as necessarily administratively involved in it, of which anon. John 20 was the general mission of the apostles,

which, as we have seen, had the forgiveness of sins for a principal object; indeed, as to the individual's state, repentance and remission of sins embraced the whole circle of its testimony, both of course in the name of Jesus. The apostles acted with the Lord's authority in this matter, Paul (as is fully declared by himself) coming in to partake of it from Christ Himself. But this forgiveness had a double character.

All Christians (as we have seen) were a forgiven people. They had redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. John would not have written to them but that they were all forgiven. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." God has quickened us with Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses. We are personally forgiven and accepted, our sins remembered no more, we are perfected for ever. Either this is true or scripture is not—so true that there is no more offering for sin; if they are not forgiven completely and for ever (as regards the imputing of sin to us, and just divine wrath against the sinner as to judgment), they never can be, because there is no more offering for sin, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. I do not talk of sins past, present, and future, for I ought not to think of sinning in future; it is a misapprehension, leading to a reference to the time of the fault and the then change of the state of the individual needed for forgiveness, but shuns its meritorious cause, instead of seeing one perfect work accepted of God as its ground, a work perfect and complete as accomplished by Christ for believers before or believers after, before believed in a hoped for, now accomplished and believed in, righteousness, revealed and accomplished propitiation. If I will speak of time, all

my sins were future when Christ bore them. But the true way is to see a complete work accepted of God, in the acceptance and sweet savour of which we always stand. God for Christ's sake (in Christ) has forgiven us. This was the grand testimony of Christianity. Called thereby to repentance, men had received the remission of their sins by faith in Christ and they were to be remembered no more. They were justified. But, besides reconciliation with God and man by the precious blood of the cross, there is the government of God's children.

God withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, says Elihu to Job and then enlarges upon the ways of God in chastening the righteous, and their restoration to blessing on their humiliation under His hand—just the lesson Job had to learn, and which is taught us in that book. The three friends insisted that this world was an adequate witness of the dealings of God with man as to good and evil, and hence that Job was a hypocrite. But we learn in it that when a man is righteous in God's sight, then it is that the dealings of God have their place for his practical profit and the acquirement of self-knowledge; that whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. This connects the idea of forgiveness or the contrary (not at all with imputation of sin as guilt, and condemnation as the consequence), but with the present infliction of chastisement, in displeasure doubtless, wrath if you please, in the righteous. If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord, but when we (Christians) are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we might not be condemned with the world. When this chastening, or the forgiveness which is connected with relieving any one from it, is confounded with the

forgiveness by which we are accepted and reconciled to God, redemption is not known at all: I do not say, intentionally denied, but not known at all. A conscience purged by the blood of Christ has no more to do with guilt, or with the question of salvation. If he is not cleansed, forgiven, justified completely and for ever, he never can be, for Christ cannot die again; and, as the apostle reasons, were it not so, He must suffer often, for that only puts away sin. He suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust. Christ is his righteousness, and he is in Christ before God. But for this very reason God will not allow any evil in him. He chastens for our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness.

Let us see what scripture says of forgiveness in respect of these dealings of God with the righteous, whether using the word forgiveness, or practically referring to the thing. The whole book of Job is a history of it. I quote particularly chapter 33, “He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit … he is chastened also with pain upon his bed. … If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom … He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy.” Here the man is not spoken of as righteous; but the dealings are in grace for correction; and when set right, the hand of God is removed from upon him. In chapter 36 it is expressly the righteous man who is dealt with. Again then He opens their ear to discipline, and if they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in

prosperity; if they obey not, they shall perish with the sword and die without knowledge. The Psalms are full of this principle; it is, so to speak, their main subject, though founded on atonement. “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Jehovah, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,” Psa. 94. “Jehovah hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death,” Psa. 118. “Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.”

In the New Testament we have a positive intelligent intervention of the saints in the administration of this forgiveness. First, indeed, men are called upon to judge themselves that they may not come under chastisement (1 Cor. 11:31, 32). But we have two cases where other saints have to say to it, besides apostolic power: discipline, and the supplication of brethren, or the elders’ prayer of faith. And first, in respect of discipline, the wicked man had been put out from the midst of the assembly. This, while purifying the assembly from evil, had brought the offender to his senses, and he was profoundly humbled about his sin. The apostle directs the assembly to forgive him; the punishment had been sufficient, and they were again to shew their love to him. It was no question of his being the righteousness of God, or of his part in it, but of the government of the Church, and the maintenance of its holiness here below. The wicked man could not enjoy in his wickedness the blessed privileges that belonged to it. He was excluded; now, humbled and penitent, he was to be forgiven. It was the present administration and government of the Church down here, and sanctioned of heaven. At the same time the apostle uses his apostolic authority; and

as he had judged the case himself, so now he forgives (2 Cor. 2:7, 10). He had the same authority as that given to the apostles in John 20, and the assembly at Corinth was to exercise concurrently its own in dealing with the case. The apostle was careful there should be no jar between the two. This is the force of verses 10, 11.

The intervention of any Christian, in favour of a sinning brother, we find in 1 John 5. A sin may bring death on a Christian, bodily death in this world, and that in a twofold way irremediably, so that he cannot be prayed for because of the character of the sin (such were Ananias and Sapphira); or, it may result in death, if he be not humbled; as we find in Job, “because there is wrath beware, lest he take thee away with a stroke.” If they obey not, they shall perish; that is, when He opens their ear to discipline. The Christian is expected here to discern where the sin has a character which draws out terror and indignation, not intercession. But if it is a sin not to death, though unrepented of, it may lead to the sinning brother’s being cut off, taken away with a stroke; then prayer is to be made, and the life of the sinning brother will be spared. He is in this sense forgiven. The threatened result of His sin is turned aside by the intercession. So, in Job 42:8, the effect of God’s displeasure is to be averted by the intercession of Job. In James it is the elders’ prayer of faith. A Christian was sick, he was to send for the elders of the assembly, and they were, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, to pray for him, and the prayer of faith would restore the sick to health, the Lord would raise him up, and, if he had committed sins, they would be forgiven him; evidently implying that if those sins had been the occasion of his sickness, it would not hinder the efficacy

of the prayer, but the sins would be forgiven, and the man restored to health.

We have thus the various phases of administrative forgiveness. God, in His government, no longer held the offender liable to judgment according to that government exercised here below, not as a question of acceptance in Christ, but the government of His children. It might be chastening from Himself, or it might be also the assembly's discipline. It does not refer to final judgment: the believer has boldness for the day of judgment, because as Christ is, so is he in this world; but he is (as calling on the Father, and knowing he is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish) to pass the time of his sojourning here in fear, for the Father judges every man according to his works. Now, as regards the final judgment, the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son; but there is the judgment of our ways in the path towards the glory obtained by Christ for us. There is a judgment of the ways of all. The unrepentant are heaping up wrath against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, but God withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, and it is our God who is a consuming fire. Where true gold is, it purges away the dross. There may be tribulation for good, in which we can glory; there may be chastening for actual transgression, under which we have to humble ourselves; there may be discipline which applies correctively to our state, and even, as in the case of Paul, anticipates the evil for our blessing. We have to distinguish the absolute forgiveness and acceptance of the believer from the forgiveness which applies to divine discipline, or even church discipline when we are

accepted, the effect of the eyes of God being on the righteous. The denial of the fulness of the former is the great plague of modern Christianity. It will be resisted and calumniated as every important truth will; but if the word of God be true, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and are purged, have no more conscience of sins, by one offering are perfected for ever. This the Old Testament saints did not know. Christianity is the revelation of the righteousness of God. It is that that made the apostle boast of it (Rom. 1:17). It was then that righteousness was declared. God's discipline, and the assembly's judgment (for it judges those within), forgiveness as to present displeasure with the conduct of the children, come in when acceptance is perfect and apply to the righteous and accepted children. In the Old Testament these were not distinguished with the same clearness, because the full remission of sins was not yet revealed,24 nor divine righteousness; so that this distinction could not be brought out, for it depended on that remission and standing in righteousness, our entrance into the holiest through the rent veil. Hence even protestants who have not the consciousness of this standing are at a loss as to forgiveness.

Some remarks may have their just place here. First, it may be remarked that all the chastening is from God's hand, even when wicked men are the instruments urged on by Satan. God it is who has set Satan at work as an instrument, as we see in the book of Job. The interpreter, the man of prayer, may be the means of removing the evil, but no human authority imposes any. Chastening discipline is the judgment of the Lord, a Father's hand upon His child; it has nothing to do with

the Church, nor the Church with it. The Church or assembly only acts on proof of evil by putting out from itself, and so clearing itself, and bringing back when the person is humbled. It judges those within, and forgives when there is just ground for it. The Lord chastens in love, to make us partakers of His holiness. He forgives and removes the chastening, when there is just occasion for that. An individual's prayer may avert death when wrath is there, or the prayer of the elders of the Church, if the prayer of faith may restore to health when sickness is discipline, and forgiveness be granted. God may see occasion to inflict permanent chastisement, as Jacob halted all his life. Full remission of sins was not known under the Old Testament; its announcement is of the essence of Christianity, and peace with God through justification. An unjustified believer is a contradiction in terms: all that believe are justified; but justification, if it be more, is certainly imputing no sin. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is pardoned; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin; but to him that believes in Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is imputed to Him for righteousness.

Let me add that delivering to Satan is an act of power; putting out a wicked person is a duty attached to the faithfulness of the assembly. No doubt exclusion from the assembly of God is a very serious thing, and leaves us exposed to sorrow and just trouble of heart, and that from the enemy: but direct delivering to Satan is the act of positive power. It was done in Job's case for his good. It was done by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5, though acting in the gathered assembly, for the destruction of the flesh; and again, without reference to the assembly, in 1 Timothy 1, as to Hymenseus and Alexander, that they

might learn not to blaspheme. All discipline is for the correction of the individual, though to maintain withal the holiness of the house of God, and clear the consciences of the saints themselves. We must not confound what the Church binds being bound in heaven, with the Church being able to bind and loose all that Heaven can. What the Church (that is, two or three gathered in Christ's name) binds in the sphere committed to them according to the word, that is sanctioned by Heaven. But the Church has nothing to do with forgiving sins, in the sense of not imputing guilt, or making a person righteous; this Heaven (that is, God Himself) has done as regards the believer, and the Church can neither bind nor loose it. It has no power or jurisdiction in this sense at all. It has a sphere of discipline in which it forgives or judges, and its righteous acts in that sphere are sanctioned on high. And it is important to remark, that the binding and loosing is, in Matthew 16, conferred on Simon Bar-jonas in the administration of the kingdom of heaven. He has nothing to do with the Church there. That Christ builds. When the Church forgives, it is an assembly, it may be of two or three gathered together in Christ's name. The apostles could administer forgiveness, and did, in receiving into the Church of God persons called in by grace (John 20). Paul acts in the same power, and owns it in the assembly then in respect of discipline; the distinction of which from not imputing guilt I have already noticed. Simon Bar-jonas binding and loosing had nothing to do with the Church. Two or three gathered in the Lord's name do it in church matters. It has nothing to do with any supposed authority of the Church as a whole.

24 Nor was wrath from heaven against all ungodliness revealed.

Reply To The Remarks In Two Leading Articles Of The Christian Journal

Entitled “Our Separating Brethren”

Address

The following tract, the occasion of which is most deeply regretted by the writer, has been hastily written merely in answer to the two articles in the Christian Journal to which it alludes, and in no way as any formal tract on the subject; as the second article consists chiefly of arguments from scriptures which have been referred to in reply, and the length of the latter has been so extended by the insertion of the first, it was not thought necessary to insert it, especially as this tract will come chiefly into the hands of those who have opportunity of reference to the Christian Journal.

The writer has only to repeat his entire regret at the occasion of it. He has refrained from any statement of, or invective against, the flagrant and painful abuses, which must and ought to shock the conscience, connected with this subject; or attributing motives to those implicated in what the tract charges as evil j nor has he attempted to ransack history to prove the evil connected with the settlement of the Church of England. He has merely stated the principles on which it and its state must be a continual reason for the righteous and bounden separation of conscientious persons from it, in reply, as has been stated, to the two articles in which those who have done so have been attacked as evil doers. The Lord must judge between them and the

Church of England, and those who, as the editor of the Christian Journal, defend it and its principles.

“Our Separating Brethren”

The above is the title of a leading comment of the Christian Journal. It is painful to be drawn from the simplicity and fulness of Christian enjoyment to contend with those who would reproach us for following our consciences. We do not doubt the editor of the Christian Journal is both wise and prudent; but, though he knows the world in all ages and the Church in all ages, there are often things which the simple are taught which are hid from the wise and prudent. That the evils of a depraved nature are attached to and to be contended with by the “separating brethren” is certainly not new; that they have to contend with the snare of the enemy, who would take advantage of their ignorance and weakness but for One who helps them, is equally true, and they are in a measure conscious of it. Of this part of the subject the editor of the Christian Journal in all his writings seems to be profoundly ignorant; and it is not to be wondered at, as he continues in a system of which he has seen the evil—which he has rejoiced at being shaken to the foundations, as a heretical system inconsistent with the progress of the gospel. The “separating brethren” believe this, and therefore they are dissociated from it. The editor of the Christian Journal believes it, and he is not dissociated from it. It cannot therefore be a matter of surprise to them if his eyes are dim to other and greater evils. Acting on what we know is the real power of faith. Could the editor of the Christian Journal condemn any one for not being subject to that which he declares to be “inconsistent with the

progress of the gospel"? One would suppose the answer to be easy: to a simple Christian it would be easy—he would not condemn them. The answer is, that he does condemn them, and approves of those who remain connected with it and supports that which he says is so. What can his "separating brethren "see in this but the spirit of the world? Nor is it anything else. And since the editor cast off so distinctly his "separating brethren," from whom he was not always so alienated, to throw himself into the hands of the worldly party in the Church, it has been quite manifest to a discerning eye that the spirit and character of the Christian Journal have quite changed, that it is become less spiritual and more worldly, less pressing separation from the world, and more sanctioning continuance in known evil; that it has ceased, comparatively, to press conformity to Christ in order to press conformity to the Church of England. The latter purpose it may do well, and we will not compete with him in the pursuit of it; we would desire in peace to seek the former: to this the Christian Journal has ceased to be available. We should not have had formerly as we have in the number, on the leading article of which I am now commenting, a sermon on the text, "Be ye [not] conformed to this world," signed "A Clergyman." I do not deny that occasional articles of measured difference from the world may be introduced to suit the taste of all; but the character and tendency of the Journal are in this respect wholly changed, and the reason is obvious. The editor, or others with whom he is associated, found that he could not press thorough non-conformity to the world, without its producing non-conformity to the Church of England, because the spirit of the world was in the Church. Not having faith to get over human support of circumstances, he chose to hold

by the Church, and resume the spirit of the world it carried with it, rather than give up the world and the Church that had identified itself with it. The article alluded to is adequately illustrative of this, and is very aptly signed “A Clergyman.” It is the expression of the claim of conformity to the world, and worldly station, which is implied in the maintenance of the system symbolized by the signature of the paper; and I cannot but think that the pressing of that point in such a way would not at one time have met the approbation of the editor of the Christian Journal; but descent is gradual. I have but little hope of his present emerging from the system. When “Ephraim is joined to idols,” the word is, “Let him alone.” But I do think if the editor read the paragraph in that article “Our Gracious Saviour,” his conscience would smite him on recurring to former thoughts; if not, I should grieve.

The “separating brethren” have felt differently as to the question, and acted differently; they have felt and sorrowfully felt, that they must (the necessity was not of their own making) leave the system the clergy sought to maintain, if they wished to leave the spirit of the world and to walk as Christians. They did so at cost and sorrow to themselves, the loss of friends and fortune, often of situations in life, and in many instances of home; and always at the cost of bitter and cutting reproach, none of which, but wisdom and prudence, is the character of those who remain: “so long as thou dpest well unto thyself, all men will speak well of thee.”

I know it will be answered, The Church is abused on all sides. But this is a far different thing from personal reproach, and merely produces esprit de corps. The Lord’s denouncements of Jerusalem were far different

from the reproach which He suffered, because He was a stranger to their ways, of which He says (how little we bear of it now, I well know), “Reproach hath broken my heart.” May we abound in it if it is for His sake! Sufferings the Church is undergoing; but the question remains to be asked, Is she suffering for righteousness’ sake? Is it for the abundance of her labours, her bold testimony, her separation from the world, her intolerance of its evil? We may suffer for evil, and the hatred of the nations accrue. I read, for other reasons against a corrupt church than for its righteousness, “These shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put it in their hearts.” The clergy have suffered in Ireland; they have also suffered in France; they are suffering in Spain and Portugal. Is it for righteousness’ sake? I do not believe it is for righteousness’ sake; but for unrighteousness’ sake. The exertions of those who violate their own system and break through its authorities—in which exertions we may in a great measure rejoice, for every way Christ is preached—are not the cause of its sufferings, but quite the contrary; nor have they at all arisen from the order on which the system is based, but on an entire violation of it, as they will surely end in its destruction. But I would advert, as a passing service, to the article, whose title is at the head of the present paper; and the fairest way would be to give it in full.

“Our Separating Brethren.—‘The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this

is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us,' Eccles. 1:9, 10.

"The world is the same in all ages; the same evils, and the same amusements, and the same manner of spending time, with very little variation, have obtained at all periods of the world. Horace's description of the upper classes in his day would serve to describe, with tolerable accuracy, the habits of the upper classes in the present day: hunting and shooting, and theatres, and feasts, and exhibitions of various kinds, occupied the time of the upper classes then as they do now. If this observation is true with respect to the world, it is equally so with respect to the Church: the same evils, the same follies, and the same extravagances, are recorded in the pages of Church History, as occurring in each century, from the time of our Lord to the present moment. This fact has been forcibly impressed on us lately by meeting a little work entitled 'Good Thoughts in Bad Times,' by Thomas Fuller, in which we find the same evils which trouble the Church at the present day, causing reflections to the mind of that acute and pious minister, corresponding with those which might occupy the minds of thinking persons now. Take for instance the following contemplation headed "'Atoms at Last.—I meet not, in either sacred or profane history with so terrible a rout as Saul gave the host of the Ammonites, under Nahash their king (1 Sam. 11:11). They which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. And yet we have daily experience of greater scatterings and dissipations of men in their opinions. Suppose ten men, out of pretended purity but real pride and peevishness, make an awful separation from the Church of England, possibly they may continue some

competent time in unity together. Afterwards upon a new discovery of a higher and holier way of divine service, these ten men will split asunder into five and five, and the purer moiety divide from the other as more drowsy and feculent. Then the five, in process of time upon the like occasion of clearer illumination, will cleave themselves into three and two; some short time after, the three will crumble into two and one, and the two into one and one, till they come into the condition of the Ammonites, so scattered that two of them were not left together. I am sad that I may add with too much truth that one man will at last be divided in himself, distracted often in his judgment betwixt many opinions—that which was reported of Tostatus, lying on his death-bed: "in multitudine controversiarum non habuit quod crederet"— amongst the multitude of persuasions through which he had passed, he knoweth not where to cast anchor, and fix himself at last.'

"Who can read the above, without perceiving its applicability to the state of things in the Church at the present day? Let us examine a few of the sentiments contained in the passage. The writer speaks of pretended purity causing separation from the Church of England. We hasten to say, that as far as our experience reaches, we have not met with any instance where the brethren, to whom we conceive the above passage is so applicable, can be accused of extraordinary pretences to purity. It is true that in many of them, we believe, the depravity of human nature has much the same uncontrolled operation that it has amongst unconverted professors in the Church of England. But we believe that in the majority of instances they are 'Israelites in whom is no guile'; and that, like the beginners of all other

Christian sects, they are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good. But we must remember that purity of life and conversation is no certain preservative against error in judgment; it is no preservative against mental derangement; nor is it a preservative against any of its degrees such as follies and eccentricities of various kinds, which we cannot but observe amongst many whom we acknowledge to be saints. We are particularly anxious that our readers should be well informed on this point, that holiness of life is not a sure preservative against error in judgment on points that do not affect the vitals of Christianity; because it is an argument which is commonly used, and particularly calculated to deceive unstable souls. As we have already hinted, the framers and beginners of every new sect must necessarily be, or appear to be, holy people: otherwise they would have no followers. Baron Swedenborg, we have reason to believe, was an eminently devoted man. It is said of him, that, 'he affected no honour, but declined it; pursued no worldly interest, but spent his time in travelling and printing to communicate instruction and benefit mankind.' He had nothing of melancholy in his manner, and nothing in the least bordering on enthusiasm in his conversation, yet he was not preserved from the grossest fanaticism. We are told by his biographer, that he professed himself to be the founder, under our Lord, of the New Jerusalem Church. His tenets are drawn from scripture, and supported by quotations from it. He asserts that in the year 1743 the Lord manifested Himself to him in a personal appearance, and at the same time opened his spiritual eyes so that he was enabled constantly to see and converse with spirits and angels. Then zeal and apparent spiritual-mindedness do not preserve from

error: indeed it does not. Again and again we have heard Christians speaking of what they have termed truths which God had taught them, which we believe to be as simply the product of their own fancy, or the fancy of those from whom they learned them, as Baron Swedenborg's supposition, that his spiritual eyes were opened to enable him to converse with angels. Again, George Fox, the founder of the sect of Quakers, together with his immediate followers, were most unquestionably deeply pious persons. 'They were pious persons, who were dissatisfied with the settlement of the Church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.' We are told that 'the tenor of Fox's doctrine was to wean men from systems, ceremonies, and the outside of religion in every form, and to lead them to an acquaintance with themselves. Drawing his doctrine from the pure source of religious truth, the New Testament, abstracted from the comments of men, he asserted the freedom of man in the liberty of the gospel against the tyranny of custom, and against the combined powers of severe persecution, the greatest contempt, and keenest ridicule.' Yet neither Fox's piety and zeal, nor that of his followers afforded any good reason for embracing their various extravagances.

"But we have, in our own day, perhaps, the most remarkable union of apparent piety, talent, knowledge of scripture and fanaticism, which has ever appeared in the Church of Christ. Mr. Irving we believe to be a very holy man; the generality of his followers we believe to be very holy people, and indeed they apparently surpass all others in devotedness, and I will say in their knowledge of the letter of scripture. But that is no reason why sober-minded persons should embrace their

unaccountable follies, any more than the fact of George Fox and the first Quakers being holy people would have been a good reason for joining them. We would add for the truth's sake that the converse of this position is true. We would say, that the unholiness, the violence and strong language (to use no harsher term) which is used by some of the separatists, is no reason why we should not join them. No later than yesterday we heard the following very inconclusive argument used by an ardent and sincerely devoted Christian: 'At one time I was very well inclined to join them, but the violence and abusive language used by Mr.—— and Mr.—— has decided me against doing so, and I know others upon whom it has had the same effect.' Now, though we quite approve of the decision which this servant of Christ arrived at, yet we think it was made upon wrong grounds; for if continued attachment to the Church of England depends upon the real or apparent holiness or unholiness of every zealous, eloquent, talented, wild eccentric opponent who arises, attachment to it rests upon an unsteady foundation, and the membership of such while it lasts is not worth much. No, the apparent holiness or unholiness of men is no reason for our adopting or rejecting an unscriptural line of conduct, which separation from the Church of England appears to us to be. Fuller says that 'pride' caused separation in his day. Richard Baxter seems to have been of the same opinion in his day. He says, 'I have ever observed the humblest men most tender of making separations, and the proudest most prone to it. Many corruptions may be in a church, and yet it may be a great sin to separate from it, so that we be not put upon an owning of their corruptions, nor upon any actual sin. There is a strange inclination in proud men to make the Church of Christ

much narrower than it is, and to reduce it almost to nothing, and to be themselves the members of a singular Society, as if they were loth to have too much company to heaven': Can the separations at the present day be attributed in any degree to the same cause?

"We believe that in some instances (perhaps unconsciously to the individuals themselves) pride has had some influence in producing the evil which we deplore; at least dissent has a tendency to gratify pride, and that feeling of individual importance which is so natural to man. For instance, in a large Church of England congregation, ministered to, we will suppose, by a good man, but a minister who is unenlightened as to the nature of a church, the services of individual Christians are seldom recognised as being of the importance to the welfare of the whole which they really are; in many places, nay, in most instances, the evangelical minister is the doer of everything himself, and no use whatever is made of the less honourable members; souls are converted to God, and the minister rejoices in their conversion, but they are not valued and cherished, and made much of, as if each were of vast importance to the well-being of the whole Church. But when they join a new sect, they are valued by their new associates; they are spoken of as belonging to them, whereas before they were not spoken of as belonging to any body; consequently they become conscious of their own individual importance to the body to which they attach themselves: and thus we say that at least there is an occasion afforded for the workings of pride. It is true that the grace of God may hinder its operations (and we are sure it often does), but still it is not less true that there is a temptation thereto; and if men or women have

a little talent or imaginative powers, the temptation is very great. In some instances it is more than probable that in this matter the enemy may have gained an advantage.

“As to the peevishness spoken of as operating in the seventeenth century, it sounds rather too strong an expression for any thing that has come under our own observations, in connection with the evil of separation now; but it is not really so. According to Johnson, ‘peevish’ means, ‘full of expressions of discontent,’ ‘hard to please, easily offended.’ In all these senses our separating brethren seem to us to be peevish to an extreme; we speak in love, but we must say they appear to live in the use of expressions of discontent with every thing. They appear to take a kind of melancholy pleasure in contemplating the false fact that everything is growing worse and worse; and again and again have we perceived, or at least thought we perceived, the symptoms of Jonah’s character. Jonah had preached to the Ninevites, and his word had been attended with power. This, instead of exciting cordial acknowledgment of the good done, filled Jonah with discontent, lest that, in consequence of the judgments with which he had threatened them not being executed, he himself should appear a false prophet. Reader, we know very little of ourselves if we do not recognize in Jonah more or less of our own characters; self-love, a desire that our predictions should prove true, often swallowing up our gracious feelings; and we greatly mistake if this failing does not manifest itself amongst our dissenting brethren. In this matter we should gladly find ourselves mistaken; but again and again have we feared, that if what the author of Fanaticism justly calls

‘interpretations the most excessive, expectations the most dire, comminations the most terrible,’ proved to be erroneous, there might possibly be feelings of discontent (‘peevishness’ in fact) entertained in the breasts of those, the most naturally amiable, kind-hearted saints of our acquaintance.

“If we were asked to state the cause which operates more generally perhaps than any other in producing divisions in the present day, we should say it arose from a diseased mind, or a certain morbid sensitiveness of the conscience in one speck to the exhaustion of all sensibility in a far larger portion— sensitiveness about corruptions to be deplored doubtless and remedied, and insensibility to the great dishonour done to God, and the widely extended injury done to souls by divisions amongst Christians. Yes, I say unaccountable insensibility of conscience to such passages as that to the Corinthians: ‘I beseech you, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment’; or, as that to the Philippians, ‘whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.’

“What one controverted point concerning church government is nearly so plainly revealed as the duty of avoiding divisions in the Church? What corruptions are there in the Church of England nearly so dishonouring to God, as divisions amongst those who have left the world and are living to God? None that we know of. What does nearly so much injury to souls? Nothing that we know of.

“But what appears to us as the most extraordinary feature in the system is, the general agreement which there seems to be to set common sense and stubborn facts at the most open defiance. If there is one fact more indisputable than another we think it is that within the last twenty years there has been an extraordinary spread of true religion throughout this country, so much so as to produce a great and beneficial influence over those who are not savingly influenced thereby. Now if this statement should meet the eye of any who deny that this is the case (as doubtless it will), we would ask pardon of such for not attempting to prove the same, and our brethren will forgive us for saying in all Christian sincerity, that any little knowledge which we have of human nature, and the manner of God’s acting on the minds of men, forbids our entertaining the remotest expectation of convincing those whose minds have been brought into such a state as to deny the fact. We shall merely state what appears to us to be the cause of their not seeing it. It is briefly this: Our dear brethren see (in common with ourselves) that wickedness is spoken of in the scriptures as being great, and to increase at some period between the time of the apostles, and the second coming of Christ. But our brethren have determined in their own minds (what we have not determined in ours) that the present is the time alluded to by the inspired writers as the time of increasing wickedness: instead of the facts of the case leading them to doubt the correctness of their interpretation of the prophecy, with a degree of boldness worthy of a better cause they fly in the face of facts. The stubbornness of the fact is nothing in their estimation; their interpretation of the scriptures must be true, and therefore they do and will maintain to the end their

position, that the world now is worse than it ever was and will grow worse and worse!

“We scarcely wish to give an opinion concerning the future, as to whether improvement or deterioration is to be expected; but as to the present, we must say in the retrospect, ‘the Lord hath done great things, whereof we will be glad.’ Reader, ‘Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this,’ Eccles. 7:10.

“In closing our observations we feel drawn out to express the most unfeigned love for those to whom they apply; and we know their love to be such, that they will not reckon us ‘their enemy because we tell to them’ what we believe to be ‘the truth.’ In a future number we may state the grounds upon which the duty of adherence to the Church of England, notwithstanding the gross corruption of its hierarchy, rests, and also point out what we conceive to be the duty of Christians who reside in parishes over which ungodly clergymen are placed, and who are not within the reach of the churches of any Christian ministers.”

I cannot but remark that the style of our judges is very much altered. Heretofore we were “schismatics,” and “enthusiasts,” and the Epistle of Jude applied to us, and the like; now we are “separating brethren”: and though there are some hints, in italics, about mental derangement, yet the great point to be pressed is, that holiness of life is not a sure preservative against error in judgment! a statement of most ambiguous and doubtful character. But surely the editor of the Christian Journal should at least, wise and prudent as he may be, hesitate before “pride and peevishness,” if not pretended purity,

be taken as the causes of the separation of those of whom he declares the great majority to be Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile, “more than ordinarily engaged in doing good.” We should have supposed there must have been something of the Spirit of Christ, not a “proud or peevish spirit” surely, though full of heaviness and scarce bearing the evil around Him, in those who are of such a character and activities. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile; and He went about doing good: and He was “separate” too from His brethren, and blessings descended upon His head. He was not indeed approved by the wise and prudent: none of the rulers nor of the Pharisees believed on Him—only the foolish people who through grace would not call evil good and good evil, nor put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; to whom fellowship with guileless Israelites, who went about doing good, was more valuable, though wise and prudent people thought it error, than the charge of error from worldly-minded people was the occasion of fear: the rest saw that, if they let Him thus alone, the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. Little, little indeed have we of His Spirit, but if we are of this character surely it is from His Spirit; and they who condemn should be cautious, where the fruits are such; lest, where the Spirit of Christ so dwells, the separation may not come from the same cause. It is a circumstance singular and fatal to the established system, that those who separate from it should be habitually such.

But the editor of the Christian Journal seems habitually, I do not mean intentionally, to neglect the idea of the Spirit of Christ on the one hand, and the power of Satan on the other; and thus, while prudent as to

circumstances, to be very little informed of God's estimate of the causes of things and of their real character. Thus in any selected articles, in the present number, you will find "Divisions of parishes," "Man contemplated," "The power of the press," "The calls are many," "Sales in a great city," "Hints to clever people," and a caution to Clergymen not to let poor people to their table but not one (save a feeble allusion of Coleridge's) of the selected articles, in which there is the smallest allusion to the Spirit of God or of Christ. Here is the real source of the difference between us. He looks to means of mending the world of human devisement, declaring it to be "a false fact" that it is not actually getting better. We, foolishly no doubt, would desire to be Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, and are content if our Lord finds us so, and seek for His Spirit to enable us to be so, while we cannot help thinking the world, as it ever was, an evil and an ungodly one, which is judged because it rejected Christ—crucified the Lamb of God. But smooth as the article may appear and kindly wise, it is indeed very bitter; and I regret to add very ignorant, or else full of what must be called chicanery—I do not doubt the former.

I shall merely comment, I trust very calmly, on some of its statements. It disclaims the charge of pretended purity, but does charge real pride and peevishness. This his "separating brethren" must leave to God, conscious that there is everything in them which would lead to it; and thinking it probable that in the abounding of evil they may have been sometimes guiltily weary in spirit, we will take courage from the warning, and be bolder

and more decided, more cheerful in our opposition for the future.

But there is a remarkable confession contained in the account: “In the majority of instances they are Israelites, in whom is no guile; and, like the beginners of all other Christian sects, they are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good.” The character given them I pass by here, though we might fancy there was a little of that sort of ‘peevishness,’ which is ‘hard to please,’ in the characteristics of “proud” Israelites in whom is no guile, who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good; neither can we say that the Christian Journal, while hard to please if such Christians as these he describes do not satisfy it, is empty of expressions of discontent at the “separating brethren,” though it may live more in expressions of self-satisfaction, and at the world which denied Christ around it. But it is not this I would dwell on but that the beginners of all other Christian sects are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good. Now this is surely an extraordinary circumstance—that invariably those who leave the church are more assimilated to Christ than others, than those who do not. Is not this an appalling circumstance in the character of the Church of England, that those who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good are somehow or other driven out of it, or, in other words, beginners of sects? Is the selfishness of the system insensible to the fact; that as men become in all ages animated by the Spirit of Christ, they cannot remain in it? They may have failed in continuing their system in the same character it began. So did the apostles, because their work hung on the presence of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of the world came in and the Church sank. So did not popery; so did

not the Church of England, because in various degrees they joined the world, and were of its spirit: and the world owned them; and they went with the world, and continued as long as the world bore them, and was satisfied with them. Hence when the Spirit of God wrought, discontent arose, because it would not bear with the spirit of the world, men became more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, and the Church would not bear that (it was irregular), and they would not give it up, because the Spirit of Christ and the love of Christ constrained them; and they were the beginners of sects. The same platform soon held them again when they became worldly together. But, indeed it was very evil, that they separated from the established system: they troubled the ease of worldliness. This could be the only reason, for "they were Israelites, in whom was no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good," and therefore, not, it is to be supposed, worse Christians. They were better Christians, but worse Churchmen, and that was a very great evil.

But, indeed they were like to be reduced to "atoms." If so, the Christian Journal should have in the use of its motto turned to old Gamaliel, and taken his advice, and (after quoting kindly Swedenborgians and Quakers and Irvingites as the parallel cases of those Israelites in whom is no guile), have refrained from these men and let them alone: for if they are going to atoms by themselves, it is foolish to bind them by external compression and immortalize the ephemeral existence of the "separating brethren "in the Christian Journal^ when they will be so soon gone to atoms. I trust that when they cease to be Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, they

will be remembered nowhere else and by no other testimony and go into atoms, heard of no more, even as two together. Such is my earnest wish and sincere prayer to God, save as their portion is with Him, who coming shall not reject such as He finds so doing. Whom He would estimate, we would be; and not say, “My Lord delayeth his coming”: let us go on and live with the world.

But I repeat, that it is a remarkable fact for the Christian Journal to attest, that such has been the spirit of all separated from the Church of England, and what does she care? We agree entirely, “they went out from” her, because they were not of her. But of the instances.

And we must confess, besides the spirit which would associate the “separating brethren” with Swedenborgians, there is not only no reference to God’s Spirit in this article, but a very fearful trifling with scripture.

As to Thomas Fuller, I will not question his piety, though much more remarkable for a very tenacious memory, and a strong adherence to all the corruptions which the editor of the Christian Journal would reform. His acuteness in the paper in question at any rate entirely failed him; for, having resisted all reformation such as the editor would seek, he was deprived, and when the gross corruptions were entirely restored, got his share of them again, and was only prevented from being one of the hierarchical system (inconsistent with the progress of the gospel) on account of his staunch support of the corruptions, by death. A reformation, however, of the Church of England took place, such as the editor desires; and it lasted about ten years. When it ceased to

exist (which it did soon after their close), the atomic separatists remained on the restoration of Charles the Second a widely extended body, to which the remnants of the reformed Church of England of the day, being turned out by the new Church of England, under the monarchy, by the Bartholomew Act of 1666, attached themselves; and were lost amongst them under the general title of nonconformists, those who were distinctively such having for the most part in late years turned Socinians—the ultimate result of the improved Church of England. On Thomas Fuller's character, I do not think it necessary to comment. But it is beyond controversy, that the reformed or improved Church of England was lost, or remains in Socinian deputies, and the atoms of separatists form the active extended bodies of Independents and Baptists—a result I have no desire the "separating brethren" should ever arrive at. Thomas Fuller's sentiments may be excellent, and none can read them without perceiving their applicability, but unfortunately, though they may serve the editor of the Christian Journal as a prophecy, they have been sadly falsified. At any rate it is too bad to be blamed for studying divine prophecy, which is surely true, and given us to study, and to bring out human prophecy which has proved all false, and helps only to prove the present editor's prophecies false with it, which I pray the readers of the Christian Journal to note.

And now of the other instances. First of the Swedenborgians, to which the editor so kindly compares his "separating brethren," he has reason to believe Baron Swedenborg was an eminently devoted man. "His tenets are drawn from the scriptures, and supported by quotations from them." What does the editor mean? The

Swedenborgians deny the Trinity, the atonement, and almost every sound Christian doctrine, and draw their notions from a vision of Baron Swedenborg in a coffee-house in London, and subsequent revelations. Was the editor aware of these things, when he said his tenets are drawn from scripture and supported by quotations from them? Surely, his jealousy of his “separating brethren” has carried him beyond the bounds of prudence, when he asserts that the tenets of those who deny the Trinity, the atonement, and the like Christian doctrines, and hold Swedenborg’s revelations exclusively as to the other world, are drawn from scripture and supported by quotations from them. Probably he was quite ignorant of what he spoke; but scripture ought not to be thus trifled with, however, his “separating brethren” may.

As to George Fox, I do not doubt he was a pious man; wrong as I think the system he founded. But here we are told again, “drawing his doctrine from the pure source of religious truth, the New Testament,” etc. Does the editor believe this? Does he know that the Quakers, though the Lord is now working very extensively amongst them, would not as a regular thing read the New Testament; and trusted to everything spoken (as they supposed) by the Spirit as of equal authority, looking to the living word and the inward light and not simply to the New Testament for guidance; though they thought that might be uttered or written from the same inward light, and therefore so far had authority with them, but in fact was very little attended to by them as the shell of the letter; the disregarding of the letter of scripture being a distinguishing mark of old Quaker habits? But wild as many of them ran (as surely they did, when following this supposed light), as separating from

and testifying against the Church of England, very few of their testimonies failed to take effect. The system they might afterwards set up might be very defective, as it undoubtedly was, and their doctrine most defective as not founded on scripture; but their open testimony against the Church of England was often with much serious power, and the things took place. No one can read George Fox's Journal but must see, that he was remarkably sustained before the persecuting magistrates of the day, who sought to support the Church of England against them: and this it is in their great declension that has kept the Quakers together: they might be without a rudder, but the shore they had left behind them was in a ruin from which they had escaped.

As to Mr. Irving, he is too much present as it were amongst us to say much. I believe their great defect to be, as it is of the editor, and all he has quoted, that he does not take scripture as his guide, but modern utterances as equivalent to it, as with the Quakers, and my experience of Irvingites is that (though full of particular passages there used, and interpretations upon those current amongst themselves) there is very little unborrowed study of scripture, very little reading of it for themselves, looking for the guidance of the Spirit. The peculiar characteristic of the system, to my mind, is the withdrawing people from this; and I never find them give simple heed to scripture. I think the editor treats holiness with very little ceremony. Holiness, real holiness and subjection of heart according to the word, can proceed only from God's Spirit; and this is not what will lead into darkness and mistake. The form of it may, I admit, but spiritual subdual of evil is not the way of

error, but a single eye the way of much light: and I do not think the editor is doing much service to Christianity in so carefully separating real holiness and truth. I believe there are many Christian amongst the Irvingites: I do not believe they are a holy people, but a deceived people.

Fuller, the editor tells us, complained in his day, and Baxter in his day, wise and holy men no doubt, and in every day along with the editor they have to complain of the same thing. But perhaps the editor would have the kindness in his next Journal to tell us, what the different days were in which Baxter and Fuller lived. It is hardly honest to make a parade of names at different eras, if the editor be ignorant whether they lived at the same or not; nor to state that the tenets of Swedenborgians are drawn from scripture, if he does not know what they are, and to make the scriptures an uncertain source of truth, that the infallibility of the Church of England, just going to be reformed, may be the resting place of some weary Tostatus.

As to dissent producing pride, it is very likely. The editor must settle that with his dissenting brethren: wherever the Spirit of the Lord is not, there will be pride, be it in the Church of England or in dissent; his “separating brethren “have nothing to do with either. I beheve, his dissenting brethren think for the most worse of them than he does; for, as for this sect, it is everywhere spoken against: may it ever remain so, and if they are called Nazarenes, be found to be Nazarites indeed!

“The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their house in the rock.”

With regard however to raising some to importance, we will not affirm that either adequate wisdom, or (we would add) adequate humility is shewn in those of this world's honour, who have separated from an evil state of things; but as to exalting the importance of individuals, they do not deny or shrink from the charge. Some are exalted and some brought low. If as the Church and the clergyman in this Journal would have it, the high are to keep their place in the world, we grant it may often do it; but if they mind not high things, but walk with men of low estate in the simplicity of Christ, great blessing follows. We read, "let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, and the rich in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." They do not say, that there is not trial of grace in these things; but they believe when done in grace, the approximation of these to each other is accompanied with great blessing.

The use, as to us, the Lord made of His glory was to empty Himself, give it up, become poor that we by His poverty might become rich. He could not but be superior and different after all from those to whom He came; but He hid it, shewed it only in the glory of continued and more abounding service, and knowing that all things were delivered unto Him of His Father, and that He came from God and went to God, He took a towel and girded Himself, and washed His disciples' feet, shewing us that if He, our Lord and Master, washed their feet, we ought also to wash one another's feet, for He had given them an example that they should do as He had done to them. In a word, He took the privilege of His glory to be among them as one that serveth. May we be like Him! The only advantage I know of earthly glory is the

privilege of giving it up. The poor man's grace will be shewn in a wholly unassuming spirit, giving the other double honour because of his willing lowliness; but the principle our Lord gives is, "he that is great among you, let him be your servant." The real secret is to give its value to Christ's grace. If it be the value of adding to numbers without the power of grace, it is purely evil.

But the great sin, the peevishness, of the "separating brethren," their hardness to please, seems to consist in their not thinking that the Christian Journal and the like is mending the world. This is a terrible thing—this "false fact." But the editor seems to forget that the great body of godly clergy in this country believe in this "false fact" too; while his dissenting brethren quite agree with the editor that their Lord delayeth His coming.

But, indeed, it comes out a little after that there is a general agreement to set common sense and stubborn facts at the most open defiance; and that too in spite of all the pains of the editor of the Christian Journal.

"If there is one fact more indisputable than another, we think it is this, that within the last twenty years, there has been an extraordinary spread of true religion throughout this country; so much so, as to produce a great and beneficial influence over those who are not savingly influenced thereby," etc. If any deny this, he asks pardon for not attempting to prove the same.

We do not think it a good thing continually to seek to make people pleased with themselves. It argues a low and a falling standard; but this, of course, must mend the country, and improve it, and given reason to think prospects are indeed brightening. We will not listen to these Micahs, that are always prophesying evil

concerning us, and not good. And now, gentle reader, what is the blessed result of this amazing improvement, which proves that the world is growing better, and not worse and worse, as these foreboders would say, who determine in their own minds that the wicked times, prophesied of, are our own times?

The Christian Journal shall tell.

“Party violence, we are sorry to say, appears not to have diminished since we last wrote; on the contrary, the tendency of things at present is evidently towards a more decided separation between the two great bodies into which the population of Ireland is divided. This is a melancholy fact: we only state it without entering into the question of its immediate cause. We can hardly conceive any country worse circumstanced in this respect than Ireland. The frame of society is just kept from coming to pieces, and that merely by the action of an external force. Such is our view of the subject, that we do not know what is to keep any person who loves peace, in Ireland, except utter necessity, or a sense of duty.” What! when such immense improvement has taken place in twenty years. These are stubborn facts.

As to the common sense, which would argue from it, that the amazing influential spread of religion which has taken place will mend the world, I leave it to the editor of the Christian Journal. It seems to me very uncommon sense. I have but turned the Journal round: both are its statements as to this country; one side “stubborn facts”; the other, the “editor’s arguments,” or “common sense,” I suppose I should call it, who thinks the improvement immense and progressive. We are apt to think, that the ripening of the wheat may be accompanied by the

ripening of the tares, but will not turn them into wheat, but leave the field just what it was, only more manifested, and ready to be cut down: but perhaps we are very foolish and the editor very wise, and that the frame of society being only kept from coming to pieces merely by the action of an external force, is a very plain sign of the universal and happy effect of religion in the country at present; perhaps it is wrong to say, it is growing worse and worse, as the editor of the last page can hardly conceive “any country worse circumstanced.” We fear he has much sorrow to learn, and we doubt not much joy, for we trust the Church may be as much improved, as the evil of the world will be magnified; but the closing page of the Journal is a sufficient answer to all the words of the leading article on the subject. This country, at least, which has been so much blessed is growing worse; just as we expect, just so it has happened.

The truth is, that the effect of the Christian Journal on all who hold its views, and seek to put off the consideration of the growing evil and sorrow of the world and approaching judgments, is to daub up hollow walls, and corrupt systems with untempered mortar. They cannot bear to have it detected: the Christian Journal is merely an effort and an instrument to do this. It is taken in hand by those who know that things are not getting better, but who would wish to hide the fact that they are getting worse; who to keep the place that they have clung to, and the value of their judgment for a moment, are seeking to hide from others the impending ruin they themselves well see. But their “separating brethren” have no hostility to them, though they see the evil coming; they are guided by moral reasons, and not

by that reason, which must be therefore everlastingly stable, when all that may be attempted to be supported by the efforts of man shall have passed away frittered in his hand. They believe that the Christian Journal is doing great sin in beguiling souls, and alienating them, through ignorance, from very important truths— amusing them with toys and plans, while judgment is crowding around them, and filled often with as much nonsense and what is merely human as any other thing going. They believe indeed, though they give little credit to much of the religion that is going, that the saints are ripening for separation to God; they believe for the same reason the tares are doing so too, and the hope of turning tares into wheat they believe to be just the folly of the editor of the Christian Journal. When many were called in the days of the apostles, how would modern calculators of results have concluded that the nation would have been blessed and brought in? What did it prove to those who knew the truth? That the nation was going to be judged. The judgment of human experience is the judgment of folly; but human experience is the wisdom of man set up as an idol by the name of common sense. This it is the editor of the Christian Journal worships. The abounding of testimony and evil together are the sure sign of judgment, if scripture wisdom is to be taken as guide The last point I shall notice is that which brings the question to issue.

“If we were asked to state the cause which operates more generally perhaps than any other in producing divisions in the present day, we would say, it arose from a diseased mind, or a certain morbid sensitiveness of the conscience in one speck, to the exhaustion of all sensibility in a far larger portion— sensitiveness about

corruptions to be deplored doubtless and remedied, and insensibility to the great dishonour done to God, and the widely extended injury done to souls, by divisions amongst Christians. Yes, I say unaccountable insensibility of conscience to such passages as that to the Corinthians, 'I beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment'; or as that to the Philippians 'whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.'"

We shall have to see where the unaccountable insensibility lies, where the guilt of division. In the first place, as to morbid conscience, the editor is simply sanctioning sin against Christ in sanctioning sin against a weak conscience. That there are many things that affect weak consciences, worse than eating herbs, is confessed; nay, it is now the fashion to confess, that there are gross corruptions in the system of the establishment: abominations is the usual word. Now morbid consciences are ill at ease about these. Well, of course, they are removed, and the weak conscience is left unoffended, "straight paths made for their feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way" but that it rather might be healed, and these strong wise men bear their infirmities, and remove the difficulties? Not the least. The morbid consciences may go and get comfort where they can, not with these: they may be shocked if they stay, and reproached if they go: what do the strong ones care for that? They have got the world with them, and morbid consciences may comfort themselves where they can. They are Christ's sheep: but what do these

shepherds care for that? They have disabled themselves from, or are unwilling to seek, their good, and they may go and get comfort by the roadside. Who would trouble themselves with morbid consciences save to reproach them, if they act on them, which they are bound to do unless they commit sin? In thus doing what offends the weak conscience, they are confessedly sinning against Christ; and in order to gain the world's help, they have sold or given up to the world the deposit of Christ with them, of acting upon the necessary exigencies of the Church—they confess they have done so; they have petitioned the State to get leave to amend themselves—the open confession, that they have sold their Christian power of fulfilling a direct known duty in the Church of Christ. The "separating brethren "feel this, and they leave the evil, which the clergy confess they cannot amend; but these things which morbid consciences are uneasy about were the subject of the greatest uneasiness, and were entirely objected to by the English reformers at the Reformation, and were imposed by the queen against their wishes, and in spite of the earnest entreaty and remonstrance of many, I might almost say all, of them. The queen wished to win the papists, and loved her supremacy, and she insisted on them.

It is often said, Can you not acquiesce in what these saints shed their blood for? My answer is, they shed their blood for no such thing, but remonstrated against these things, and secular authority alone enforced them. It is but an example, how the piety of good men becomes continuing sanction for any evil they continue in, and so the snare of Satan; as the piety of Fenelon, Pascal, Arnauld, and De Sacy, is used as an authority for continuance in the Roman-catholic church system: and

what is more, the editor's friend, Baxter, in his day (having in vain endeavoured to get them altered, much as he disliked separation and thought it an evil to separate) did separate, when these things were enforced by an Act of Parliament, and with him between one thousand five hundred and two thousand godly ministers,25 who all left their cures, rather than acquiesce in the things, dissatisfaction at which is now sneered at as the sign of a morbid conscience. I do not doubt that the editor and his friends are much better and wiser than these men, these separatists, whose piety however they are generally content to feed on and to minister for the present food of the Church. But how comes it, if this same Baxter was so averse to separation, he felt it necessary to separate, when these things which constitute the uniformity of the Church of England were imposed? Or will the editor allow me to ask, is it honest to adduce Baxter as an enemy to separation in his day, when Baxter did actually separate because the things objected to now were insisted on? The editor should remember, that the Church of England had ceased to be "a hierarchy inconsistent with the progress of the Gospel" when Baxter objected to separation, but when it was, he separated from it—got, I suppose, a morbid conscience, along with the hundreds of fellow ministers, for which they were fools enough, many of them, to beg their bread with their families. Morbid consciences are very troublesome things sometimes—easy consciences very seldom. There is a day coming in which they may be more occasion of sorrow.

The editor is probably also ignorant, that the imposition of the same things in Scotland produced sadder effects,

even in many morbid consciences there.26 These, morbid as they were, were more constant and more valuable to many there than their lives; and the beauties of the Church of England liturgy were enlivened and exalted by the blood of martyrs, and the torments of the iron boot, on those whose consciences preferred temporal death to the imposition of that they believed to be evil. The prayer-book has been the occasion, and its ministers the instruments, of other blood of martyrs, than it is perhaps aware of, or accustomed to boast. But what is that to the editor or the rest of the body here? They have not morbid consciences; they acknowledge it is full of abominations, but no giving up livings, or iron boots for them: they will protest and stay in them, and blame those who leave them for making divisions. No wonder, their consciences are really ill at ease, and they dread a testimony to it; and the editor knows this.

I cannot help thinking, and my experience has led me to the same conclusion, that if there were a little more morbidness, or (if I may be allowed to change the expression) activity in the consciences of some brethren who do not separate, it would have been no harm. And I cannot help thinking that the state force put on the consciences of all the early reformers, and the surrender of beloved flocks, by one thousand five hundred and upwards of the godliest ministers that ever breathed, and the surrender of their lives, and the endurance of torments by the saints of Scotland, might have called for something more than the reproach of morbid consciences from anything but the Church of England. But the unjust knoweth no shame. The infection has certainly not reached them. But perhaps some modern Baxter may reform all this, and it shall shine in spotless

purity, such as shall satisfy his mind, if not God's; and some pious and acute prebendary, who can give good thoughts in bad times in these days, may acquiesce in the reformation and its arrangements, results which he may regret, but which he cannot control. We would only hint, for we do not judge (we acknowledge) of the future from the past, of which we are very ignorant, but from the word of God, which is very sure; but only remind (as an argumentum ad hominem) Christians that do, that this reformation of Baxter's of old, godly though he was, and disliking separation, lasted ten years, and then everything became worse than before, and he was obliged to separate; nor could in these days, we would suggest, any modern prebendary, when the ten years were closed, feel so sure of recovering his prebend, as the pious and acute Thomas Fuller; for they are, we will agree, evil days—they will hardly afford (may we prophesy?) in any such sense, "mixed contemplations in better times." We did once to such an one, and the things have not been untrue, though despised.

But widely extended divisions amongst Christians are caused by it. Let me ask, if there are divisions between Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, and others who are continuing in connection with, and support of "gross corruption," how is the division to be healed? by those who are not in the corruptions returning to them, or those who are leaving them? But there is no need of the corruptionists joining their separating brethren—let them only get rid of these corruptions, and division would immediately cease. Will they forgive one proposing such a remedy, or think it "proud or peevish "? They know they cannot, and therefore they rail at

their “separating brethren” as proud and peevish, and promise that at some future time they may state the grounds on which the duty of adherence to the Church of England rests in spite of the gross corruptions. In the meanwhile prejudice has been excited against the guileless Israelites, and people maintained in connection with the corruptions, and the point is gained. It is a very hardening system. The closing paragraph speaks with the most perfect coldness of whole districts not within the reach of a Christian minister by virtue of the system; and of those who in such places, led by God’s Spirit, may labour and suffer reproach, and gather out souls to Christ, and if any be wicked enough to watch over them, or seek their continued good, they are to be branded as schismatics and proud and peevish. There is certainly no morbidness in the conscience of a modern corruptionist, save that which may consist in having lost its feelings altogether—a mind, I suppose, as diseased in God’s eye, as one which would refrain from eating herbs, if it thought it a sin.

As to “unaccountable insensibility of conscience, to such passages, as ‘I beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,’ or as that to the Philippians, ‘whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing’” —as to the first we say, the Church of England has made it impossible. She is bound up in positive error, and so most of her active ministers think. They do not believe for example in baptismal regeneration, though they sign their consent to it. As to “no divisions among you,” divisions among whom?

among believing disciples? Does the editor of the Christian Journal mean at present to persuade us that the Church of England is a body of believing disciples, among whom we make divisions by leaving it? We leave it, because it is no company of believing disciples at all, but a very wicked and nefarious union between the Church and the world; because its essence and essential distinction is the chief of all iniquities, the mixing the Church in the world, the holding of apostate principles if not a ripened apostate state. The editor of the Christian Journal must know that the majority of Christians in the world think the Church of England a system of great abominations; and are apt to charge upon men, such as the editor himself, the sin of division, because they force upon the morbid consciences of weak brethren that which, by the apostle's rule, it would be a sin for them to do. The editor too knows, as to divisions, there was a time, when many were willing and desirous to work with and be servants in the activities of godly members of the Church of England, though they could not sign what they did not believe. They were all cast out as an unclean thing: what could there be but division? and who made it, unless we are to quench the Spirit of God for the fancies of the assumed functionaries of Christ?

At this time, and the writer is not unacquainted with Ireland, I know scarcely a single active devoted Christian layman in the Church of England. There may be a few readers in parishes paid by the clergymen, and I trust God will bless their labours; and there may be a few gentlemen patrons of religion in their neighbourhood, but otherwise I do not know such a thing in existence. I did know one, as an active devoted labouring Christian layman in the Church of England:

such as begun so, and were more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, speedily left it. Of those, not in it, there are multitudes, but I suppose they are beneath the notice of those with whom it would be wrong to have them at the same table. But I can tell the editor, there was a time when many a mechanic was ordained because he would conform, and the ablest ministers in England shut out because they would not. The clergy delight, I do not doubt, to rest in their solitary self-sufficiency, and maintain their dignified association with the world; and they are welcome.

As to “whereto we have already attained, walking by the same rule.” As regards other Christians, we would subject ourselves to brotherly judgment as to our failure. As for my part, though the progress of Christians who have separated from the Church of England has, speaking of the mass, been very marked and decided in principle and practice, certainly not less acquainted with scripture, as indeed seems to be implied in the comparison of them with the Irvingites, and confessedly more than ordinarily engaged in doing good—yet compared with the standard that is before them, they know nothing, yea, ever will it be so; and as to doing, I suppose the most of them would confess with sorrow of heart that they come altogether short. They see a standard in every sense in Jesus, and even in early Christianity, but especially in Him, which humbles them and keeps them in the dust at every step. They only pray for more of the Spirit of God to conform them as one body to Him; and may it be so with them and with others!

But as regards the Church of England, they confess the attainment is beyond them; they have not reached to

this point in practical conduct—to wait for reasons in future to adhere to a thing, in spite of gross corruptions, where God has said “withdraw thyself from every brother that walketh disorderly.” They have not so learned Christ, and they confess that they cannot walk by this rule. It may be their weakness, but the strong should have compassion upon them, and remove the difficulty. No, they have not attained to this; they have not attained to cast their conscience and the testimony of the Spirit behind their back. They know that the Lord will judge His people, and they fear His judgment more than the reproach of a morbid conscience, when they cannot do this great wickedness and sin against God. The Spirit of the living God urges them not to abide in or to bear with evil; and they do not, taking scripture as their guide, understand (it may be their folly) a Christian’s adhering to gross corruptions. They leave the palm of prudence to the editor of the Christian Journal.

Attainment in knowledge they know little about: only that, if a man think he knows anything, he knows nothing, yet, as he ought to know it. But they count a good conscience a thing for a Christian to keep, and they have been accustomed to apply the passage in Philippians to humbleness of mind as to knowledge, and not, as the editor of the Christian Journal has done, to a question of continuance in what they account the greatest moral evil under the sun; a system calling itself a church, but really “inconsistent with the progress of the gospel,” the continuance of the Church in the world grieving the Spirit of God. If the editor does not apply his quotations to this, he is talking beside the question. His “separating brethren” do not separate because of attainment in knowledge, but because the light has

broken in upon their souls, that the system he belongs to is a system of ungodliness—to use other words, if he please, though very inadequate words, of “gross corruptions.” I say inadequate words, because corruption implies the spoiling of something good: and the Church of England was never something good, but a modification of popery, brought about under Providence by Henry VIII, and good men who held justifying truths for their own souls, and who got rid of as much of popery as the sovereign of the day allowed them.

“The protestant church system is nothing but a continuation of the catholic church system, on a less extensive scale.” I would add, with more thorough subjection to the world. I have spoken of this upon the ground that the conscience of these who are drawn out by the Church of England is morbid and weak, in which case it is manifest, that the sin is with the Church of England entirely, and the editor of the Christian Journal partakes of it, if the rule of scripture and the apostles be heeded.

But are the objections to the system merely those of weak consciences? We admit the palm of strong consciences belongs entirely to the clergy of the Established body. But there are grounds of objection, which might strike an indifferent observer of a Christian spirit, and, without evil weakness of conscience, may be accounted objects of the Lord’s judgment. The first great objection I would urge against the Church of England is that (instead of being in any sort the gathering of the children of God upon the foundation of a heavenly calling, sitting in spirit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; being filled with His Spirit; and by the supply of His spirit manifesting the life of Christ, and the

power of His grace and presence, in the unity of His sanctified members) it is essentially, as the Church of England, the opposite of all this: and that is, the union of the Church and the world. This makes it the Church of England: for that is the Church, not which God owns, but which the world owns, and of that world Satan is the prince; and the consequence is that if men be all that God owns but not what the world owns, they are accounted schismatics and evil doers, not because they separate from Christians, but from the world presumptuously calling itself the Church, and the Spirit of God and the path of Christ is blasphemed. The Church of England is not the Church of God; but the merging of disciples—of the Church in its members, in a great worldly system. It is that peculiar sin, which pollutes, nullifies and renders void the last great witness of the holiness of the Lord, previous to the coming glory: and therefore along with other similar bodies, constitutes the great final sin of the Church, the substitution of the power of the world for the support of the Church, in lieu of the power, presence and Spirit of God, the consequent necessary desecration of the Church, the grieving of the Spirit of God, making the Church of God the sport of its enemies, and causing the weak sheep of Christ, whom the presence of the Spirit in the grace of the Lord alone could comfort and feed, to be scattered to the winds and to wander on every mountain.

But they have the world and that is the point. And here is the grand sin of the godly clergy: they are using their godliness to sustain this, and let them not say the Church has not the world. I repeat, it is written, “these shall hate the whore.” The system means, its name means, the union of the Church and the world, that is,

the union in sin of what God has separated, the putting the Church into the world which God had taken out of it, and the grieving, in consequence, of the Holy Spirit of God. And He gave Himself for our sins, as of the world, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world. The Church of England is the putting the saints into the world again, the sanction of an unholy meretricious union with it. It buries the sanctified ones in the world and takes unsanctified ones, and alike calls them Christians, and the life and distinctive character of Christ is lost. I do not say God's Spirit does not act in spite of it; I know it does often in the necessity of His love. I do not say that infidelity, the wickedness of the world may not seek to pull down and deprive of its temporal goods the wickedness of the Church. I do not doubt, and the word of God teaches us, that such things will be: one need not be a prophet to discern it now; but the word of God teaches us the character of that which is so wronged. The spirit of the saints of God has nothing to do with either. It may wonder at, nay, be bowed in spirit at the thought, that that which ever had the name of the Church or form of it should be in such case; but it can have nothing to say to either. The objection of the saints to the Church of England is, that it is the union of the Church and the world; this is what constitutes it the Church of England. The necessary consequence of union with the world is grieving, resisting, and denying the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God cannot bear with the world, and the world cannot bear the Spirit of God, cannot receive it, for it seeth it not, neither knoweth. The Spirit of God may be in individuals in the Church of England, because in fact it is no Church at all; and, so far as they act from the individual indwelling of the Spirit, they may be blessed,

and may they be abundantly so! But the system is nothing else (it may sustain the flesh and so be not thought to be so) but a hindrance to them and every one else in whom the Spirit dwells, so far as it constitutes the Church of England. It is a system which the world has prescribed to prevent hurting the feelings of the world, and disallowing all that would, and must do so while on regular terms of alliance with it. Oh! it is a great sin. Hence, wherever the Spirit of God acts, it is discountenanced, or if this be feared from its power, attempted to be confined to the channel of entire dependence on the world. Its energies thus cramped and crippled within the bounds of the system the next consequence is that, when men are not tied up in the system, they do not yield to this effort to connect them with the world and receive its sanction, and they still continue to work, and though blessed and labouring hard in the Lord's cause by the strength and help of the Spirit of God, they are counted separatists and dividers of the Church. Then Satan raises up some scheme of his own, perhaps of active labour with pretence of the word, and not connected with the Church nominally, and those who have been working simply, as Christians not connected with it, are identified with this by the jealousy of those who are, and every pains taken to discredit them, and thus (by virtue of the system of the Church of England) the Spirit of God is hindered, polluted, and mixed with the world; crippled on one side, discredited and dishonoured on the other, and the sole cause and doer of all this is the Church of England. Satan gains his point and laughs at them doing his work. It is impossible that those who are united with the world can love the unhindered working of the Spirit of God.

The editor of the Christian Journal has recently united himself to the worldly part of the Church in hopes of doing more good, or of being sustained by them, and hence these articles; for I do not doubt, nor ought I, that his original purpose was to do the Lord's work. Union with the world, the grand distinctive sin and the power of apostasy in the Church, and that which is identified with it, the blaspheming and denying the Spirit of God, and refusing the word as the simple guide, is that which we object to in the Church of England: and let it leave this, all difficulty will cease. Dissenters will quarrel little, I suspect, about episcopacy, and the separatists will be forgotten, for all the saints will be separatists from the world; but while the nominal Church is in it, it may be persuaded that there will be separatists from it. It however is the necessary cause of the division, and this must be while the Spirit of God is grieved and the character of Christ lost by its worldliness.

The truth is, the power of Christ's resurrection and the presence of the Comforter are lost and unowned; and hence the evil and thence the separation. Now it is quite true that every believer may not attain to the same apprehension of heavenly things, but originally the Church held the place suited to them; and it, being heavenly, led onward the less full-grown saints, and the Church as a body held the position. The stronger were a guard and a help to the weak, and the Spirit was ungrieved in the Church (though individuals might be in feebleness), and found its resting-place there, and the Church, its comfort in its presence. Now Satan having "beguiled the Church, the Church is in the position of earthliness, and united in system with the world: he has got it while it was in its low state, tied down by its own

will first, then by actual bonds into the unhallowed union which makes it a bar and a hindrance to the Spirit of God, and, the bonds being on it, whoever becomes really spiritual and heavenly-minded, and holds his course on, becomes a separatist from it; and it is grieved and complains of division. But this arises, not from the evil of the saint pursuing heavenly mindedness, but from the helpless union of the Church with the world.

I will freely make a further admission. The leaving many saints behind tied by ten thousand bonds which Satan and circumstances have formed around them, and the feebleness of faith, which long bondage in Egypt has occasioned, weaken the ranks of those who are out, make gaps in their spiritual advantages which they fully feel, and make them more liable to the inroads of Satan; their labour more abundant than it would otherwise be. The question is, are they to go back to those who are thus behind, or march on looking for them to follow? It may be, their want of courage for war has caused them a more toilsome journey through the wilderness, but they are learning faith in God who supplies every need there, which their long worldly supply in Egypt, since they left their strangeness in a promised land, had taught them almost to forget entirely. Leeks and onions were there, but there was not the supply and the care of their own God, and they were in bondage under hard and cruel masters, whose enmity was against their firstborn. They trust that, if journeying through the wilderness to the Canaan left of old, it is now not to be as strangers, without so much as to set their foot on, but to the rest and to the inheritance which God hath prepared for them; they prefer indeed the path of faith,

feeble though they be; they are sorry for their brethren behind.

There are other things in which these, which constitute the great principles, are shewn in practical detail. The whole arrangement of ministry is from the world, and not from God. All the chief pastors of the Church and a great body of the inferior (but it is sufficient here to note the chief as the fountain) are appointed by the world in its worst form—a perfectly monstrous notion, under which the godly men are themselves groaning, but which is much more important, as shewing the practical dependence on, and identity of the whole system with, the world. The letters patent of the king, that is, the fiat of a worldly minister, perhaps an infidel, are the credentials and appointment of all the bishops in Ireland. All the parochial cures or non-cures are secular livings incident to a profession, and a large portion of them not even in the gift of men who have the moral control of the Church, however they got it, but come directly from the world. It is perfectly ridiculous to talk of godly appointed ministers, or of this being ministry.

Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, and others, used to buy up livings in order to get godly men into them: has this the smallest resemblance to spiritual pastorship in the Church of Christ? The result is, that in the very best of time a large majority of the pastors, so-called, are not Christians at all, but serve only to make everything but themselves schismatical (and the best comfort one can get is, that there are often no Christians under them), and where a godly man has been, in the majority of instances the effect of the system is, that the person who shall follow shall have his only business in sedulously rooting up the principles taught, and scattering the

flock. We have a promise, in this number, of instruction what Christians are to do when a Christian ministry is not within reach, although there are plenty of pastors brought there by the system of the Church of England.

If it is not the fault of the Church of England, whose fault is it? I shall be told the bishops'. The bishops are to take care—and who appoints the bishops? are they appointed according to God's order? No, but according to the system of the Church of England, by what as to church matters (however to be obeyed in civil) we must say is the devil. All this then is the system of the Church of England, and is destructive of the nature and possibility of a Christian ministry. People may talk of books and regulations in the Prayer Book. They do not let out the great secret of the whole. The source of the ministry is in the world, with the ministry of the country, and not with God, by the system of the Church of England. There can be no regular Christian ministry in it. It is impossible that any order or discipline should be in it. The Spirit of God may be too strong for the system. So it is; and therefore there are both godly individuals and separatists; and such is the case, partly by virtue of their being separatists. But the system is irreclaimably destructive of the being of a Church. In the same way there is, and can be, no legislation— no provision for the emergencies of the Church by any meeting assembled as a Christian one for the purpose. They have signed that they have no right to meet unless by the king's calling them together, not the Lord's. They had to do with the world, and it was jealous of their doing anything without the prerogative authority of the world—they belong to it, and therefore are regulated by it. In lieu thereof they are legislated for by infidels, dissenters, Socinians,

Roman-catholics, and everybody else that may be; and to such extent is this, that at one time half the chief pastors of the country were cut off, when the leader of the Commons has considered the circumstances of the Church, and the arrangement of their pastoral care settled by him: and there is not a pastor in the country but derives his authority from them, and there is now a commission in the country to examine the inferior ones. How ridiculous to talk of the divinely ordained ministry of the Church! And are the sheep of Christ to be subjected to this—to own such a system at all? This then is another objection to the Church of England, that its ministry is entirely the appointment and arrangement of the world, because it is of the world.

I have not here spoken of the monstrous and horrible abuses which are the consequences, but of the principles of the whole system. It was an ominous circumstance when the image of Christ, which was always in the rood-loft of the church, was taken down at the Reformation, and the king's-arms were set up there instead. This is the symbol of the Church of England, the sign of what it is. It is not formed then to act as a Church, but to obey and be arranged by the king and the parliament. They could not legislate for the spiritual welfare of the Church of Christ; they are the only legislature for the Church of England. Why? Because it is of the world, not of God. These are not abused—not corruptions; they are its principles, its system.. The Home Mission is a disorder—a corruption like the separatists; the system is orderly subservience to the king and parliament, generally not, and never acting as, Christians. This is an objection moreover which acts upon the circumstances of almost every private

Christian, and is felt in the grieving of the Spirit to the utmost corner to which it reaches, or where it precludes another from going who might be a blessing.

And hence another deadly evil in the Church of England: the ministry itself becomes a worldly ordinance—a clergyman is a clergyman without reference to grace or gift in him. There is an entire separation between gift and nominal office in the Church. Nominal office is not founded on the exercise of gift, as it was in the primitive Church, and hence becomes and is an authority entirely independent of gift, and necessarily hence apart from and independent of God, whose part in the office is conferring the gift. It becomes simply derivative from man, and thus the nominal authority of God's offices is attached to every error, unbelief, and evil doing that can be in the Church; and this is the Church's apostasy in office; and this is the meaning of the Church of England as to its offices. They are derivative without grace, not the recognition of gift in any case, but the conferring of authority with or without it. A man has them because of his human derived authority, and what is merely human becomes an exclusion of God's Spirit, and a divine warrant attached to evil. The authority is derived from the appointment, and is as good in the Church of England without grace as with it; and yet there is the awful assumption of actually conferring the Holy Ghost, and this is so entirely and avowedly the case in its worst form, that a clergyman of the Church of Rome, ipso facto on his coming over, is a clergyman of the Church of England without any reference to gift or office at all, for then gift and office cannot be, proving the whole force to be in the humanly derived authority. Their orders are identical in their source. Whence then is the mission and

authority of the Church of Rome? Thence are the boasted orders of the Church of England. They are the human substitute for divine grace, and thus the constant security of mischief and evil in the Church, the seal of apostasy.

Hence a man with less grace—less of God's Spirit—less knowledge—less holiness, would be received and trusted to, because he was a clergyman; because the world owned his fleshly order, while he who had all of them would be slighted. It is the denial of the exercise of all gifts, and the substitution of a clergyman (be he even no Christian at all) in their place. He and no other may speak, though he may be totally incompetent to edify the Church, and God may have specially qualified someone else to do it, and there is no remedy in the system for this, no provision for the exercise of any gifts; for, were he even ordained, he must go elsewhere. The clergyman is the person to give his half-hour's instruction, bad or good, and no one else can be allowed to speak. Let him be an apostle, it would make no difference; let God send him expressly, it is no matter. It is irregular for the Spirit of God to act in the Church of England. It would not suit the world, and therefore it does not suit the Church of England; unless therefore the Spirit of God be quenched, there must be divisions. While the system of the Church of England remains, it is the grand bar to the operations of the Spirit of God; and so I have ever found it in this poor benighted land. Oh! the loads of guilt it will have upon its head in this country.

The next thing shewing its connection with the world, and rejection of the Spirit of God, is indiscriminate communion: thus it becomes the positive witness of the compatibility of unholiness and all Christian privileges.

Sacramental communion is the seal and symbol of the participation of all Christian privileges. We are identified with every person who partakes these, not as to his being a child of God as known to God, but as to his being one as known to us with all due spiritual investigation. “Looking diligently,” says the apostle, “lest there be among you,” etc. “Inasmuch then as ye are partakers of that one loaf, ye are all one body,” 1 Cor. 10:17. It becomes then the solemn sanction of unholiness, making Christ the minister of sin. This is the universal practice of the Church of England; it makes her, the National Church, no church at all—disciples in it is simply ridiculous. The moment it is exercised, it ceases to embrace the nation: the king and the bishops must be the first persons excommunicated, and then where is the Church of England? So in the colleges, the education for the Church, all the fellows and students (Christians or no Christians is no matter) are canonically and by the regulations bound to receive, at least, three times a year. Thus it becomes, by embracing the world, the grand sanction for ungodliness in the Church of God, the nursery of apostasy. It makes no difference in godliness as to the privileges of Christianity. It is essentially and practically antinomian.

The next thing that may be mentioned is entire unsoundness of doctrine; the want of liberty which flows from this association with the world; assurance without discipline must be antinomian; and next the ascribing to ordinances an efficacy which makes the world without faith on the same ground as the believer; thus putting the ordinance in lieu of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to doctrine, we read in the second article, “That Christ died to reconcile His Father to us”—a statement quite inconsistent with the gospel on its fundamental principle, which flows from the Father sending the Son out of His own voluntary and uncaused love. This mission of the Father from His own mind is of the very essence of the gospel; the error is an abuse of one part of the gospel, in which Christ made satisfaction for sin, to destroy another, the fountain from which it flowed, in which God gave Him so to make the satisfaction. It strikes at the root of all the liberty and settledness of peace of the people of God. It is false doctrine, and all the liturgy is founded on the bondage. The litany especially, much as people admire it, is what no simple holy Christian could use. Can a body of Christian worshippers continually be saying, “Spare thy people and be not angry with us for ever”? If these are joint supplications, is the Church always to be under the sense of God’s anger? There is a continual confusion in these supplications between God’s people and the people of England or Ireland as being a Christian nation; and they treat the world even as in a Christian state, and are no prayers of the Spirit of Christ and for the Church at all. The fact is, it is a relic (as any one may see in the treatises on the common prayer) of superstitious processions, begun about the seventh century, to arrest evils. But it is not a Christian supplication at all, though there may be Christian things in it. I do not think any part of the Prayer-book recognizes the Church in the place in which God has set it of redeemed liberty in Christ, and because it is identified with the world, and therefore always labours and tends to keep down the Church to the level of its association with the world. In the assertion of provision

for everything there is the assertion of fitness for nothing. If I make the common supplication of the congregation to say, “be not angry with us for ever,” it is foolish to say beforehand, “let us rejoice in the strength of our salvation.”

The fact is, the Church is labouring under kingly prohibition to the Reformers to act upon the light which had opened upon their consciences. We have this statement in the homily for Whitsunday, “The true church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God’s faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And it hath always three notes or marks whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine; the sacraments ministered according to Christ’s holy institution; and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline.”

Will the editor say that there is the right use of ecclesiastical discipline in the Church of England? If not, it is not the Church of God at all; and for the plain reason that holiness ceases to be a characteristic of it. Truth, fellowship and holiness constitute the Church: take away either, and the Church is gone. The two latter the Church of England has not at all: the former, defectively.

I have noticed one point, I shall mention another in which they are mixed up.

In the homily on “Common Prayer and Sacraments,” we read, “And as for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a sacrament, namely, for visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is

annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness, and joining in Christ, there be but two; namely, baptism and the supper of the Lord. For although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin; yet, by the express word of the New Testament, it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign (I mean laying on of hands), is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in absolution, as the visible signs in baptism and the Lord's supper are, and therefore absolution is no such sacrament as baptism and the communion are. And though the ordering of ministers hath this visible sign and promise; yet it lacks the promise of remission of sin, as all other sacraments besides the two above named do. Therefore, neither it, nor any other sacrament else, be such sacraments as baptism and the communion are."

Now here we have the annexing and tying of promised forgiveness to the visible sign, and this is habitual in the minds of most, as to the eucharist, where a man ought not to come except in full forgiveness. It is taught in the most objectionable way as to baptism. Thus "it is certain that children baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."

Now I am not here questioning the point of infant's salvation, but adduce it to shew that salvation is annexed to baptism by its own efficacy under all circumstances. Children who are baptized are undoubtedly saved: no wonder, if they are regenerate and have their sins forgiven them. As to both then we have the prayer, and the assertion, "Dearly beloved, ye have brought the child to be baptized. We have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive

him, to release him of his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in His gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for, which promise He for His part will most surely keep and perform": and then: "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate," etc., and afterwards, "we yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit; to receive him for thine own child by adoption and to incorporate him into thy holy church." And he is asserted thereby to be made partaker of the death of God's Son, though not of His resurrection.

And in the Catechism the statement is made broadly that the child was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, which last indeed is made a matter of hope in the baptismal service. So in confirmation, "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water, and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins." And so much is this the case that in the sixteenth article we read, "not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost and unpardonable." Why after baptism, but that baptism was regeneration and the forgiveness of sins? The whole statement is utter confusion, but it shews the place baptism had in the system. The prayer in the eucharist service is equally strange. "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ; and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious

blood, and that we may ever more dwell in Him, and He in us."

Now these things really involve most important points of doctrine; they show a continuous system, by which though Christ has died "to reconcile his Father to us," the Church is still praying God may not be angry with it for ever, and seeking by the use of ordinances to make daily available to itself the security of averted wrath. I do not believe this is a correct view of the gospel, but puts the gospel and the Church in a false, an unchristian, position. It arises from the necessary sense of unknown and unascertained love and craving for mercy, which its identification with the unbelief of the world imposes on it. Let it have as much love towards the world as it pleases, but let it have the joy of forgiveness for itself. I repeat then, it is but the systematic perpetuation of unbelief, I do not say intentionally, but in fact. By asserting every one to be regenerate and in a state of salvation, it has lost for itself what it is to be regenerate and saved.

The next point is the want of spirituality of worship. This must be the case in its utter mixture with the world, because of the grieving of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is not looked for in worship, but instead of it prayers which must suppose the thoughts of the Spirit of God in the Church, and the wants of the saints to be invariable every Sunday in the year and all years; and capable of being appointed beforehand; and the incongruity of which to the real expression of spiritual wants is proved by their never being by any chance used by Church of England men at any other time than that in which they are prescribed by law. As a matter of fact, the worship of the Church of England is not the worship

of the Church of God, not therefore spiritual worship, and consequently unacceptable to God. They do not reckon on the presence of the Spirit of God to enable them to worship, but have substituted the Liturgy in its stead, in which there are many holy things doubtless, but which are not the Spirit of God, nor are they necessarily the wants of those who may be there, nor are they gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They meet as the parishioners of a parish, not as Christians. The service goes on just the same whether there be a single person who knows the Lord or not, whether they are Christians or not, and if there be such there, they have not been gathered together in His name. Whatever form of piety, no stranger nor any spiritual Christian going in could feel that there was dependence there on the Spirit of God, nor consequently His presence there, because two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, unless for judgment on the form of it; and the general answer is, they go for communion between themselves and God. They confess that the communion of the saints is lost; but for the other home is a better place. But think of the whole congregation, taking them in their best light, getting publicly absolved every Lord's day! and I say it now not in reproach, but as showing the character of the service, and again, as a whole congregation of Christians, saying, "Be not angry with us for ever." Where is the peace and liberty of saints in this?

But the great point is, they do not meet as Christians leaning on the Spirit of God, but as men trusting to a form. It is vain to attempt to bring it to one's self, as the spiritual worship of believing people, the joint spiritual worship in whatever feebleness of believing people. Is

there such a thing called for in the Church of God? Is it not its special character? The Establishment destroys any such thing. Hence the whole enquiry is, Is the gospel preached there? I want spiritual worship with the saints. I believe it the supply of God's goodness for our weakness, and the special privilege and comfort of the Church. The other is a form of godliness for the world, but indeed denying the power of it. Extempore prayers need not be spiritual, but the leading of the Spirit is the power of prayer and spiritual worship, expressing thereby its necessities; and daily reiterated forms cannot be assumed to be the expression of the Spirit's mind, though it may serve for the world who do not want it. It serves perfectly to prevent the ascertainment whether men are spiritual or not—the great object where the church is joined to the world.

I would ask godly Church of England men, why on every other occasion, they make use of what is called extempore prayer. Is the meeting of the saints, the Church, the only place where such guidance and assistance of the Spirit could not be? Or is it that indeed there is such mixture of the Church with the world that it cannot be; that is, that it is no meeting of the saints at all; and that dependence on the Spirit of God is given up, as in a place unsuited for His presence and help? The truth is, it is framed for meeting the world, and hence it is public worship: that is, of the world and the saints in the world, not the gathering into one, in any sort, the children of God which were scattered abroad. And here, while I acknowledge there are many saints in the Church of England, as we find Jonathan the beloved of David mixed up with Saul, I would notice what appears to me a very fatal consequence as to them, of

this state of things, and of the whole position of the clergy—an habitual disregard to convictions of mind. The system being inevitably and infallibly tied to all these things, they meet every conviction with the feeling, “If I give way to this, I must leave the whole system.” The consequence is, they endeavour somehow or other to repress, or else to quiet, the conviction by some subtle reasoning or general comforting persuasion — “I shall do more good by being here” —but the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and the honesty of their conscience and judgment impaired in its principles. If we suppress our conscientious convictions in one thing, it is not in that alone we suppress it, but we suppress the conscience itself, and we weaken the godly spring of judgment in it. There is not the same nearness to God of our conscience, the surface of it is hardened by the resisted conviction, and nothing tells upon it as it did. It does not tell so speedily, as by the presence of the grieved Spirit of God, the presence of good or evil. It is not, in the discernment of the healthful Spirit of God, God’s index to the soul; the man ceases comparatively to be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. I have known a clergyman tell me, “he had no conscience”; another, “things were true, but he had no faith” — another, “that he thought he did more good by preaching against the principles of some of the services, than harm by using them”; and multitudes, “that though they did not agree with everything,” though they signed that they did, “they thought they did more good, by staying where they were, than leaving it”; some that “the sixth article neutralized their signature to all the rest.” I never found anyone, any believer that is, but a clergyman, say such things. I have known persons stay where a measure of actual evil was, which they had not

signed, which they opposed, in the hope of getting rid of it; but I have not known any but clergymen sign what they did not agree to, or twist their consciences and judgment together in some way, so as to let their consciences slip through the difficulty for the sake of gaining an end. It seems to a simple Christian “doing evil that good may come”; for I am putting the best case for the clergy, and that no temporal motive actuates them in the least. I do not believe that one godly clergyman in the country until lately (for this wrenching of conscience has now, I believe, obscured many a spiritual thought) believed in baptismal regeneration—at least they preached against it. I do not believe, if left to themselves, ten christian clergymen in the country, until it became a matter of partisanship, would have used the public baptismal service as it stands; but they signed the approval of it, and used it, thereby not only grieving God’s Spirit in their conscience but wronging the people by an untruth. They taught continually and repeatedly in their black gown contrary to what they used and declared continually in their white; and this has had a most fatal effect upon the conscientiousness of the whole body, and a most visible one to those who are free; and they may be assured that the perception of this is not confined to “separating brethren.” Acting upon conscience they are pleased to call a morbid conscience. The tendency this will have in bringing in popery, I believe they are very little aware of: dulling the conscience is the great secret of that system, and in connection with the necessary value and power of formal ordinances. Dark as they may be, the high-church clergy are more honest in this. How deep a sin it is against the people, they must answer in that day.

But the editor of the Christian Journal has established us in the conviction of the Tightness of our principle. If he tells us that we are weak and feeble, we acknowledge it altogether as thrown upon the Lord, but not without His guidance. He tells us, we are “separatists,” “Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good.” I read that Christ the Lord “gave himself for us, that he might purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” We accept the designation and crave of the power of His presence and Spirit, that we may abound more and more, that we may be more nothing, and His presence everything among us. We are not satisfied, nor shall be till the resurrection, if we are saints; but, apart from evil we see to be more every day, preparing to meet the Lord; and we would remind the editor that to continue in gross corruptions may be human wisdom, but we read “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; to depart from evil, that is understanding.”

We believe that the editor of the Christian Journal has signed many things which he does not believe, and is what he is by virtue of doing so; we cannot think that is right. I have refrained from entering into actual abuses; but when we look around, we see the effect of the Church of England system to be the destruction of pastorship as to the great body,of Christians, and the large majority of them called so, not Christians at all; the abuse of ordinance to a frightful degree; the destruction of spiritual worship; the sanction of abounding iniquity, and the casting the reproach of schism and disorder upon the saints of God who labour in His name, or seek to keep a good conscience. And we do not think it requires a morbid conscience to have

done with this. As to ourselves we are feeble and weak, but we are not careful to answer them in the matter: our God is able to deliver us through the fire we may be brought into, and He will deliver us; but if not, we will not serve their gods, nor worship the golden image which they have set up. They have taken the graving tools and got the gold (while our Mediator has gone on high, receiving the commandments of His grace for us) and put it into the fire, and fashioned it with the tools; and when we would ask, with the broken word in our hand, what did the people, or what the king that thou didst do this? we are answered, Providence, Providence. "There came out this calf." The principles of the Church are gone in it. The spirit of obedience is gone in it. They know not what is become of Him who guided them, and they have left the principle of obedience, the only guide meanwhile, and they have formed a guide for themselves, and called it a feast to Jehovah. They may be saved (indeed we would intercede for them), but their idol must go to the ground—it must be made dust of, not by man's hand, save the wicked "the men of God's hand," but by God's. "They have not continued in God's goodness," the Church has not; and the word runs, "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

And now I have only to add, what perhaps may seem an odd conclusion, that I look for no effect merely from these reasonings. If there be not spirituality enough to give up the Church on the highest principles, it is of little avail that reasonings convince; though, as a positive hindrance to truth and the opening out of real spirituality in the soul, I do sincerely desire every Christian to be out of it. I have only to add, that the reforms in the Christian Journal lead, as we have seen,

to no real result. I do not believe the editor would now insert articles he did some months ago, while they plunge at present persons who act on his provisional plans into the worst principles of dissent. Thus in this Journal “On Hearing Sermons,” we have this recommendation as “excellent advice.” “As the gifts and talents of ministers are different, I advise you to choose for your stated pastor and teacher one whom you find most suitable upon the whole to your own- taste, and from whom you are likely to learn with the most pleasure and advantage.”

Now this is merely passing, from the confessed ruin which the church system presents of efficient worship and ministry, into the very worst principle of dissent, and that upon which more of dissenting and real evil is founded in the Church of God than perhaps any other—choosing teachers suited to our taste. It is in fact, much as the Church of England dislikes dissent, the only real principle of conduct it has left, but such a one as from one end of scripture to the other shall be hard to be found unless in “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” Unity I believe to be the most desirable of all things, but unity founded on godliness, the unity of the faith, the unity of the Spirit in a good conscience, and, as the apostle describes, “the wisdom from above, first pure, then peaceable.” But Jehu’s reformations will not save Israel from the judgment that is to come; no getting rid of mere abuses, though it may protract awhile in the patience of God. But the temple of God is lost: it is not Judah, nor ruling with God, nor faithful with the saints. May the Lord grant us to know our own feebleness, and purge us from all evil!

Before the above could be printed, the November number was seen late in the month, and the December number with an additional article appeared on the subject. It will not require many words. The early part of it strikes us as low, but so timid of the prophecies of the last proving true, that it convinces us rather of the uneasiness of the writer's mind on the subject than of anything else. In the close of it he recommends us (by a simile, if possible, more kind than even the early Quakers or Swedenborg) to be prayed for as apes. All this I would pass by; only hinting in all friendliness, that as to the Church of England, wherever it has been brought (it is his nurse-child, not ours), we hope he may get safe down without killing himself or his nursling. We simply disclaim all care of it. I am not aware of any dying Tostatus amongst his "separating brethren." But he has now ventured into scripture, and I cannot help feeling that as in the former part he must have been ignorant of the facts he spoke of, so here there is very great ignorance of the mind of scripture; but when it is quoted, it must always be met. The first part is so little to the purpose, from the character of the worship of the time, that it is difficult to deal with it; but the evidence it does afford is conclusive against the editor. It is perfectly clear, that separation from the public worship of Israel was a bounden duty, and there is express commendation of it in scripture. Does the editor mean to say that it was right for Israelites to continue in the worship of the golden calves— the sin of Israel; or to make the Church of England the answering analogy to the sin of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin?

The commendation of the seven thousand is that they had refused to join in the national worship, because it

was corrupted with worldly practices. There were no such things as religious communities then: it could not be; it was not the form of divine worship to have churches. But they separated from the public worship of the country when it was corrupted, and were commended for doing so. And when even much less corruption than Baalim was practised; when the golden calves were set up in Bethel and Dan, pretended to be the worship of Jehovah but mixing for worldly reasons Egyptian practices with it, it is mentioned with honour that out of" all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel separated from them and left the country; and if the editor had ever read the prophets, he would have known that their testimony was incessant against having any such worship. As to Jerusalem, no person could have gone from the Temple, or he would have had no sacrifice at all. When it was corrupted, they were bound not to join. As to Ezekiel, he prophesied in Babylon, and the people of whom he speaks were shut up in the city of Jerusalem besieged, but they were to be marked, because they sighed over the abominations. But the editor seems not to be aware that they were commanded by the prophet Jeremiah to separate themselves and leave it, because the judgment of the Lord was coming on Jerusalem, and that so their lives would be spared, and that all the princes and king, etc., were very angry because thereby they said Jeremiah was weakening the hands of all those who were striving to save Jerusalem and resist the Chaldeans. There is indeed nothing new under the sun; so that, far from there not being in a single instance anything like separation, it was commended or commanded in both the instances to which the editor alludes; when the church had become corrupt, and that

even at the risk, nay the certainty (for they could be performed nowhere else, which is not at all our case), of losing the ordained and regularly necessary sacrifices of God. Thus we see, in the case when we might least expect it from the nature of the worship, it is exactly the opposite to the editor's statement.

Does he seriously mean to tell us, that the Israelites ought to have worshipped the calves in Bethel and Dan? It is quite clear, they ought not, and sinned if they did: ought they not to have owned therefore any God? ought they not to have owned, thanked and worshipped Jehovah? It is clear it was their very point of faithfulness to do so; and they were separatists from corrupt national worship for the Lord's sake, and wprshipped as well as they could by themselves. Evil having got possession of public worship, they were hated just as much as, or more than, modern "separating brethren," hid perhaps by fifty in a cave, where of course it would have been a sin to worship Jehovah, or they would have been "separating brethren."

I protest, I cannot see what the editor means, but that Baal and the calves were like the Church of England, and that people ought to have worshipped at them. The former part may be true for aught I know; but certainly the scripture totally condemns the latter and makes it the very point of faithfulness that it had been refused, in spite of acts of uniformity by kings and queens; and this makes a wide breach in his argument. He says, "in their several places in the Church, protest"—what Church? Were they to worship the calves, and protest against them? They did not worship with the nation at all, and could not: this was their protest, and the whole point in question, as it is now, and the Lord specially owned

them because they would not, but did form a separate communion, and there were worshippers of Baal and worshippers of Jehovah, so that Jehu could separate them for the slaughter of the former. So it is now. It is not I who have drawn the comparison; but the conclusion is manifest—the protest of refusing to worship with them, and worshipping Jehovah by themselves at all cost, constituted the point of Israelitish faithfulness.

And now as to the New Testament: first, the Jewish Church in our Lord's time. It is a mere subtlety to call it a church; it was no church, but an outward prescribed form of legal sacrifices and ceremonies, ordained by God Himself, from which no one could wilfully deviate without sinning. As our Lord says, "not a jot or tittle should pass from the law, till all was fulfilled"; and our Lord being made under the law, having graciously humbled Himself to this, was bound to be, and would not have conformed to all righteousness had He not conformed Himself to it. Was a Jewish Messiah (as such, though much more, He then came) to have been the first to break the law God had given to the people He was of and came to? Who ordained the pattern of the Established Church? On what mount was it shewn unto a mediatorial Moses? We are getting into popery in earnest now. The church of Judaism, if he will call it so (for church it was not), was not corrupt, but the people were who ministered in it. The state of things in the ordinances was exactly what God had ordained, even to the tithing of mint, rue, and cummin: and therefore the Lord says, "these ye ought to have done." Conformity, therefore, was a plain duty: therefore the Lord says, "the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." They were

prescribing Moses' enactment, by Moses' authority, and therefore, what they commanded was to be observed; but their works were not to be followed. There is no such seat unless we come to popery, or legal prescriptive ordinances in the Christian dispensation.

The confessed inventions of man we do not feel it necessary to follow: the works of those who assume the place we would for the most part avoid; but the simple answer to this is, that the temple was a divinely ordained system, and that the structure of the Church of England is not. Our Lord Himself therefore could not separate Himself from it. "He came to be the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God," to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and of course came in connection with them, would not go to a Gentile, and commanded His disciples not. But, consistently with this, He was as separate as He could be, living in despised Galilee, and choosing His disciples thence, from whom Jews were a distinct designation, as is manifest to any one well acquainted with the Gospels: but the moment our Lord died and rose again, the whole thing changed. The Church became partakers of "the heavenly calling," and the character of His priesthood, and consequently of worshippers under it, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens. He was to be known in the Church, "not after the flesh," in which He was connected with Judaism, according to the faithfulness of God, but "the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." It was then not Messiah walking blameless under the law, but "what communion hath light with darkness, Christ with Belial, or a believer with an unbeliever?" The world was a

condemned world, having rejected Christ; “wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

The Church of England and the editor of the Christian Journal will not obey this primary command, constituting the spiritual character of the Church as one with Christ. They will not “come out, and be separate,” but say, under the sanction of the Irvingites whom they despise, that Christ can have communion with Belial. “Be it ever so corrupt, people ought to stay there.” They have destroyed and corrupted the foundation principle of the Church of God, stated in that passage, that a believer cannot have communion with an unbeliever, that it is Christ and Belial. They would rather justify the worship of the golden calves, or Baalim, or Ashtaroth the abomination of the Sidonians, than have the trial of losing the support and comfort of the world. For my own part, I have no hesitation in saying, that were it to come to this, I would rather worship with two or three in a house separate from evil, though it were in every street of Dublin, than be deliberately mixed with evil, which the Lord must judge and set aside when He shall appear.

Such a state of things may be an evil and sorrowful state, but it is not the deliberate and haughty sanction of wickedness. They might have been destitute of the order and beauty of worship, and hidden in their caves on bread and water, but not sanctioning a system, in which whosoever would, people that were not priests at all, the king consecrates to minister to the calves, which are called Jehovah—the departure from the covenant of God. But I trust that the readers of the Christian Journal will

remember that the principle on which the editor calls on them to continue in the Church of England is avowedly that which is built upon the sanction of, and continuance in, the worship of the golden calves of Bethel and Dan. I desire no other evidence of what the principle really is.

As to the principle of Jerusalem worship, it is simply this: the Lord had recorded His name there, according to His promise in Deuteronomy 12, and other places, and there He had promised to meet them, and there to bless them. The place where He has promised now to meet them is, “wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them,” Matt. 18. This is the constituent difference of the dispensation, the Lord taking care first to shew the order of discipline, by which a wrong-doer is to be put out as a heathen man and a publican. This then is the promise of this dispensation, that on which it hangs—the presence of the Lord— “wherever two or three are gathered in his name.” So even, while the temple was standing, the apostles went up there to teach, and broke bread (Acts 2:46) from house to house, or at home. The Lord has provided comfort for His poor saints, seeking holiness in these promises against the haughty scorn of the sanctioners of corruption, of wickedness in the place of judgment. They know that however weak, yea, or failing in particular instances, it may be through their foolishness, gracious as the Lord is, they rest upon the basis of the whole dispensation; their adversaries, upon the corruption of its principle and alliance with evil and the world, which the Lord will judge. We would meet then in the Lord’s name, and hail everyone, even though not perfectly one in opinion, who loved the Lord Jesus, and was led by His grace in truth and righteousness,

resting in His atonement and resurrection, and subject to His will.

I do not believe that in any church of the Church of England, although I freely admit there are individual worshippers, they meet as two or three gathered in the Lord's name at all, or that His name consequently is recorded there to bless. The sermon may be blessed, or the individual may very humbly intend to worship God, but there is no blessed common spiritual worship; they are not met at all according to the Lord's commandment as Christian believers, nor are they addressed as such, when the clergyman speaks for himself, though he may do so when the Prayer-book speaks for him, thus making the whole thing a sort of mockery; in which the Spirit of Christ speaks one thing in the minister, and the form he reads another thing in the congregation.

And now to turn to the parts of scripture which do apply, that is, subsequent to our Lord's ascension.

"We find," the editor says, "the apostles and all the Christian Jews observing them with scrupulous exactness." I do not see any such thing. I see considerable and natural slowness in dropping what had ceased to be obligatory on those who had been brought up amongst them, and difficulties arising in the Church in consequence of their adherence to them, the attempt to maintain what had nothing to do with Christianity, and impose it, as the editor and his friends would now, but strenuously and steadfastly resisted by the apostle of the Gentiles, as marring the progress of the gospel, with one exception which we shall see just now. First Peter did not observe them, though he dissembled evilly about it, just shewing the effect of such things. Let us

turn to Galatians: “but when some sought to spy out our liberty,” says the apostle, “which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

This was the apostle’s way of dealing with what was sought to be imposed; and we say, we cannot be subject to, nor worship your golden calves, though you may call it Beth-el, and it may be set up where the pilgrim of God once was, with his staff in his hand, and God the portion of his inheritance, a wanderer for the sake of the inheritance and promise; yea, though it be the king’s chapel, and the king’s court. “Again when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed; for before that certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself [here is another sort of separation—separation from saints, not from evil], fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with them, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.”

Well it was for the Church of God, that there was one even then to stand out against these imposers of Jewish observances, that the truth of the gospel might continue with them. But what a picture of the effect of this continuance in the church ceremonies! dissimulation that jeopardized the truth of the gospel. But where was all the exactness of their observance? Not at all, till the fear of man and dissimulation came in; the two things which ever go together, and of which human ordinances, assumed to be divine or obligatory, are ever the instrument. Are there no Peters at Antioch now? Paul

was a foolish man not to conform to harmless ceremonies! He knew they were the parent of dissimulation, and the destruction of the truth of the gospel, the moment they were made obligatory. And he withstood it to the face, and would not be in subjection for an hour. But it is clear, that the Christian Jews did not observe them with scrupulous exactness. Hear the bold apostle. “But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”

What does the editor mean by scrupulous exactness, except in the way of dissimulation? But let him hear the same Peter again, and he might learn a wise lesson about what creates separation. In the chapter he has referred us to, I read this: “God [says the apostle, now unburdened by his fears] which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as to us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.” And it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to lay no greater burden than certain necessary things, from which I suppose few “separating brethren,” led of God, would be anxious to be free. Would (but God is wise) it had seemed good to others to observe the apostolic rule! To us, indeed save in love, it matters little, but we should have heard little of “separating brethren.”

The editor states it was decided that the Jewish ceremonies were obligatory on Jewish Christians. This is quite untrue: there was no such decision whatever; if so, Peter was wrong at Antioch in eating with Gentiles, and Paul and Barnabas and all. Indeed, so far from being true, it would have been destructive of the whole order and unity of the Church, and is merely ignorance of the progressive actual freedom to say so, as it is contrary to the matter of fact in the scriptures.

But there is an instance of Paul's acquiescence in their prejudices, which the editor refers to. Not acting from the guidance of God's Spirit to himself, he takes counsel with flesh and blood. James and the elders advise him to volunteer in shewing conformity to the customs of the Jews, who were all zealous of the law of which, it is clear, Christ had been the end as to this. However (whatever Paul's full concurrence was with their counsel, which does not appear) he acted on it— acted on conference with the flesh and blood deliberately for the first time. But what was the consequence? It brought him into all the difficulties from which he had been praying and begging the church's prayers to be delivered. If Romans 15:30, 31 be compared with Acts 21, it will be found that this very act was the source of all the difficulties which he had foreseen and deprecated, and besought them to deprecate so earnestly. God in His overruling mercy might turn it to good, as ever He will with His children. But it is a remarkable instance of the danger of temporising with fleshly conformity to prejudices, and not acting from the simple guidance of God's Spirit and word. They caught him in the temple where he, the apostle Paul, went to purify himself with the men, as if God had not

accomplished these things, building again the things destroyed, tending to make “Christ the minister of sin.” Two years’ removal from all ministry, and deliverance to the will of the Gentiles, under God, was the fruit of his acquiescence in the advice of conformity to the Jews. It is wonderful while they so often deny Jewish hopes, how fond churchmen are of Jewish manners, and the rudiments of this world, which is all their ways are now. The apostle teaches in Galatians 4:8-10, that for Gentiles to return to Jewish ordinances, habits and observances (now that God’s sanction has been removed from that system, and it is consequently merely the world), is to go back to heathen idolatry and evil. They were desiring to be again in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements, from which, as idolatrous Gentiles, they had been delivered: for Jewish ordinances without divine sanction were the same thing, human inventions sought out, and the principle of heathenism and idolatry in the sight of God. For the rest, we have seen, it clearly was not Paul’s habit among Jews, for it was Peter’s dissembling led to it in Antioch, and to it Paul would not yield. As to “imposed to the time of reformation” we shall see its use just now. Only meanwhile we would recommend the editor’s reading Colossians 2.

Now as to the Corinthians, the apostle’s command was to come out from the midst of evil in the world; our word is the same now to Christians mixed with the world in what is called the Church of England; because there can be no communion between Christ and Belial. And till the Church had proved itself clear in this matter, the apostle would not go at all, but sent Titus to see how it was, and when he proved their entire subjection in the matter, and that they were clear, went then, for he wished to

spare them; but he would not hear of what the editor now defends, nor go to the place until it was remedied. This is the instruction we have from the Corinthians—the instruction expressly that we are never to bear the mixture of known evil in the Church; that it is the horrible lie of the possibility of the communion of Christ and Belial, that they must separate from the world and not touch the unclean thing, and then God would receive them, and they should be His sons and daughters. “He would walk in them and dwell in them.” “The old leaven being purged out.” The apostle separated between the guilty and not guilty, and kept the Church pure. He did make separation, but it was by turning out the evil which the Establishment keeps and clings to. “If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.” “If one that is unclean by a dead body, touch any of them shall it be unclean? And the priests answered, and said, It shall be unclean. So saith the Lord is this nation, and so is this people before me, and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean.”

As to the Galatians, there was nothing corrupt in the Church at all: they received false doctrine from other teachers which the apostle corrected; so of the other evils which arose in the churches. The apostle corrected them, and so held them together—an example in the matter, of course. When corrected, they had no need to separate. It would have been sheer madness to have corrected the evil, and told them to separate at the same time; a provision for separation, while the Church was planting in holiness, would have been simply denying

His apostolic work, which was to form the churches on those principles which have now been departed from, so that which is called the Church is nothing but another aspect of the State.

But the Seven Churches “furnish cases exactly in point.” They do no such thing. The Seven Churches exhibited churches formed thoroughly on sound principles—principles of not allowing evil; and because they did not act upon them, they were to be judicially removed out of their place, which they were accordingly. They formed the next step in church history to the epistles of the apostles, the parting warning from the Lord. The Epistles afford the example of apostolic energy in maintaining churches rightly planted in their right position of separation from evil, the apostle warning that he knew, that after his decease things would go wrong, and evil arise. The Seven Churches’ epistles are the judgment of Christ on this subsequent state of things, the Son of man, but judging in the midst of the candlesticks—churches rightly founded, having generally ceased to be rightly ordered and therefore removed out of their place by the Lord’s judgment, making way for the apostasy as “things that should be.” Removal for practical corruption of a holy thing is the tenor of these epistles, the setting aside the church as standing in its first planting. But they were “things that are.” As prophecies, if such, they have nothing to do with this question. The Church of England never stood on such ground at all—never was the subject of such judgment. It never was planted as a colony of believers in the midst of the world—removed when it ceased to act on the principles of separate holiness. It was the result of the union of the Church and the world in the

outset; or rather the Chur,ch never came out of the apostate world at all, and therefore there were no principles on which to judge it, except general professed principles in Christendom. It never reached the point, nor sought it, nor understood it, in which these churches began, and on which therefore Christ judged them, for their departure from them. It never stood on their ground as to moral position at all. It is a perverted attempt to apply “things that are,” as if it applied to “the things that shall be,” which is a perversion of scripture. Christ’s judgment was on “the things that are”; His prophecy of “the things that should be.” If the churches be taken prophetically, I may apply the Philadelphian to the separate saints and Laodicean to those who are not. If this be set aside, and on which I do not now rest, then I say it was the Lord’s judgment on the things that were, and the removal of them, because they did not conform to the principles on which the Spirit of God in the apostles, etc., had founded them, and which thereupon ceased to exist and made room for the apostasy; and that no subsisting church rests, or can pretend to rest, on the ground on which this judgment rests at all, for they are founded on the union of the Church and the world, which is the moral principle of apostasy, which resulted from the failure of the judged churches to maintain the principles on which they were founded. It was the warning of what led to the consequences which followed since, under which we are now suffering. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the founding of the Church on the principles on which Christ established it; in the epistles, the sustaining it by the apostolic energy of the Spirit; in the epistles to the Seven Churches, the judgment of Christ upon their subsisting state, as not continuing upon the ground on which they were planted;

and, consequent upon that, the apostasy out of which we are commanded to come, from which it is our clear business to keep separate. Separation from evil— a peculiar people—the gathering together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, are the meaning and purpose of God in the Church. In its institution, separated from evil, and secured by the energy of that preached; and death, or immediate rejection for inconsistency by the presence of the instantaneously detecting power of the Holy Ghost, that its meaning and character might be adequately exhibited as pattern in the outset; then the apostles, watching, guarding, preserving, judging, and calling them effectually to correct themselves, as we see in the epistles. Thus evil was separated from them, when manifested among them. Then, this being inadequately performed, the judgment of the Son of man rejecting the churches, and threatening their removal if not corrected, which happened; and then the whole being in a fallen evil state, in which it was not only evil, but in the world (during which God has ever maintained a separating witnessing people, that it might be seen, He gave no sanction to evil) and, when fully discovered, the actual command— “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues” —separation then being so far from wrong that it becomes the test of obedience and faithfulness.

And now as to separating from the Jewish system, and the adherence of Christian Jews to it, we have seen the practice not to have been at all what the editor states it; but this is not all. There is upon the very ground of the Church being of a heavenly character, and having no portion in this world, a direct summons to go forth out of

its now unacknowledged sanctity. “Christ, therefore [as the sin-offering was burnt without the camp of God] that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” —of what? of the world? Nay, of the holy city. “Let us, therefore, go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” It is, when the Church thus is worldly and not heavenly, bearing Christ’s reproach to go forth without the camp. The camp was not Egypt, nor the city the world in form; but it was in character; and they, being heavenly “partakers of the heavenly calling,” could have no more to say to it. This then was the positive direction to the Hebrew: separation from evil— separation from the world, both which are “enmity against God”; but we being “reconciled to God” is the essential character and meaning of the Church. It was for this Jesus suffered. “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.” It is in this character He is our risen head and priest, “separate from sinners,” “no more in the world.” It is in this people walk, for this the martyrs suffered; it was for this John Huss was burned, and Wickliffe was persecuted. When it was reproved by apostolic discipline, the Church was kept separate from evil. When not, it was judged. When the Church coalesced with the world, it ceased to have any such character, and separation from it was separation from the world and, where this is not, righteousness cannot be. It must be maintained at all cost.

As to Jude, the editor’s professed love to his “separating brethren” proves that he does not himself believe in its application to them; but our answer is this—separation from the Church of God we admit not only to be an evil but a totally ruinous evil. It is to leave the only holy

sanctuary of God in the world, and it is the reckless doing and blasphemy of this of which Jude speaks. Does the editor really believe that the passages in Jude or Peter apply to his “separating brethren”? If he does not, why does he quote them? If he does, let him fairly state so. Either we are not Christians but totally lost persons, or Jude and Peter do not apply at all. These are the passages he quotes to condemn separation. They condemn separation from the Church of God—to mock, and walk after their own ungodly lusts and speak hard words against Christ. Does this apply to the guileless active Israelites? If not, it is entirely another conclusion which must be drawn from it— that the Church of England is not the Church of God at all: if it were, the consequences in Jude would follow; but if not, separation from it, so far from being evil, is but a bounden testimony against the pretences to be such, by which the saints of God are so deceived. The editor has spoken a bold word in saying that all who separate from the Church of England “are sensual, not having the Spirit.” Is this his opinion of many of them? if not, is he not blaspheming them? much rather, incurring the charge of hard things spoken against Christ in His people? I count him much more a separatist in truth, who (when saints are trying to walk orderly, devotedly, and in grace) separates himself from them or them from him; because of lying and worldly ceremonies, most of which had long had the sanction of Satan in an evil world, but never that I could learn of God.

As to the only remaining passage which he could cull from all scripture against his “separating brethren” (besides these, which do but fully ascertain that the Church of England is not the Church of God at

all, and which he knows are not applicable), to that from 1 John 2:19, they plead or I plead entirely guilty. “They went out from the Church of England, because they were not of it.” They have not left off being Christians, but though once many of them were in the Church of England, they were not of it—they did not really in spirit belong to “a hierarchical system, inconsistent with the progress of the gospel”; and consequently sooner or later they went out from it; a system where practical abuses (as the editor has taught us in a previous number) flow not from casualty but from the source of all its appointments being corrupt and worldly. I repeat, they have agreed with him, and they have acted on it, in humble trial and sorrow—he has not. He, perhaps, may be of what he has thus designated, and therefore has not gone out from it; they were not, and consequently have. Whether they are sensual, not having the Spirit, God, and not the editor, must judge. If not, the editor has not a single text of scripture to plead against it, nor could he (while the holiness of God remains) find from His word a sanction for continuance in known evil. The editor may speak of remedies, and mend the Church in connection with the world. His “separating brethren “will seek by grace to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, and to keep themselves, waiting for His appearing, unspotted from the world. They rejoice that in all the word of God the anxious care of the editor can find nothing to charge them with but these passages in Jude and Peter, the application of which may prove apostasy in the Church but not in those who separate from it. We would recommend to the editor 1 Samuel 22 and he may see, though unowned, where God’s king, God’s prophet, and God’s priest may sometimes be found, and what sort of people are around the king.

What a judgment would have been forming of David's cause by the world then!

As to things imposed till the time of reformation, it is hardly worth while to any Christian acquainted with scripture to refer to it. But I need only remark that, instead of sanctioning the Jewish Christians in the exact observance of their ordinances, the apostle (as is the tenor of the whole epistle) is pressing on them that they had no obligation on them at all, now Christ was come, their calling being heavenly in union with Him, as their High Priest not in this world at all: that they were merely carnal ordinances imposed on them till the time of reformation, figures for the time then present; and that they were identified with the way into the holiest not being yet manifested, but that, Christ being come, they had passed away. He having entered not into holy places made with hands, figures of the true, but into heaven, they had no longer anything to say to Him. The Church of England, by the editor's confession, just returns to and imposes them, witnessing that to her the holiest is not made manifest, and that, in lieu thereof, she is imposing carnal ordinances, not having come to that "time of reformation," in which the glory and high priesthood of Christ took the place in the Church of these things. This is exactly our complaint against her; and we do not wish to be bound down in this confessed evil bondage. It is exactly the editor's confession; she has not entered into the heavenly calling and priesthood of Christ. Her services are bondage; her ordinances carnal; the time of reformation in a heavenly calling has not reached her soul; she is still seeking a priesthood on earth, not a portion in heaven; she was founded in what was earthly, and never got out of it.

As to the degeneracy of the age, which is noticed and denied in this number, we believe the editor is most awfully and guiltily misleading the Church. As to Ireland, we have noticed the inconsistency of his statements; and (while it is against the direct testimony of scripture, declaring that things shall go on, as in Noah's days and Lot's days till the Son of man come, days in which men despised warnings as much as the editor does now) nothing but the grossest ignorance of the state of England could lead him to such a statement. He confesses that crime is largely increased, but he says it is among the rabble. Yet how comes wickedness to have increased so much among them? But, in truth, this is the least part of the evil; the universal degeneracy of principle with much profession, and the great progress of infidelity, of atheistical principles, and the spirit of rebellion against lawful power, which is identified with these principles, and the slight of testimony and judgment, the "where is the promise of His coming "(in which the editor takes his part), are far worse signs of apostasy and judgment than the petty acts of evil which are but accompanying results.

The editor makes it his business to prove the world better, the world that rejected Christ. In this we believe he is most ruinously and desperately deceiving the Church of God. It is this which would make us decided. He rejoices in the increasing circulation of his Journal: I fear, and I say so sincerely, in proportion as it is of the world, the world will love its own. The editor rejects and slights, in ignorance we are assured, the warnings and judgments of the Lord, and therefore recommends continuance in evil. He denies, as a thing in which the Church of Christ has any present concern, the coming of

the Lord, and therefore must be the instrument of darkness and of error. I do not doubt his desire to serve the Lord generally. In this point he is surely in utter and mischief-working blindness; and his labours can but serve to bind the blind in the error they are in.

Separation from godly persons I deprecate as much as he; I desire union with them as earnestly, much more earnestly than anyone I know; but to go into ungodliness to be one with them is impossible for the saints of God.

I look for better things for Ireland than I do for England as to its state, but not by the saints continuing to sanction and be mixed with evil, as he would advise.

If they do not discern “this time,” let them at least of their own selves judge the things that are right. We would just refer those who have the Christian Journal (I have but my Bible with me here and a borrowed liturgy) to the “Ten Bishoprics,” in No. 14 of the Christian Journal; the leading article on Church Reform in No. 6; the two leading articles in No. 10; and compare the petition with the “Ten Bishoprics” in No. 14.

25 By the Act of Charles II in 1666, whoever did not conform to the liturgy of the Church of England, by St. Bartholomew’s Day in that year, was to be deprived. Nearly all the godly ministers in England left house and home, and wandered—some in severe trial, where they might find relief.

26 Archbishop Sharpe and the Duke of Lauderdale carried on a most bitter and relentless persecution against those who opposed, and in order to enforce, the liturgy of the Church of England and her hierarchical arrangements; and there was episcopacy in Scotland till the Revolution.

The Claims Of The Church Of England Considered;

Being The Close Of A Correspondence Between

The Rev. James Kelly, of Stillogan, Ireland, and J. N. Darby

Introduction

The only thing necessary to be explained in the publication of the following correspondence, is the fact of its having been published after so considerable a lapse of time. It will be seen by the correspondence itself, that one of the parties declined pursuing it farther. 27 The other disliking contention, and weary of it, much preferring direct edification, had this additional motive for not taking any positive step—namely, an unwillingness, unless by what was identified with direct edification, to raise questions in public on what had the reputation of protestant truth, in the presence of error, which lifted up its head high enough.

Some brethren in Christ who had seen the MSS of the correspondence, urged by the actual state of things in England, desired particularly the publication of the last letter, adding the last of Mr. Kelly's,28 that it might be understood, or of all if that were demanded. Under the circumstances he wrote to Mr. Kelly, acquainting him with what has just been mentioned, and asking permission to satisfy the wish expressed of publishing the last two letters. At first Mr. Kelly required the publication of the previous part of the correspondence, which was acquiesced in, as indeed the other party was

naturally bound thereto if demanded; but in a subsequent letter Mr. Kelly declared his mind changed in this respect, and acquiesced in the publication demanded, the following communication being annexed.

To the Rev. J. Darby.

Stillogan Glebe, Dublin,

January 28th, 1842.

My Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter from Lausanne, which has just reached me, I hasten to say that since our last correspondence I inquired after you several times as to whether you had returned to this country, with a view formally to decline pursuing the subject of controversy between us any further; but hearing you were still abroad, I did not think the matter of sufficient importance to communicate with you by a foreign post. I now avail myself of this opportunity to let you know my decision. The grounds on which I have come to it are these: first, the inutility (in many of my respected brethren's estimation) of disputing with you; second, the accession of care and occupation connected with my appointment to this parish, which I was led to reflect afforded more profitable exercise of my little talents than carrying on a discussion with the leader of an extravagant class of schismatics; third, the little hope I entertained, after reading your most diffuse and incoherent reply to mine of February 8th, 1839, of being able to bring you to the real point at issue between us.

As to the publication of the letters to which you allude, I have no objection if you see fit, although I must confess I do not attach to them the importance which you do. I

have only to request that you will annex to them the following observations by way of explanation of some passages in my letter which you have misunderstood, and of final comment on some sentiments of your own.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours in Christian truth and love,

James Kelly.

The observations themselves, alluded to in this letter of Mr. Kelly, are placed at the end, as coming then naturally in their place after the letter on which they comment.

With this brief introduction, acquiesced in by both parties, as to what has led to the publication of them, these letters are now submitted to the reader, with the desire that the Lord may use them for the establishment of truth, the strengthening of souls in it, and the refutation of error.

The Letters To the Rev. J. Darby

Liverpool, February 8th, 1839.

My Dear Sir,

Though I might recount many other adequate causes of my silence since I received your last, yet I must say my chief reason for not being more prompt has arisen from the very uninteresting reply you have given to mine of December 12. It really appeared to me evasive of discussion. I asked you, in order that we might come to the argument of the subject at once, to allege your grounds of separation from the communion of the Church of England—a very straightforward question methinks, and the import of which was very obvious. But

instead of a plain answer, as might have been expected, you occupy a considerable portion of your letter in making reflections on me as “an adversary,” as you call me, of whom you add “nothing” (Christian, I suppose, you mean) “is to be expected.” You then quarrel with my assuming that you have forsaken the Church of England, as though this was not the case (remember, I did not say the Church, but the Church of England); and, lastly, you give out your impressions against the character of the Church of England, erecting them into assertions, and dilating upon a new and better way, as you are pleased to think, adding in the meanwhile not one syllable, not even professing to do it, of argument to bear out your assertions. Now, my dear sir, I feel from this, as well as the loose character of your former communications to me, that it is vain to expect from you anything like an orderly and intelligible vindication of your views. In this respect you seem to write as you speak. I therefore propose for the future, without waiting for such, taking up just as they come your aspersions of the Church of England, and the peculiarities of yourself and brethren as dissenters, sifting them as the Lord may enable me, and bringing out the truth as distinctly as I can, for the perusal of all who may see our correspondence.

First, then, you say that the world is in the Church of England. What do you mean by “the world”? Is it the openly profane and ungodly? This we deny. The Church recognizes as her members only those who are baptized into and make a solemn profession of “the truth as it is in Jesus”; and all those who scandalize their profession by evil lives, are, by the discipline of the Church, to be excluded from her communion. Do you mean earthly-minded professors? In sorrow we assent to the sorrowful

truth of this. St. Paul wept over such in the Philippian Church, and the same, we have reason to believe, abounded in the Church at Corinth. There never has been, and there is nowhere upon earth a pure Church in the sense of excluding false, worldly-minded professors. Or do you say that the constitution of our Church, looking at our articles and formularies, is worldly? This I deny, and call upon you to prove the statement, if you make it.

Worldly professors, then, being in the Church of England, which is all the amount of meaning that your charge has in it, what is the duty of God's children who are also within her pale? This is the fundamental point of difference between us; this is the question which, troubling the consciences of our dear people, gave you the occasion—which, alas! you have industriously improved—to separate them from us. You hold and teach that it is imperative on the faithful to come out from the communion in which are the unfaithful. To use your own words, they are "to cease from the evil": to more than this, in the first instance, it appears you do not aspire. Mr. Hargrove says, "Do you see the evil? Then cease from it; let that be your first step—God will shew you the next when you have taken that." In other words, we are to take a leap in the dark from the Established Church, not knowing where we shall land, nor why this course. Is there no evil bound up in the body of flesh which you carry about with you? is it not even hindering the regenerate spirit, lusting against it, "a vile body," as the scriptures call it, and to continue to the last? And yet you do not recommend the withdrawal of ourselves from the body, that is, suicide—that be far from you; but why not, according to your principle above laid down? Are

we not afflicted with an evil companionship, so that by reason of it we often “cannot do the things that we would”?

To such a proposal as this, of course, you justly reply, The word of God says we are to bear this conflict between the flesh and Spirit, wrestling with the former, though in the flesh not walking according to it, which, so long as we attend to, we are told it is no n ore we that do the evil, but “the sin that dwelleth in us.” Precisely similar, then, is what the scriptures say in the case you put of Christians being in a church in which there is worldliness. Look at the declension on the part of the Jewish Church throughout their history. Behold also the prophets testifying against the evil, but yet remaining members of that church: and if we turn to the New Testament scriptures, what do we find there? The account of churches which had become grievously corrupt; even exhortations to the faithful within their pale; but in no instance separation enjoined. Take the churches of Thyatira and Sardis for examples. In the former it appears a false prophetess was allowed to assume to herself a commission from God, and to teach men to commit fornication, and judgment is denounced in consequence. But what is said to the remnant that preserved their allegiance? Is it, Flee out of her—form yourselves into a new Church? This would be your remedy; but such is not the injunction of Jesus; it is simply, “That which you have already, hold fast till I come,” Rev. 2:25. As to Sardis, we read there were but “few names left which had not defiled their garments”; but even here there is no recommendation to separate (Query— Is not this the secret why you and your party

deny the Church of England to be a Church at all, to get rid of such passages as these?)

We do find separatists indeed spoken of elsewhere (Jude 13); but it is in a bad connection—in company with "murmurers, complainers, and mockers," the inscription over whom is "sensual, having not the Spirit." I can readily receive separation to be the easy course to take —easy to flesh and blood; just as in the degenerate Christian family, for the member who walks close with God, and is anxious that all the domestic arrangements should be characterized by the spirit as well as the form of religion—for him to withdraw himself from the sphere in which his bearing and longsuffering tenderness, alternately with his faithfulness, is exercised, and either live by himself in solitary communion with God, or unite with more kindred spirits—all this would be comparative enjoyment, but then it would be a selfish enjoyment; it would be a pleasing of himself—a "looking on his own things, not on the things of others." He has left the family circle which he should have dearly loved; in which, as it was his duty, so God might have made it his privilege, to witness for His truth, and promote a revival of the power of vital godliness. Of course, if there were rules laid down for the regulation of the family, or doctrines professed by them at their family altar, at variance with the word of God, separation would be lawful, though even then it should be resorted to only after the most patient zeal in striving to effect a reformation. But I have supposed the family only to have declined in spirit, and that their professed reverence for, and outward observance of, piety still existed; and under these circumstances it is plain that the rending of unity of the domestic circle would be quite inexcusable.

Though separation might spare the individual in question many an exercise of his grace, yet it would be wrong.

Now this, I conceive, aptly represents the case of the Church of England and you separatists. There has been a lamentable degeneracy among us, though, praised be the Lord, a considerable alteration for the better is taking place. But as a Church we profess God's truth, which, handed down to us in our venerable formularies from apostles and martyrs who have gone before us, we have neither added to nor taken from. The deposit of Christian doctrines is with us as a Church, and our people (however wayward they may walk) yet profess adherence to it. But how have you separatists acted? Instead of resting the lever of your brotherly love and Christian devotedness upon this important fulcrum of the church's still faithful profession, and bending all your energies to effect a revival in the family, you have selfishly withdrawn yourselves from us, and, aggravating the degeneracy in which you should have sympathized as members of the body, have contemptuously left us under God's judicial sentence—"unnatural sons," says Bishop Hall, "that spit in the fact of the father that begot them, and the mother that bore them."

Thus, my dear sir (I trust speaking the truth in love), I have alleged selfishness of conduct against you and your party: may it not be possible, I would add, that there attaches pride to your procedure also? We know how insensibly it works; "a sin," as some one observes, "that rises from the ashes of other sins," mingled among a company whose title, many of them, to the Christian character is almost defaced, except to the eye of charity

which “hopeth all things.” The shining graces of individuals are obscured; but when they come out and stand apart in a little body by themselves, ah! then they attract notice. While they remain in the church, serving the Lord with humility, supporting the weak, comforting the feeble-minded, restoring the offender “in the spirit of meekness,” Christians are like the convalescent patients we sometimes see in an hospital tending their fellow-sufferers; but these persons, we can imagine, might get impatient of their charitable office, and, revelling in the consciousness of strength themselves, might not brook being confounded longer with the diseased and dying, and so depart from the asylum that had been so blessed to themselves. Alas! my dear sir, while I write it, the apprehension of something similar having to do with the course you are pursuing, and persuading others to, growingly presses on me. I do not say this is the case, and I heartily pray it may not be the case with any of you; but you must see how incident the evil is to the procedure you have adopted; and as one who is in the flesh himself, I cannot but remark it. Would to God the people who have gone out from us would reflect upon this! They felt the cross of having to witness for Jesus, and keep their garments in the midst of declension and inconsistencies around them, which was the school for them, and they were thriving in it; but alas! they forgot that this might be the case; and enamoured of the prospect of purer communion (apart from the embarrassing presence of the worldly), and of the conspicuous position they would then stand in, they embarked in the enterprise of dissent. They know, perhaps with bitter disappointment, the result—that, while the tares are more like wheat, they are bound up with them still, only closer than before; and that the

liberty of ministry which you have among you is a sorry substitute for the solemn responsibility of office in securing edification. Would to God, I say, that with the experience to which I know some, not unlike your party, have been brought, you would all “search and try your ways,” and see if the flesh, with its ten thousand labyrinths, has not betrayed you into your present position.

Having thus briefly vindicated the Church of England against your sweeping accusation of being a worldly system; shewn—and that even when there has a tide of corruption set in upon a church—separation is contrary to the mind of God; and having suggested some dangerous motives which may be operating upon you, I come to analyse for a moment your improvement, as you think, upon ordinary dissent. For you must know I cannot suffer you to disclaim altogether affinity with common dissenters: the only difference I see between you and them is that, according to the genius of the day, you are more latitudinarian. Until your views came out, it was thought that the dissenting bodies in this country had become grievously lax in their principles in order to effect unity: the followers of John Owen, for instance, changing pulpits with the followers of John Wesley—each party, for the time being, keeping in abeyance those doctrines which were obnoxious to the other. Even the heterogeneous materials of Calvinism, Socinianism, and popery, appeared not long ago combined on the subject of political agitation; and at this moment, in the national system of education for poor Ireland, we see the sad spectacle of representatives of these several classes sitting in conclave to determine how much of what each maintains to be truth is to be sacrificed at the shrine of

the popular idol, unity. I, for my part, did not think that latitudinarianism could go beyond this. But you and your brethren have found out a still more comprehensive ground of union. You propose to unite all classes, not by the old-fashioned way of endeavouring to banish "erroneous and strange doctrines" —the fruitful parent of strife—but by cushioning them, and inscribing upon your standard only one or two articles of faith as essential: and really while I admit this, that you have set your seal as a body to any truth, I do not know that I am altogether right, for where is your confession of faith to be found? If you say, In the written word—well, the Socinian professes to find his there too: is he therefore admissible to your communion? I believe not; how then do you exclude him, since you have no defined standard of truth? Why, it is by using a standard stealthily and in private, by secretly defining what is truth. You have your touchstone of error in each of your breasts. The leaders among you appeal to it as occasion requires, and thus the Socinian is excluded; but, by the way, where is the security for your continuing to exclude him? That touchstone of unrecorded opinions within you may change, so that the sentiments which are not congenial to you to-day may become so to-morrow. Not to diverge, however, from the point—you do exclude the Socinian, though in an unsatisfactory way: do you exclude any others? Roman Catholics? How do I know this? Pascal and Fenelon—and doubtless they have their successors in our day—would be as devotional as any of you in speaking of and extolling Jesus. If you have no other test than this, why the wafer-idolaters may come among you, and be called brethren! If indeed you have your mental touchstone to apply to their views, you are free, I will suppose, from the intrusion of both these obnoxious

classes, though I leave it to you to shew your consistency in recognizing what is truth in their cases, and then stopping short. Do you not see, my dear sir, that at the very point your recognition of truth ends, there your admission of error begins? And here is your latitudinarianism. Let men but profess their belief, as your phrase is, “in the blood,” and then, whatever be their heterodoxy, they are admissible among you—Baptists and Paedobaptists, Arminians and Calvinists, Millenarians and Antimillenarians, Quakers, etc. Your cords of union are indeed lengthened, but alas! how superficial the truth they circumscribe! The ordinance of baptism, though a command, cannot be administered among you; the doctrine of God’s electing love, the second advent, the agency of the Spirit in the Church, cannot be introduced at your meetings, forsooth, because the moment you touch upon these topics your boasted unity is at an end. Doubtless, it has happened because of the paucity of your numbers, and their select character, being chiefly from the one communion, that you have had somewhat more of liberty than I have described as the tendency of your system (though, by the way, I saw myself the elements of discord working among you at Clifton); but according, I repeat, to your latitudinarian principle, coming together only as believers in the atonement, this liberty you have had does not legitimately belong to you. Just as in the national system of education, when the teacher goes beyond the books of extracts, he transgresses the rule, so when in your assemblies for worship you touch on ground other than what is common to you as Christians of all denominations, you violate your principles. The only way you can fairly get out of this bondage is by determining your views of doctrine, and authoritatively

setting them forth. Then indeed your ranks will not present so party-coloured and motley a group, but they will be sadly thinned; and if you have not your Thirty-nine Articles, like the Church of England, which you affect to despise, yet will you have some “Shibboleth” which will get you the character you are now giving others. You see how involved you are in a dilemma: either you meet on the common ground of one or two truths, and then you cannot go beyond them in your teaching; or you have a regular system of doctrine, conformity to which is expected, and then you are inconsistent, for you repudiate all confessions and creeds.

But now to another subject. You say that the Holy Ghost is not honoured in the constitution of our church. Your letter does not explain where the hindrance lies; I guess, however, what you mean, from your addresses which I have heard, and your brethren’s publications. It is because, it seems, we admit an ordained ministry among us; that is, by ordination we give authority in the church to those whom we believe endued with the necessary gifts, and called by the Holy Ghost. Mark, we do not arrogate to ourselves in the first instance, as our liturgy testifies, the selection of our ministers; but those who appear by their solemn profession and examination to be called by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office, we ordain to it. Why, my dear sir, you do yourselves something similar. Those who commend themselves to you by their gifts, and as apt to teach, you yield submission to; and they act as pastors among you. I remember, at your late meetings at Clifton, asking Mr. Hargrove how he took upon him to expound scripture to his assembled brethren one morning, and his answer

was to this effect, “You and some two or three others had arranged it previously.” You see, then, you have authority exercised among you, though in a covert way. The difference is, that we demand from all candidates for the ministry among us, Do they believe they are moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the solemn office? And so far as man can go, we see that we are not imposed upon, by requiring that they be persons well reported of, and of competent knowledge in the word of God. Whereas you, by a sort of whispering debate among those who are the managers of your party—irresponsible persons, determine who are fit to teach, and who not. There is with you no solemn examination of the individual by those who have authority given them in the Church; there is no fasting or prayer previously, to implore the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but just according to the way the individual pleases his hearers, and it might be by sparing their sins, your selection is made; and then it is only for the time being, for you may supersede him on the morrow; and all this most inconsistently, for he may affirm that the Spirit has moved him to speak, just as confidently as you affirm you are moved by the Spirit to silence him. I ask, my dear sir, Is God a God of order? and can you say that amidst this confusion the Holy Ghost is honoured among you?

To sum up in a few words this part of the matter, there must be authority used in the ordering of the Church; and while this is conformable to the general rule laid down in the word, it is as absurd to say that this introduction of it hinders the Spirit, as it would be to contend that the use of types, ink, and paper is officious meddling on our part to preserve the scriptures, and

that it interferes with the agency of the Spirit. Authority, I repeat, must be had recourse to; and we maintain that ours is conformable to the general rule laid down in the word of God; but while you have authority among you in a covert way, it is capriciously exercised according to no open acknowledged standard; and thus, while our dear people whom you have got among you are taught to flatter themselves that they are free from the yoke of man, you and the other managers of your party are virtually their lords; and if your own minds receive an evil impulse, God knows what mischief you may inflict upon them; or if you are preserved (and I pray the Lord you may, and, further, be reclaimed from your present schismatic course), other leaders may arise among you, men of parts and ambition, who may become the worst of spiritual despots.

On the whole, my dear sir, I think I have proved that your system has not originated in obedience to the word of God, and that its tendency is most pernicious. Here I would be content to close my letter—beseeching the Lord to open your eyes, and the eyes of our dear people who have been decoyed away from us by your vain (though, I admit, sincere) representations; but your letter turns to personal matters, upon which, lest you should be offended if I were silent, I beg to spend a few words.

First. You reproach me for challenging this discussion; but this I leave. If I were in the strict sense of the term “the challenger,” as I said before, it would be only conformable to my ordination vow.

Secondly. You go back to what transpired at the Clifton meetings. All I shall say to this is, that I am surprised at

your venturing to allude to the subject, after your shrinking in the manner you have done (I allude to our correspondence) from, on the one hand, the vindication of yourself from the uncharitableness which (on the testimony of your own brother, Hargrove) I alleged against you; or, on the other hand, the honest confession of your fault as a follower of Jesus.

Thirdly. You do not understand, you say, my regretting that this is not a viva voce discussion—time, manner, and place being left entirely to me. On this I beg to observe that, independent of my unsettled circumstances in the ministry at that time, and which occurred to disturb my original design and wish, and of this you were duly apprised, when I came maturely to reflect upon the novel position I should occupy in going to Hereford, or any other place where your party was, to argue against you, as though my brethren in the ministry stationed there were not fully competent, if they approved of such a course, to enter upon it themselves, I recognized it as providential that the alternative of the press, through which without indelicacy I could meet you, was suggested by you instead of the platform. Not but that if, in the providence of God, you or any of your party broaching your schismatical views came within the sphere of labour under my control, I would for a moment hesitate to challenge you to oral discussion. I think it a sad pity when it is a legitimate course to adopt, that my reverend brethren do not pursue it, though, as I told you, a most valued brother said he thought it would be making too much of you.

Fourthly. With regard to the publication of our correspondence, I shall go as far back as you please. It

was really for your sake—your first letters were so unchristian and slovenly, as well as that they related to personal matter—that I proposed omitting them; and if you name any medium in England through which the whole correspondence can appear, I am perfectly content. I think the Statesman would be available for Ireland.

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours in Christian truth and love,

James Kelly.

Stafford, February 26th, 1839.

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I am glad we are at last launched in the subject; it is a great relief to my spirit, though not a pleasant task in itself. I received your packet from Dublin in London, I suppose by private hand, and sit down at once to answer it, having run it over as I came down again here.

Your letter has completely justified to me the ground I took in my last letter to you; satisfactory, if not to you, at least to others, whose minds were anxious on the subject. All your present letter goes on the assumption exactly of what I refused to acknowledge in my last—no attempt being made on your part to prove it. In replying to the question, Why I left the Church of England? I replied, Not that the world was in the Church of England, as you say—no such thing at all; but that I found the system I was mixed up with to be the world, and not the Church of God at all. This is a very distinct thing from worldly people being in the Church.

I said to you very plainly that your question assumed that the Establishment was the, or a, church, which I did

not admit. Now this is a very plain ground. It is to me precisely the ground of importance; and a plain truth which, when once apprehended, frees the conscience of many an anxious person. The position in which you desired to place me is also evident from the expression, you will take up “my aspersions of the Church of England.” I have no pleasure in casting any aspersions on it: to free my own and others’ conscience from all that may be or tend to evil, I do desire. Further, sir, I have to admit that the manifested progress of Popery, of which the system of the Church of England is the instrument, renders me less jealous and less anxious to avoid the plain expression of what one may feel painfully, and yet, from ten thousand associations, be unwilling to declare, lest some rude Edomite might suppose for a moment one felt with them. My mind has long admitted its tendency, and I have acted on it. The signs of it are too publicly apparent not to call forth at least some additional warning voice. If mine be so very feeble and despised, as I am sure it is, may the Lord give it truth and affection, and therefore His own force. The Oxford Tracts and their prevalence cannot but have drawn your attention, as they have of Bishops and even newspapers; and recently we have had a very remarkable sign of the times—the highest ecclesiastical authority in the country pronouncing a definite judgment that prayers for the dead are not inconsistent with the doctrines of the Church of England. You may say this is not right: her godly ministers protest against it. Be it so. They cannot help it; and if they say, We declare it is not right, then is the judgment of God on them, because they will not plainly act on and abide by what is right, and renounce what is wrong. What is the resource from the evil proposed by the Record?—An

appeal to the Privy Council! What a condition for the Church of God to be placed in, that, when a heresy comes in and is sanctioned, its appeal is to the Privy Council to get rid of it! But I allude to this merely as a sign; and whether the church exculpate herself or not, a sign it is to them that have eyes to see.

I believe, dear sir, this, that at the time of the Reformation two great elements entered into the composition of the Church of England, as it is called: one, the power of the Spirit of God in the preached word, which was directed against the Church of England (or of Rome in England then subsisting) and which was carried on by a system of irregularities—Latimer, Bernard Gilpin, and a host of others, many whose names are better known in heaven than on earth, preaching and teaching all about the country, without regard to parish or anything—but which was the power of light against the power of darkness, and that was blest. The other element was partly through the fears of churchmen, and mainly through the interference of the Crown and secular power—a system in which, in order to maintain unity in the whole country, and that even to conciliate Roman Catholics for political purposes under Queen Elizabeth, a vast mass of association with Roman Catholic forms and the value of ordinances was preserved and asserted, by which a connection with the great apostasy was kept up; which, although the power of truth and the providence of God may have a long while hindered its effect, is now beginning distinctly and publicly to show itself, and will, I have no doubt—woe is me that I should have to say it—result in this once comparatively happy country being immersed in and given up to darkness and opposition to God. Can you

suppose, sir, that this gives me satisfaction or pleasure in saying it? The Lord knows who grieves over it most—those who sanction the system that leads to it, or such as in sorrow of heart have gone out without the camp, though bearing His reproach, and in word and work become a witness, however feeble.

A man cannot, while acting in and sanctioning a system which involves these evils, honestly bear witness against the evils he partakes of and upholds. The whole system is thoroughly woven together. He subscribes his assent and consent to all and everything contained in it. Satan, under divine permission, has been allowed to force the adoption of all or none; and makes the single sentence, or word, or even form of appeal, as necessary to unity, or to living honestly in the church, as justification by faith or anything else. This is the position of a minister of the Establishment. It cannot be denied. Mr. Head, near Exeter, is a public instance lately of the truth of what I say. But though the truth might be preached by individuals, which I do not controvert, the consequence of the preservation of this popish parochial unity was the entire forfeiture by the Establishment of the title to being a church at all—not merely by accident, but by its very essence and system. There was a transfer of all the inhabitants of a parish to a protestant form from a popish, but no gathering of saints at all. It was matter of legal penalty not to go to church. The parochial centre was there; the minister the law provided was there; the legal right to seats was there; the whole framework of ordinances for the whole parish was there; and, I repeat, there was a legal penalty for not attending. These are matters of historical fact. The whole population, as such, were transferred in geographical divisions to another

form of worship; and there was no gathering of the saints, though there was to a considerable extent the truth preached.

That was the system of the Church of England, not its abuse. Those who refused to come were termed popish recusants, and dealt with as such; and those whose consciences refused submission were very extensively subjected to punishment and imprisonment. And this is still the boasted principle of the Establishment. The toleration that there is., forced on by the consciences of others, has in nowise altered the principle of the Establishment. Her boast is that she provides religious instruction for the whole population of the country: into the truth of this we may shortly inquire, but it is her boast; but when I begin to seek what is meant by religious instruction, I find this a most deceptive and inadequate statement. Her system, be there instruction or not, be there bad or good, is a system of ordinances by which the whole population are received as Christian, whether they believe or not, and are dealt with as such by her ordinances, with which, according to her directions, they are all bound to comply: so that those who do not are called recusants, dissenters, and schismatics. Thus it is really a provision, not for the instruction of all, but for calling all Christians, whether they are so or not. Do I go into a town or country parish, if there should not be any dissenting body, it would be the boast that they were all Church of England people; though a Christian minister within her pale would perhaps avow he was satisfied there was not one who was a Christian, or knew the Lord, amongst them, and would preach to them as entirely unconverted people, and often does so very faithfully.

You say that discipline is to be exercised. In fact, it is not, nor could be, scripturally; if it were, it would be merely to make the world decent, not to keep the Church holy; and discipline with unbelievers is merely entirely deceiving the souls of all, the height of confusion and absurdity. My assertion then is, that the Establishment is not, unless in self-assumed responsibility, the Church, or a Church, at all—is not a body that God owns as such, save for judgment. And yet she treats as schismatics those who separate from her pale.

This short remark sets it clear. If a man left the Church of God, he was out of the manifested body of God's saved people altogether. But further, if a man at Corinth left the Church of Corinth, he left the Church of God—he left God's assembly. Could this be said of the Church of England? I find no such thing as a national church in scripture. Is the Church of England—was it ever—God's assembly in England? I read of the churches of Galatia, which was a province or country, that is, God's assemblies in that country; but the very idea of an assembly of God is lost in the claim and boast of the Establishment.

Now, dear sir, instead of this being an aspersion on the Church of England, it is her boast. In her effort to build new churches now—may the Lord turn it to blessing by sending the truth into them, for He is sovereign, and not tied to our ways or any but His own—her plea is to keep pace with the population, not with the growth and extension of the Church of God. Such is the practical evidence of a fact too notorious to require much proof.

If you refer to the Irish canons, I think the sixth (I have but my Bible with me here and a borrowed liturgy), you will find that the parishioners are to go to the sacrament so often, or to be forced by penalty of law. An analogous canon, not quite so violent in form but the same in principle, will be found in the English collection. What has been the consequent history? For I may be told that these are obsolete: when we turn to facts, we are told that they are abuses; when we turn to documents, we are told they are obsolete. But facts and documents alike prove that, in the principle of the Establishment, “the Church and State are but different aspects of the same body,” to use the expression of one of her distinguished defenders. Hence I am relieved from the thought altogether (save in sorrow for the saints in her pale) of leaving the Church of God, when I cease to be of the Establishment. If you are not the Church of God in England (and such a pretence is idle), then, save the importance of avoiding the deceiving myself and others, my having nothing to say to you can be of no sort of consequence. You tell me to remember that you did not say ‘the Church.’ If you are not, as far as England goes, the sooner I have done with what pretends to be and is not, the better. It seems to me to be an awful thing to pretend to be the Church of England, if you are not the Church of God there. Whose church are you? or what new thing have you introduced?

These are questions which ought to be answered before charges of schism and dissent are launched out so readily against those who cannot form their consciences on the model of a church which is not the Church of God. How is it schism to leave you3 if you are not the Church of God? What is schism? Would it be schism to

divide Turks, or to divide Christians from them? Would it be schism to seek the unity of all saints, apart from the world? Were the Establishment blameless, to force a weak Christian's conscience on an indifferent point would be schism. But what do I find in the history of the Establishment? Why, that in order to enforce unity, or rather uniformity, and that even in apparel (and that can hardly be necessary for the unity of the Spirit), nearly two thousand of her godly parochial ministers were rejected at once. If it be said, This was by Act of Parliament, not by the act of the church, I answer, then you have for secular reasons made yourselves the slaves, the helpless slaves, of whatever the world chooses to impose upon you; and that in the most important point of ecclesiastical discipline. And the unhappy excuse (what a plea for one who is jealous for the actual real maintaining of Christ's honour in the Church!) that the parliament and king are part of the Church! Who made them its judicial visitors? But even this poor excuse is taken away now, and we have the modern evidence that Roman Catholics, Socinians—in short, the world, can dispose of the whole ecclesiastical arrangements of the country; and a Chancellor of the Exchequer can get up and say he has considered the state of the country, and it can spare ten bishoprics, and they are taken away. This may seem to your minds order; but to us the authority of Christ over His Church seems cast to the winds by it, and His honour despised. And I cannot but feel it preferable in ever so lowly and despised circumstances, and that without the camp, in ever so much acknowledged weakness, to wait humbly for the guidance of the Spirit and the word of God, in the sorrow into which all this worldliness has cast the Church of God.

If I be asked by what authority I do these things, my answer is an appeal to the plain righteousness of the case, and the refusal on such a charge as schism to reply to the inquiry whether the Establishment is the Church of God or not, or even give a plain answer whether they consider her baptized children regenerate or not. If I be told as to the Act of Uniformity that it has ceased to be binding, I ask by what authority? Is schism to be permitted by Act of Parliament? When the Act of Uniformity, that great public act of schism, was found politically intolerable, the authority which had tried to force unity in a worldly way sanctioned, according to church notions, schism in a worldly way.

Such is the history of the Church of England. To turn to scripture or its idea of a church, no one thing the least like it can be traced in the New Testament, or Old either. When you speak of the world being in the Church, in the sense of it as referred to in scripture, it could not be in the Establishment. I admit there were false professors—but how was this? While the Church was in a state which scripture recognized at all, I read of false brethren coming in unawares: this could not happen in the Establishment. There is nothing for them to come into unawares. All, false and true, are bound to go there; and if they preserve a good worldly character, welcome in theory, and without it even in practice. In scripture I find a within and without—a direction to judge them that are within. This state of things does not exist in the Establishment. Her aim and boast is to have the whole population within. I repeat, there is no pretence of being a church at all.

And really, sir, when you deny that the openly profane and ungodly are in the Church of England, in your own

sense of it, you make an assertion of a very strange character to those who are familiar with facts. People's consciences must answer this for themselves. Will you allow me to ask you, and beg you to read it over, Is the Commination Service intended for the members of the Church of England, or for those without? for believers or unbelievers? for people under the law or the gospel? But I will not suffer myself, in the Lord's mercy, to be led away from great principles. I believe it was meant in honest hatred of sin. I honour this. But on what ground it can be defended by a minister of the Church of England now, it is hard to tell. Were I to use an argumentum ad hominem, I could remind you that, in the homilies, the right use of ecclesiastical discipline is one of the three marks whereby the true Church may be known. How this consists with the Church of England being a true Church, and avowing what it does in the the Commination Service, is hard for a simple mind to tell.

You can now pretty well understand why I speak not of the world being in the Church of England, but of its being the world and not the Church at all. It is notorious that, if they be not actually dissenters, the population of a parish, town, or county, if they be in pitch darkness, are all members of the Church of England, so called. They would call themselves so. They are called so, and boasted of by their ministers as such. They are entitled to be received as such, if not notoriously profligate, though they may not be able to tell you who Jesus was, and deny in their ignorance every truth of the gospel. And that this is a fact, and not a fiction, is known to every one acquainted with the state of the country. That is, the world, behaving themselves so as not to shock public decency, are entitled to be received at

communion, because the system rests on ordinances, not on faith. And a minister faithful as to the truth he preached would address the whole congregation in the services of the Church of England as his brethren and as the Church; and when preaching to them, perhaps honestly and faithfully tell them they were all unconverted, and unless they repented they would all perish. In a word, he would address them, when he told his own mind as faithfully serving Christ in the Spirit, as unbelieving sinners; and when he recited the church's forms, and told hers, as congregated saints. Which is right? But, first, which is true? Who is the faithful minister (I put it to your own conscience), the man who in a dark parish, or as to the great body of every parish, preaches the gospel to them as sinners, poor lost sinners, or the minister who treats them all as the congregated Church of God? The latter minister, on your own statement, and the clear avowal of the Prayer Book, acts in the mind of the Church of England.

The truth is, you have two irreconcilable elements at work within her pale—truth in the hearts of many of her ministers, and in a feeble measure in her Articles; and a system of old bottles, which cannot bear the new wine of the kingdom. In these times of God's dealings they cannot both go on together.

I say, then, that the constitution is worldly, because she contemplates by her constitution—it is her boast—the population, not the saints.

If circumstances have driven many outside her pale, she treats them as dissenters and schismatics, and so do you, and therefore in principle avow and admit the charge. The man who would say that the Church of

England is a gathering of saints must be a very odd man, or a very bold one. The parishioners are bound to attend by her principles. Are they all saints in theory? If you say, Yes, I answer, then it is not God's theory, and judgment is pronounced on the question.

But there are other points connected with this point of theory and discipline, which are to me very important.

We are habitually told not to judge, and this sounds well; but it is a very awful and anti-gospel, and at the same time a very hollow, principle. True it is that I am not to pass a human judgment on a brother, as regards God's final estimate of him; nor to speak, he being before me as such, as to God's present acceptance of him. This is clear; but to treat all as Christians, because they have been baptized in their infancy and connected with the formularies, is a very uncharitable deception, and you know that as a Christian minister you do not. The system of your church may do it, but I am persuaded your heart does not; it could not if the Spirit of Christ's love be there: neither then should our acts or words. They forget that Christianity begins with this, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." And if a system of ordinances have concealed these truths, if the Church has learnt to rest in the ordinances in lieu of life and its necessity, it is just in the practical state of apostasy from which I have to flee, in love to my own soul and that of others.

Next, I believe that the notion that I cannot recognize brethren as such is an abominable delusion of Satan to the destruction of the grand witness of Christ on the earth. I am told not to judge who are and who are not. I

answer, the practical recognition of them is the principle of the dispensation. Knowing that all are dead, the recognition that any are alive is the joy of charity. Their corporate union and worship is Christ's witness in the earth, "that they may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." And though the disregard of the unity of worship of the saints, known to each other as such, may seem to a carnal man as charity, it really destroys all the first springs of holy affection. What would come of family affections if all were reduced to uncertainty as to who was a brother and who was not? How can I greet with cordial affection as of one heart and one mind my brethren in the Lord, if I do not and am not to know who they are? Is there not, according to scripture, to be some set of people who are all of one heart and one mind? Is not charity injured, and God's witness of love from each injured and destroyed by this cold and heartless doctrine, that I am not to judge who are brethren and who are not? Love the brethren, says the Spirit of God. Nay, I am told you must not judge who are and who are not. The first precept of charity is annulled by this system, "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How can this great witness and test of discipleship be manifested if there be not a mutual recognition by the disciples of the Lord as such? This fair form of worldly charity is, I believe, a very evil delusion of the enemy. And is it not the fact that you do judge, preaching to many as unconverted, and conversing with others as saints? You must do so if you have the Spirit of Christ.

Further, as to discipline, there is not otherwise a body capable of discipline as led of the Spirit of God, by which alone it can be rightly exercised. Discipline by a body of

unconverted persons is ridiculous. A remark of your friend Mr. M'Neil is an evidence of this. He says, speaking of those who complained of mixed communion, "Have you followed the scriptures? If your brother has driven you from participating in this ordinance, he has certainly trespassed against you." This is a poor and strained way of taking a brother's trespass against me, and it is besides a piece of sophistry; for my difficulty is, not that my brother has trespassed, but that you have by your system gathered a heap of people who are not brethren at all, and would reject and scorn the title of saints in heart and life, so that it is a very poor sophistry. But let that pass. "Have you gone to him alone? "says Mr. M'Neil, "then taken two or three more? and, if that failed, then told it to your minister? "Why "your minister"? because the use of the scriptural direction would have laid bare the inconsistent and absurd position he was in. If he had said, Tell it to the Church or assembly, every straightforward person would have seen its absurdity: there was really no Church to tell it to. But to be in a position which obliges one to change the word of God is just the expression of unwilling consciousness that the word of God condemns my position. It condemns it in the very point at issue between us. Thus holy discipline is destroyed, as well as charity, by the world being called the Church; and "put out from among yourselves that wicked person "is as impracticable as "love the brotherhood." Everybody knows the fact.

Now as to one or two objections you make. First, you refer to Israel. There was abuse, you say, but they were not to leave it. In the first place, we are not Jews but Christians. Judaism was an elect nation; there could be no such thing as leaving it: Christianity is not, but a

gathering of saints. God has not recorded His name in the English nation; but wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there is Jesus in the midst of them. What the temple was to a Jew, the gathering of the saints is to me. My complaint of the Establishment is that it is not, and never was, a gathering of saints. If a man ceased to be a Jew, he ceased to be of God's people altogether. That nation and its ordinances were wholly, solely, and exclusively God's people, sanctuary, and place: to leave them was to apostatize from God. They were gathered, not in spiritual worship, but to carnal ordinances, imposed not by conversion of heart but by Jewish parentage. The Church of God alone is analogous in one place. The Establishment has no pretence to be what Israel was as God's only place of abode. Where Judaism and Christianity are entirely different from each other in principle, in naturalism and obligation of carnal ordinances, there it has followed Judaism, and then uses this as an argument why it should not be left. If this argument proves anything, it proves its apostasy. Two or three gathered together in Christ's name have the authority of unity which Israel had of old, not a sorry imitation of that which the gospel treats as beggarly elements, and now equivalent to idolatry (see Gal. 4) and carnal ordinances. Israel, I repeat, was a national election; Christianity is not. The laws of the country were God's own laws, the presence of God was there, and the abuses and corruptions did not alter that. A person could not leave it, and be in the place of God's worship and God's ordinance. Now the place of God's worship and God's ordinance is where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name; and this the

Establishment is not, but a provision of ordinances for the population in confessed imitation of Judaism.

Next you refer to the seven churches. This there is more occasion to answer specially, as it is the common resort of argument on the question. The simple answer is, they were God's churches or assemblies in the place mentioned, and they could not be left; corruptions are no ground for leaving the Church of God. The Church of God cannot be left, and a man be in the path of salvation in so doing. These were the churches of God, the assemblies of God, in those different towns— gatherings of saints, although carelessness had introduced corruption. The Establishment is not this at all. Were the apostle to address an epistle to the Church of God which is at Liverpool, or London, there is no gathered body distinct from the world who could receive and act upon the letter. Where the epistle says, Ye have among you such and such, and calls for repentance, were they not to put them out, or would they otherwise have repented? Where is the body, then, which could act thus, when you are preaching to an indiscriminate heap of unconverted people? In a word, there was a known body which could act by the leading of the Spirit of God. There was no direction to leave these churches because they were churches. The Establishment has no such claim; and I do not leave it properly, but have nothing to say to it, because it is not one. The Establishment does not, nor ever did, stand on the ground of these churches or local assemblies of God at all, and has no principle of their structure, order, or constitution. I should think it a great sin to leave a church of God because corruptions were found in it; but the Establishment is a great national, secular system, and not the Church of God at all.

Another assertion you make is, I have evil in myself, and that I cannot leave, and therefore it is a hopeless thing to seek purity. This (forgive me for saying it) is an ugly argument. There is no hope: we will continue to do evil. But it is a poor piece of sophistry. I cannot leave the evil in my flesh, so I remain in the body. I can leave the evil around me, so I am to remain in that too. You will admit this is not very strong reasoning. But more plainly, the Lord says, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” He does not say, Come out from your body. The Lord says, “If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel made unto honour, fit for the master’s use.” I cannot have done with my body, though I may mortify it and treat it as dead through grace and infinite mercy. The Lord says, “From such withdraw thyself”: I cannot from my body. The Lord says, speaking (I believe you will agree with me) of these latter days—days it may be not fully ripened, still they are now the last days, “From such turn away.” From my body I cannot turn away. The answer simply then to this is, that the Lord has commanded me to come out and be separate from the world; He has not commanded me to come out of my body. Is your argument really a righteous one in this?

One only remark, I believe, remains in this part: your objection to ceasing to do evil before we know to do good— taking, as you call it, a leap in the dark. Is it taking a leap in the dark for a Christian ceasing to do known evil, because he does not yet know all the Lord’s subsequent will concerning him? Are we to say, I will not act on what I do know, till you tell me all my course on

to glory? I have seen the Lord thus continually exercise His children, giving light enough to make a thing a matter of plain Christian obedience, and not shew all the happy and blessed and full consequences, till faith acted on that. It is just a holy and excellent trial of faith. He says in principle, I am the door. The mind may say, Where to? The Lord answers, I am the door: and wherever the soul finds Christ or the will of Christ, it, if walking in faith, trusts that, and the blessing follows. It soon goes in and out and finds pasture. You seem to forget the praise of Abraham's faith was, He went out, not knowing whither he went. It is better to trust God in doing His will, than the consequences which doing His will may produce, however blessed. Now surely it is of Christ and the will of Christ to cease from known evil. If you call this taking a leap in the dark, Christ's will— and surely it is His will to leave known evil—is not darkness to us, but light, for which our poor foolish souls are thankful. Nor shall he that follows Him walk in darkness, though he may only know that in the very next footsteps Christ has gone before him. And if you would know our experience, sir, we have not found it darkness but blessed light; we have found our own weakness, and the poverty and ruin of the Church; but we have found marvellous and abundant light in the Lord, though light affliction for a moment might accompany it.

As to the Corinthians, though the principle is unaffected by it, it is perfectly plain that the worst among them was a Christian, though a fallen one. The habits of the Establishment seem to have confounded decency of morals and deportment with the very faith of the Church of God. As to the Philippians, that corruption and apostasy were then rapidly flowing in on the Church of

God is unquestionable. I do not see that these people were at Philippi, and therefore there is no consequence to be drawn from the passage. With regard to Jude (if you do not believe that we are wandering stars, reserved for the blackness of darkness for ever, ungodly men before ordained to this condemnation, turning the grace of God into lascivious-ness), you are not—forgive the saying so—quite honest in quoting it. Do you believe this? But there is a little circumstance in this epistle to which this convenient word “separate themselves “seems to have blinded those who quote it in the Establishment; and this is, that these persons had crept in, not gone out. This you will admit is a material point. They were corrupters come into the once pure Church, not saints gone out. They feasted with them. They were spots in their feast of charity. Your charge against us is that we have gone out. Yea, and because we feared to feed ourselves without fear where evil was. I think if you examine the word for “separate themselves” (apodioriz) with the context, you will find a very different force in it from that which you attach to the English phrase, as a convenient placard to the eye against those whom you condemn—to a well-instructed mind one of no great difficulty.

And why do you say you find separatists in bad company? I read, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” Do you believe in fact, as an honest man, that these latter characters apply to the greater majority amongst ourselves, or the professed members of the Church of England? And just allow me to ask you also, why you state in the outset that I complain of the world’s being in the church, when you, in speaking of the seven

churches, give a reason why “our party” say the Establishment is no church at all? All the character you give yourself of alternate tenderness and faithfulness, and our comparative enjoyment by selfishly quitting the family, I pass by; great comparative enjoyment indeed I believe we have had, not in selfishly pleasing ourselves. But the point is, What is God’s will? One charge is, that you have called that the family which is not the family at all. And if you have lifted up your eyes and seen the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, and then found yourselves in Sodom vexing your righteous souls (for such I admit there are), you have nothing to boast of in that sort of patience. We prefer the place of Abraham, and give it all up to you, trusting that the Lord will deliver you too; but see no motive to follow your example, or to associate ourselves with that on which the Lord’s judgment is coming—and coming on it you yourself, I bless God, do not deny that it is.

I have now, in reply to the earlier part of your letter, spoken of the great principle on which I rest, as an obedient servant of Christ, in not recognizing the Establishment as the Church. I must now—a much more disagreeable and painful task—refer to the plainer facts of the case, and some of your own documents, shewing its working, and how it is mixed up with the canonical principles of the Establishment. I have preferred resting first on the great principle, partly because I am replying to your letter which does so, and partly because the plea of there being abuses does not enter into the question. The real subject is fairly before us; and effects, what you call abuses, act most directly upon the conscience, and therefore are most material in this question; for all healthful action is action by a conscience led of God’s

Spirit and the word. And if, in the whole arrangements of a system, there be a constant violation of the laws of Christ and His will and righteousness in the Church, it becomes impossible for a righteous man to act in it or with it. This, I repeat, is a much more painful part of the subject. It is pleasanter far—oh, how much so!—to keep the soul in the unsullied regions of Christ's blessedness; and one has to watch one's treacherous heart, lest one should begin to rejoice in iniquity, because it proves one against whom we are contending to be in the wrong. And I feel that one is not fit to speak of evil to another, unless we can bear its burden in sorrow of heart before the Lord as our own burden in their behalf, at least for those that are saints, beloved of God, the pure and holy One. Controversy tends to destroy esteem, and to make us prove rather than cover the sins. Still you have compelled me to state the facts, which are plainly inconsistent with God's righteousness in the Church of God.

In the first place, then, pastorships, or what hold their place in the system, are publicly bought and sold, or at least the right to appoint to them. At this moment the Corporation livings are on sale. I remember a town where the next presentation to a living was sold to enable the Corporation to build (or pay for) a theatre. I have one now with me copying this, for whom a living was bought as provision for him as a younger son, and he then of course was to be brought up at a University for the ministry. But the placards of auctioneers and the advertisements of newspapers are evidence that the pastorships of the Church of England are bought and sold in the market like other property; nay, if I am to believe Mr. M'Neil, they are consequently appointed

because they are unfit (see his Letters on the Church, in a note, I think, to page 104). Do you think this consistent with the order of the Church of God? You will tell me this is an abuse. Is it not sanctioned by the courts of law, by the ecclesiastical courts, by the institution of the bishops, so that the Church of England treats anyone else but the person so holding it as an intruder and schismatic? It is the consequence of that organized connection with the State which makes it the National Church—the Establishment.

There is another thing besides that. Some one has a legal secular right so to present, giving secular advantages, and therefore temporally cognizable as a right by the State. It is the horrid price you pay for your specific and formal character. I do not understand how, if all the spiritual and temporal authorities of the system treat as an intruder and a schismatic anyone else than the person so appointed, the appointment can be called an abuse. If you say it is, comparing it with the Church of God as displayed in the word, we are agreed indeed; but then it is in this abuse that the system and order of the Establishment are entirely, and fatally for its character as a Church, at variance with what we find in the word of God. But this is exactly what presses, and justly presses, on the consciences of the Lord’s people, and compels them to disown her authority and her state. You may tell me that such or such instances are abuses; but I say that it is just as abhorrent to the principles of the Church of the living God to have a good man or a society buy up livings as to have an infidel do so. Do you think an infidel ought to have the right to present anyone to the pastorship of a place? Perhaps indeed by the system of the Establishment there may be no saint

there, but by the system of the Establishment it is perfectly competent for him to do so: he may be seized of or purchase the advowson, and the bishop must admit his right, and institute his nominee, and treat all else as schismatics and intruders. You will say his nominee must be a clergyman. Be it so; but by reason of the system of national advantage, the bishop is bound to ordain, if there be no legal reason to the contrary. And supposing the clergy to be all faultless, do you think it is the system of the Church of God that an infidel should have the right of choosing the pastor of a place? How would such a system have appeared at Corinth or Ephesus? Is it in principle—I do not talk of abuses—the system of the Church of God? But it is the system of the Church of England. Her system is a system of parochial geographical divisions, to which certain legal rights, privileges, and emoluments are attached. This is her boast as contrasted with what she calls dissent, by reason of which the appointment to these geographical divisions is vested as a right or privilege in some one or another, it matters not who. Now I say this, let it be ever so well ordered, is not the system of the Church of God at all. Mr. M‘Neil says this is a disgusting ingenuity of abuse. How is the legal authorized system of the Church as such? I leave the hard words with him; I have only to say if this be the system, it is not the system of the Church of the living God.

And now, sir, will you shew me one document or formulary of the Church which says the patronage of livings and other benefices, or the sale of advowsons, is an abuse, or disallowed by the Establishment? If you can, I can only say, to gain the world’s advantages you have reduced yourself to an impotency of doing right,

and this is no place for a Christian to remain in. Further, I have heard it asserted, as a matter of triumph by evangelical ministers, that there are probably near three thousand evangelical ministers now in England—that is, ministers who, they reckoned, held the gospel of Christ, and were Christian men. There are, I suppose, about twelve thousand29 ministers in England, more or less. Now what is the nature of the system which, under plea of providing instruction for all, and charging all not within her pale as schismatics, has, when her state was boasted of as remarkably improved and under blessing, provided that three-fourths of the population should be taught contrary to the gospel? and that whoever did, under the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, go and preach it, these should be denounced as schismatics and intruders?—that three-fourths of the pastors of the Church of God, according to them (if not, avow you are not the Church of God, and cease to talk of schism and dissent), should not be Christians at all.

These are things inexplicable as a state consistent with being the Church of God, to one who has read the word of God, and drawn his ideas therefrom, and not from habit or tradition. Indeed, sir, there are little expressions habitual with ministers of the Establishment which shew they are not conversant with the idea of ministering in the Church of God. I read, "our people," "our dear people," and hear, "my flock," and "why do you intrude on my flock?" Who made them your people, or your flock? An apostle would not, nor the Spirit of God, have called them so. He would have spoken of the Lord's people, and the flock of God. How could a servant of Christ, ministering holily in whatever gift God had given him—an Apollos at Corinth, or Priscilla and Aquila at

Ephesus, or anywhere else—have been intruders on the flock of Christ? They were part of it, wherever they were, and to serve in it as able and bound so to do. But all is altered with you. You have not even—forgive the word—the ideas connected with it: your speech betrays you. And why? Because you are a minister, even if true, of such a parish in the Church of England (your flock perhaps not Christian, nor the Church of God at all), not a minister of the Church of God.

Again, sir, who appoints the chief pastors of the Church of England? In fact, the Prime Minister of the day, for any reason perhaps that suits his convenience; the fact is well known, and facts, sir, are important to conscience. The Church of God ought not to be trifled with by theories, while the sheep of Christ are actually scattered. It seems to me to be a very evil sign, when the spirit is pressed by the actual scattering and wrong done to Christ's sheep, to be told there is such a document which shews the theory of my system is quite right: these are abuses. The Spirit of Christ cares for the sheep of Christ, dear sir, and not for neglected scraps of paper. But I take the theory; for I wish to avoid resting at all on abuses. The king appoints them. If you tell me there is a congé d'élire, Mr. M'Neil shall answer you in the note previously quoted, that the king does really appoint, for by the theory he nominates the person to be so elected. In Ireland they are appointed directly by the king's letters patent. What part of the system of the Church of God is this?

And let me here remark, that an appeal to Church of England documents is in many respects a very fallacious mode of judging, for the most material and distinctive characteristics of her system are not found there at all.

The work of ordering, governing, and directing the Church is entrusted to persons chosen by the head of the secular authority of the country; and here, again, the whole principle and theory of the Church of God is contravened and set aside, not by the abuses but by the order of the Establishment. How can I own them as bishops (supposing me a rigid Episcopalian) appointed by God, when I know they have not been in theory so appointed—that the whole is a mere secular affair? You tell me they must be clergymen, and be thirty years of age. Is every clergyman of thirty competent to be the chief director of the Church of God? Is that God's theory, or is He the endower with needful gifts for His own work? One who believes, then, God to be the author and gatherer of His own Church, and the divine Orderer of its government, can find neither the body nor the guidance or order of that Church in the system of the Establishment; and, as Mr. M'Neil justly says, no reform remedies this, while the principle continues. The effects shock the conscience; the principle is judged by the spiritual mind taught by and formed on the word of God.

Supposing a child of God in a parish where the system of the Church of England has placed a minister who does not know the gospel, but preaches quite the contrary; and in the communion of the Church there is no one who owns the gospel on which communion is founded: here are the effects which try the spirit. But the person is bound to abide and hear error taught and souls deceived, and to own as one body (and thereby help to deceive them) those who are entirely unconverted, because by the theory of the Church of England he is Christ's minister and they are the Church. If such a person does not, he is schismatic and a dissenter.

Supposing two or three in the same circumstances, and they cease to own those who by their profession of doctrine are not believers, as ministers and the Church, and they meet because Christ has said, “wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” they would be set down as wilful schismatics; but according to the word of God, they would be really the Church of God in that place, let them be ever so feeble, and have no minister at all—despised perhaps by those who had thousands to fill their aisles, and the respectability of ecclesiastical associations to clothe their forms, but not of God.

The promise of the Lord outweighs to faith all these charms on the imagination—these goodly stones and gifts; and how strong they are my own heart well knows.

I speak not, then, of abuses; but will you say that it is the theory of the Church of God that the king should appoint the chief pastors or bishops of the Church of God by his letters patent? or whether it be the system or principle of the Church of God, or compatible with it, that the appointment of the pastors should be in Landlords, Corporations, Universities, the Crown, or whoever may buy them? and whether you are to be content with the scattering and grieving of Christ’s sheep produced by such a system—a system sought to be enforced by the secular arm, to the expulsion of thousands of devoted ministers; and then what is called schism tolerated by Act of Parliament, because the social effects were mischievous—a system which contemplates not the Church of God but the population, and secularizes the Church of God, by forcing the population to be all one with it? And let me add this question: Can you, while I do not admit the propriety of

staying a day in connection with such evil in a system, by your own confession not the Church of God—can you give the smallest rational hope of the change of the principle and theory from which all the evil flows—that the king, or the landlords, shall not nominate the pastors, or advowsons be sold? Can you say that such a system is the system of the Church of God according to the word of God?

But I have said enough to shew the principle on which, in conscience before God, I act, and must disown the system before me as the Church of God; and to dispel, I trust, however feeble my thought (and I admit it humbly and sorrowfully before God), the prestige of a sort of hallowed obscurity, soon to merge, I am fully persuaded, in the darkness of popery, which perhaps, by its claims and influence, may deliver the nominal church from the incubus which presses down the Establishment as it is, and satisfy the desires of the Puseyite school—men who, though I believe honest (for I know their views well), are as inconsistent as they are mischievous; for the secular bondage of the Church is a very Babylon in the mind of an honest theoretic successionist. I would add a little word to them as well as to you, that it is all but perfectly certain that the root of the English succession was an unconsecrated man; I once pursued the point with a good deal of research. And thus by their system they will be easily thrown, when it is pressed home, and they ripen a little, into the necessary arms of undisguised popery. Such is the prospect which your cherished Establishment is engendering for us—not willingly, I freely admit, in the minds of many of her members, but helplessly, because she has tied herself to the car of the State, not to dependence upon God; and wherever its

interested or careless wheels roll on, she must go, or cease to be the Establishment. Her efforts, therefore, are to control the State, not to follow God, because she is bound and governed by it—not obedient in freedom and simplicity to Him. “She is my sister, not my wife,” acquired for Abraham cattle and Egyptian riches in abundance.

I would now turn to the documents of the Establishment on the two main points connected with the subject I am upon— the constitution and membership of the body, and the ordering of the ministry. I have already referred to the Canons, with which the Rubrics concur, which require the attendance of the parishioners— “every parishioner” —at the Lord’s supper so often in the year, and treat as recusants and schismatics all absenting themselves or impugning any part of the system. But there is a point which lies deeper than this, and gives not its relative but positive character to the system— those documents which describe its members, those within, not those without, the assumption of which was quite necessary to the other. Now these documents shew that the ecclesiastical system of the Establishment is founded on the efficacy of ordinances, not of faith, and thus is enabled in theory to embrace the whole population, and treat them as Christians, without reference to faith at all; and that any operation of the Spirit of God in the heart, save as communicated by an ordinance, does not come within its scope of instruction, or introduction to full membership. If I am told it cannot judge but by fruits, be it so; but these do not either form any part of the question of membership: a member who is a notorious evil liver is refused communion in theory, but that is all.

First, as you are aware, the child is pronounced regenerate by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it is attempted to say that this is a change of state, not of personal condition. This is an idle effort. Were I told, according to the fathers, regenerate means baptized—though abuse of words produces much mischief: if it were merely meant to say they are baptized, and thereby personally admitted into the pale of the visible Church—my present argument would not hold. Baptized persons are certainly baptized. But I say this is an idle effort. The congregation are to pray that God will grant to the child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with the Holy Ghost—an expression itself full of confusion, but certainly something positive, and personally spiritual; again, that he may be sanctified with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, and being steadfast in faith, etc.; again, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation." The congregation are told they have prayed God to release him of his sins, sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, and give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life; and Christ, they are told, has promised to grant them. And passing by other consistent expressions, after the rite, it is stated, the child is regenerate; and they pray he may lead the rest of his life accordingly, and then give hearty thanks that it has pleased the Father to regenerate the infant with the Holy Spirit, and to receive him for His own child by adoption. What other terms could you use for a saint quickened by God, and made actual partaker of divine life? The prayer is changed when there has been previous private baptism into "that he being born again — Give that he may be"; and it is then stated that he is

by baptism regenerate. In the former service the expression is used, that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration—again, confusion of thought as to an infant, but definite in the extent of what is attributed to baptism. The baptism of such as are of riper years seems to me to seal the confusion, but that is not the question now to occupy us. In the Catechism the child is taught that he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and that by baptism; and therein it was promised he should believe—the scripture saying we are children of God by faith, not by ordinances. The child confesses he is bound to believe, and keep God's holy will and commandment, which he will, and thanks God he is in this state of salvation. Now here faith in certain articles, and keeping the commandments, are obligations on the child, he being (on the proxies undertaken for him) made a child of God by the baptism itself already, where he assented too unqualifiedly that he would keep the commandments. And the promise of faith afterwards they are stated to be bound to perform. The Sacrament also he is taught expressly was the means by which he received the inward and spiritual grace (are not these words plain?) of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and this, anomalous and inconsistent as it is, is clearly the doctrine of the framers of these services and this system; for the strict sense and definition of a sacrament is declared in the homilies to be, that the forgiveness of sins is annexed and tied to the visible sign. It is there said that absolution is not a sacrament, because though there is forgiveness of sins, there is no visible sign instituted by Christ; ordination is not, because though there is a visible sign, there is no forgiveness of sins; and that there are only properly two sacraments, because there

are only two where the forgiveness of sins is annexed and tied to the visible sign.

Let me call to your memory that I am not adducing these statements to prove the faults of the liturgy, but the principle on which the Establishment incorporates the whole population into Christian membership, believing or unbelieving, affirming them to be regenerate by the ordinance, and then making the belief of certain articles incumbent on them on another's promise.

Next, the child is to be brought to be confirmed so soon as it can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and is able to answer the Catechism set forth for that purpose. That Catechism sets forth and has taught him that he is a child of God by baptism already, and acknowledges he is bound to believe and to do as has been promised for him —articles which, though of course containing facts of Christianity, tell him nothing really of the way of a sinner's salvation at all, for even in the interpretation he is taught that all mankind are redeemed, and clearly they are not all saved; and he is made to rest on the promises which ruined Israel under Mount Sinai: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" —an undertaking which, because of its perfection, works death to the sinner; and he is taught the Lord's Prayer.

I would remark, in passing, that the instruction as to what he learns in the articles of his belief is objectionable even as articles, because creation is ascribed to the Father only as His act; and then redemption to God the Son, as if He had no part in creation, but had only a distinct act of redemption as His. But this by the bye. The instructions as to duty I

have nothing to remark on, save that the knowledge of the Father, as His child should know, is nowhere found in the Catechism. In a word, what is properly Christian faith is found in it nowhere, though many topics of Christian truth are referred to.

The sacraments I have already spoken of, save to note that it is stated that the promises of God are made to them in the sacraments, and whatever articles may be given credence to, promises in a sacrament are the only personal resting-place which is proposed to the child: he is to believe in promises made in that sacrament. This preparation being made, he is to be brought to the bishop, he having there asserted that he is bound to believe, and that he will keep the commandments. It is repeated that they had been regenerated with the Holy Ghost, and been given the forgiveness of all their sins; and thus after Confirmation they are introduced to the Communion, being now in full membership (and why not, if they are regenerate of the Holy Ghost?) and now confirmed. And all her members are called upon by the Establishment as Christians, as Mr. M'Neil justly agrees, to partake of the Lord's supper— the very people to whom the same person would preach, I believe very faithfully, as sinners to repent and turn to God, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved.

Thus we have evidence as to the body, how the population— the parishioners—are fictitiously made the Church; and while individuals may preach the gospel, the body rests on a system of ordinances which makes the whole body, the whole population, by a fiction preserved to their burial, a body of regenerate Christians. If these services be compared with the

system of popery, and the order of their administration, then not a moment's hesitation can be entertained of what (though doubtless purged of many details) the meaning and principles of them are. Of the fact that the body of communicants are not really Christians, no question is or can honestly be maintained: but the principle of the Establishment being that all parishioners should come, and orderly provision by her previous services being made that they should, it becomes not wrong that they should be there, but their positive fault and sin that they are not—they are bound to come, believers or not; and thus is the principle of the Church of God laid prostrate altogether. And Mr. M'Neil presses it as the first act of obedience, should there have been previous disobedience all the week; and the rule of the Establishment would apply to an infidel who was not a notorious evil liver, and the fiction be kept up by his presence being taken as profession. This then is the principle of the Establishment as to the body; the effect is to scatter the saints of God, grieve and gall their consciences, and then reproach them with dissent and schism.

I am now to refer to the documents, upon which I would only remark as to the former point that all the daily services go on the same principle of all the parishioners being good Christian people. It is vain to allege that a service is to be made, and must be for Christian people. The fact of the Establishment is, that they have made the Christian people for the service, which is a matter generally left out of sight in their plea for this. Who warranted them in doing this? or what does such a making amount to? A reference to the Homilies and Canons will abundantly confirm the statement that this

is the principle of the Establishment. But to apply myself to the documents as to the ministry, we have seen, as I said, the facts (these are notorious) that the Crown and secular persons and bodies present to livings and bishoprics, and that young men are brought up to them as to a lucrative profession, and that they are bought for that purpose. And you cannot shew a single document by which these things can be shewn to be an abuse: they are strictly legal by the system of the Establishment.

But the two documents I shall refer to are the twenty-third and twenty-sixth Articles, which give the authorized form to the ecclesiastical part of it. The first states that those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called by men. Do I quote this wrongly? Here then we get a principle formally laid down which makes men the choosers and callers to this work. They have authority given to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard. Now I see the Lord directing the apostles to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest; and it was the householder who hired the labourers into the vineyard. It is further stated, that it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office without it. Provision is made for the consequence of this human calling in the twenty-sixth. Sometimes evil men have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments; and though it may be right to see to this, yet if it be not seen to, they minister by Christ's commission and authority, and are to be attended to even in hearing the word of God, though perhaps what they preach is contrary to all God's truth. And thus, to maintain the authority of the system, and the validity of ordinances where there is no grace, as far as man goes, souls are jeopardized, and the

people subjected to all manner of false teaching as of Christ's commission! Do you believe that Christ has really sent a man to preach who is not a Christian, and does not preach the gospel at all? If not, what is the meaning of Christ's commission? and why this care to maintain the authority of those called and sent by man, even when they are evil, but to maintain the validity of a system of ordinances which rests on man where there is confessedly not the grace of Christ?

I may be referred to the Ordination Service, where the person says he is called by the Holy Spirit. Be it so: but there are articles, on the one hand, to hinder anyone from acting on that, unless he has man's sanction and authority for doing it; and, on the other, if it be quite false, and the man a pretender, or careless, or a hypocrite, there are articles to maintain his authority, as of equal validity by Christ's commission, as if he really were; otherwise it would be clearly impossible to regard him as the minister of the parish, which by law they must, and treat those as dissenters and schismatics who have been perhaps called by the Holy Ghost, but have not submitted to avow their receiving the Holy Ghost from a bishop, whom the king or his minister has appointed. Do you believe every bishop the king appoints has power to confer the Holy Ghost? If not, surely it is an awful thing to pretend to receive it at his hands. We are told, first, the bishops are securities against any not really ministers intruding, and that we are liable to this evil; and then, where the fact is notorious that the vast body are not ministers, and are absolutely opposed to the gospel— are not called by the Holy Ghost but enter it as a profession, we are told that, they having avowed they are led by the Holy Ghost

through their own hypocrisy and fault, the Church has done all she can. Well, then, the plea of this security is folly— save, observe, to authenticate as ministers, and the only lawful ministers, of the place those who are not ministers at all. This is all it does. The call of the Holy Ghost does in itself necessarily remain in the bosom of him who asserts it, but by his ordination the man is authenticated before the truth of his calling by the Holy Ghost is proved.

I have now, I believe, dear sir, gone through what the documents of the Establishment present, and her legal authorized proceedings, which do not appear upon the face of her documents, but which are just her form and constitution as an Establishment, in order to judge as to my continuance within her pale as recognizing her as the Church of God. If you avow she is not the Church of God, then I feel no claim upon my soul on her part at all; but your assertion of schism or dissent in not being of her assumes a very important character indeed, because it pretends that she is. The framers of her canons and constitutions (who took, if unfounded, very clear and decided ground as to this) were well aware of this, and therefore honestly denounced and excommunicated all who questioned or impugned it. And this is the point you must meet, if you mean to hold the consciences of God’s children. That party feeling, early habits, and natural associations, and in many cases personal attachment, may hold a multitude within her pale, I do not question.

I do not think you can charge my letter with aspersions, nor with evading the discussion. The ground I have taken is clear and distinct, on which my mind rests, not without sorrow—I should grieve if it did—but in perfect, joyful, thankful peace of conscience as to the position in

which divine mercy and grace has placed me, and a clear though very sorrowful judgment as to the point at issue. Save as to the responsibility which every false assumption casts on the party making it, I cannot own it as “the Church,” or a Church at all, but as a system by which the saints of God have been and are scattered, and which (I firmly believe) is the channel of the country into popery, by the importance it gives to ordinances, and the sanction of that which is in word and not in power, and the hindering the corporate manifestation of the children of God, and their fully following the light. The providence of God in this, and the judgment which it will close in, though matter of undoubting certainty to my mind, confirming my faith, and, where occasion is given, matter of mine and others’ testimony, is not directly the ground of conscience, and to that in direct argument I have here confined myself.

As to selfishness and pride and the like, as being merely a question of motives, I feel it not to the point to argue them. As to your appeals to our brotherly love to remove the degeneracy of the Church of England, my answer is, I cannot spend my strength on correcting what is in principle wrong—it is lost labour. It is not degeneracy; it is the system and principle of it as to its incorporation, government, and principle of ministry (though individuals may be good men and Christians who minister), which I believe contrary to the mind, word, and will of God. This was not the case with Israel—the principle and system were God’s own there: not the case with Sardis and Thyatira—the principle and system were God’s own there too; and therefore degeneracy claimed service, and not departure; for it would have been departure from the principles of God’s gathering and

assembly in the two dispensations. By being of the Establishment, I feel I should be in a state of departure from the principles of God's gathering, not by being out of it. Nothing, I think, can be clearer than this distinction.

When you talk of the Establishment being a company whose title to the Christian character is almost defaced save to the eye of charity, I can hardly think you serious. Do not you, do not all real ministers of Christ acting in charity, preach to the mass of them as unconverted and unbelievers? Do you think them uncharitable? I do not. But when you state that the shining graces of individuals are obscured by this company, but that they attract notice when they come out and stand apart in a little body, you just state the grand excellency of doing so; and God's principle of dealing with a poor, ruined, sin-darkened world. God does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The method and principle you accuse us of following, then, are God's own, with this precise object. The ascribing of motives to us in acting on it I leave in your own hands.

As to staying in the hospital, it sounds fair, but our objection, dear sir, is to staying in the tombs. You are preaching to them, at least to the great mass of them, as dead in sins. Are you not? Certainly in charity and truth you ought to be. Well, we agree with you as to the mass that are in the great broad road: only we do not then come down and join them as brethren actually in the road to glory, bound to avow that they are heirs of it in partaking of that one loaf at least three times a year, and

assuring them they are children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. An hospital is for a people that are alive: is it not? Do you believe that the mass of the Establishment are alive to God? In fact, your statement about the hospital is merely playing on our feelings.

I hardly know how to answer your exhortation to us to search and try our ways. You tell us that we were "thriving in the Establishment"; then, "that though the tares are more like wheat, we are only closer bound to them still"; and "where people not unlike our party have been brought." I can only say they are all pleasant assumptions or suggestions on your part. We have deeply felt and found our own weakness, and the condition to which the principles of the system of which you form a part have reduced the Church of God. But in this weakness we have found God faithful, and very merciful and gentle with us too; and in spite of our infirmities, enlargement and comfort of heart, and growth and liberty, and ability in some increased measure to feel sympathy, deep and conscious sympathy, for the whole Church of God—even for that part of it which is in the Establishment, and a safeguard too, through His mercy, from the many ruinous principles, which are flowing in from different quarters, both in the Church of God and in the world. Our own weakness and imperfection I trust we are freely and fully ready to admit, and be humbled for; for my own part I avow it without hesitation; but in the path of righteousness and God's will we know at least where strength lies. But enough of ourselves: you have compelled me thus far to be a fool.

I might have appealed to Mr. Kelly at Clifton for the refutation of some of your suggestions; but I pass on to the charge of latitudinarianism, and it is only striking to my mind how evil and systematic habits hinder simple understanding and subjection to God's blessed word and ways. But first as to one or two charges. You charge us with having Baptists, Pasdobaptists, Arminians, and Calvinists, Millenarians, Anti-Millenarians, and even Quakers. Well, are there not Paedo-baptists, Arminians, Calvinists, Millenarians, Anti-Millenarians in the Establishment, and teaching too? And Quakers have been received there too: also they have been with us, and have been baptized as became them from the circumstances they were placed in. The only difference, then, on the point, is as to the existence of these various views in the minds of these amongst us. They being real Christians, we should undoubtedly feel it wrong to shut them out, and rejoice we can walk together in love. There is only this additional difference, that there is not, through mercy, amongst us a vast body of members who have no faith at all. And I think you would find more unity of mind amongst us than amongst yourselves. Nay, it was your complaint at Clifton, that we were all so made up in one mind that, wherever you met us, you just heard the same testimony from us all; and when you had heard one, you had heard all. Others have made the same complaint. We are thankful the Lord has kept us thus hitherto, and lean on His mercy to be preserved in this unity. As to not being able to baptize, I have only to say you are quite mistaken, and that we do so when the occasion arises. That some are Baptists, so called, and some Pasdobaptists amongst us, is very true; but by the Lord's mercy we have felt the unity of Christ's body more important than the unity of judgment on this point;

and each person, without any hindrance to charity, acts in this as he believes according to the mind of God. Would you exclude a Baptist from the Lord's table with you, were he disposed to go? We have acted on the principle of this word, "Whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this also unto you." We have found most happy peace and flow of charity in it; we do not pretend to have attained perfect light in all that God reveals.

Next, sir, you should have been surely more guarded, on reading chapter 17 of John's Gospel, in talking of "the popular idol, unity." I think, sir, deference to the word of God should have made you attach more importance to it. That the world is imitating it by latitudinarianism I know: such is Satan's guile often, and I am not now denying (for I fully believe) its existence; but the allusion is rather an unfortunate one. Are Churchmen or the "Brethren "engaged in carrying on this latitudinarianism of which you cite Irish national schools as the example? I believe the latitudinarianism you speak of is the principle of infidelity and atheism; but I know that the authorities of the Establishment were the means of its introduction into Ireland. Somehow they were able to exclude near three thousand godly men for a garment in 1662, but unable to hinder the introduction of public latitudinarianism in 1828. Was it the "Brethren "or the public supporters and champions of the Church who announced that the reading of the scriptures in the schools was a vital defect, because it was contrary to the principles of the Roman Catholic religion? I do not introduce these things I trust as recriminations.

I have already said that I believe modern latitudinarianism is just atheism and infidelity in its worst and perhaps basest shape; nor am I aware of its existence amongst the “Brethren,” but, on the contrary, the strongest testimony I know against its real evil. But I believe the narrow sectarianism of the Church as to rules of forms, and its extreme latitudinarianism in introducing by these forms a mass of unconverted, careless persons—careless unbelievers—within its pale, has given occasion to the existence of this latitudinarianism, and a plea for those who have the worst spirit of it to attack that of which the Establishment bears the name as more conscientious than it. Do you think, sir, an infidel cannot act on the minds of men in charging bigotry where godly men are excluded from Christ’s Church for the shape or form of clothes—clean contrary to the apostolic rule?—and that a handle is not given such to ridicule the picture of holy pastorship when the sale of their appointments and the education for them as one of the professions are notorious facts, however the advocates of the Establishment may excuse or colour them?

It is an awful time, and, I would press upon you, a time near judgment, when the conscience or moral judgment of infidels is in advance of the practice of that which carries the name of religion as the Establishment. Such is its effect; and thus while it feels the effect of latitudinarianism as inconvenient, it strengthens its hand by the position and character which it holds before them. It is this want of godliness and heavenly character in the Church which has given the world the occasion to legislate for it. Persecution there might be, but not legislation for a body who only sought heaven and

renounced the world really. You may charge us, as they did Jeremiah, with weakening the hands of all the men of war in the city, but, by the help of the Lord, we would not cease from our testimony, nor join the Edomites, but be alike strangers to what you call your Zion, and keep aloof from all that at bottom hate it, not because it is corrupt, but because it is nominally the house of God.

But, having thus far replied to the charge of latitudinarianism, your statements as to the possibility of going beyond the foundation in teaching have to be noticed. And here it is remarkable how habits contrary to scripture obscure the judgment; and, while we are judged as if to set aside ministry, the real value of ministry is lost in the mind of one who rests on Establishment and creeds. The truth is, sir, Establishment —that is, men's support and a creed—has taken the place in your mind of the Holy Ghost and of truth. One would suppose that the person who made the remarks you do did not really believe that there was any Holy Ghost really to guide, animate, control, order, and provide ministry in the Church; no Saviour to nourish and cherish it as His own flesh. This is our dependence (however feeble and faltering our dependence may be), that He will guide us into all truth—truth treasured up in the word of God, but into which we have daily to be guided, and all of which is before us in the word. You might say of yourselves, who have a limited standard of truth which you subscribe, "Where our creed ends, error begins." But we have no limit to our creed, but the whole wisdom of the Bible; unless our own want of spirituality, which must ever hinder. We are open to receive and thirst for all truth. If you say, What is to keep you from error? we should watch against it on the

very same principle that an apostle did (I do not say with the same power), but we can lean only on God to keep us from it; and we trust He will, and are sure He will while we humbly wait on Him. You have, on the contrary, trusted a creed: so have the foreign ecclesiastical bodies; and what is the consequence? Error, justification by works, and neology—here in three-fourths of the pulpits of the country, abroad in eight-tenths. Creeds cannot give living truth to the soul, nor can they secure truth beyond the compiler of them, even in form. You have kept a measure of truth in a book, but nothing more: your body has fallen into error ruinous to souls just as much as even those you declaim against; and remember that even Neology and Socinianism prevailed more where creeds were than where they were not. I have not found the advocates of liturgies and creeds quite honest on this point; and if they boast of this country and the wisdom of its churchmen (not the continuing grace of God), the answer is, It was dark as others; and it was grace, not creeds, which revived the Lord's work, and that not quite within the regulations and limits of the Establishment, I think you must admit.

As to ourselves, if you cannot distinguish between the unity of God's saints on one foundation, and that, if you please, as you rather slightingly say, "in the blood" — yes, the precious blood of Christ—and latitudinananism; if your system of uniformity without unity have reduced you to this state of mind, I can only sorrow for it. If you call the unity of God's children a popular idol, we are sorry you are in such a state of mind. With us it is a cherished, deeply cherished, object, because, in heart and principle at least, we are led by Him "who gave Himself not for that (His own) nation only, but that He

might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad”: and that the Holy Ghost leads us to seek to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, in that by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body— all one body, as partakers of that one loaf; and the prayer of Jesus has sounded in our ear a voice that subdues our thoughts, “that they all may be one, that the world may believe.” We may fail in the object—we cannot be wrong in the desire. But that the unity of God’s children (this alone we desire) is a popular idol sounds to us like a stranger’s voice, not that of the Good Shepherd, and we fl x from it.

If you speak of confining ourselves to one truth, and teaching no more, this assertion must be meant for strangers. Have you found this to be the case? One truth, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, I trust, will ever hold undisguised prominency; but do you think those who have been much amongst us are less taught than those who have not been?— are less acquainted with scriptural truths? This is not a usual charge, whatever the value of knowledge may be; for I believe grace is far more important, though truth be most blessed. But our principle is this, sir: whenever the first great truth of redemption—in a word, whenever Christ has received a person—we would receive him. That false brethren may creep in unawares is possible. If the church be spiritual, they will soon be made apparent, but as our table is the Lord’s, not ours, we receive all that the Lord has received, all who have fled as poor sinners for refuge to the hope set before them, and rest not in themselves, but in Christ, as their hope. We then afterwards teach them as they are able, according to the grace and knowledge and wisdom we have received—all

the truth we have received at God's hands; and here it is that ministry comes in. We do not make a creed but Christ the ground and term of union; but trusting to the help and ever-watchful and ready care of the Lord over us, and to the true and real presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, we seek and give all the instruction, exhortation, comfort, and (when need arises) rebuke in love, we are enabled. One may lay the foundation (and all that are on it we receive), and another build thereon; and they must take heed how they build thereon.

You may say, But there will be false teachers. So God has taught us, and all your plans will not prevent it. But the grace of God will overrule it, enable us to detect them by the word, and turn it to good. And your plans only hinder your leaning on that which is effectual—a spirit of constant dependence. There will be heresies—there must needs be, says the apostle— that they which are approved may be made manifest. In a word, sir, your plan is to take the Church of God out of the field of faith and dependence, and thereby lead it away from the constant and blessed energies of the Holy Ghost, and make it lean on something else. But the truth is, God is most gracious and faithful, and blessed in His careful mercy, though you may not trust Him. He knows that we have but a little strength; and, though He has graciously permitted that which may exercise and strengthen our faith, He has never suffered us to be tempted above that we are able, but rather set before us an open door. The Lord keep us in the word of His patience, and men or Satan shall in vain seek to shut it.

We do then receive on the one great truth of Christ's salvation all that through divine grace believing it are converted to God. And we then, having ministry of truth,

build them up according to what God has given us. That there is imperfection in the teaching I do not deny, for we are all imperfect. But I do not think, dear sir, if you are acquainted with scripture, and your mind is based on it, you can object on principle to this as unscriptural. I think you would find amongst us the very opposite to latitudinarianism—a strong desire and prayer for and search after unity among the saints of God; and the careful and diligent teaching of the measure of truth we have received. And if you say no good thing can come out of Nazareth, we will count it only prejudice, and say, “Come and see.”

As to our banishing of error, we have abundant provision in the word of God, if we have grace to do it; and on this we lean: without it clearly we can do nothing. You assert that the scripture is insufficient for this, precisely on the same ground as the Roman Catholic does. We have no stealthy standard at all; we openly condemn every discovered error. We believe not in the infallibility of the clergy, and the insufficiency of the scripture, and the sufficiency of humanly composed creeds, which is your ground. You say, with the Roman Catholic, that a Socinian could appeal to the written word. Could he? Do you say he could?—But we believe in the sufficiency of the scripture, and the grace, energy, and power of the Spirit—the Comforter, to keep out error from the Church, so as to guide us in the truth.

This is a very grave question—I believe, the question—between us; yet I would not willingly say so; for I believe it to be the question between apostasy and the special point of truth now. But you have put yourselves on this ground: you deny either the sufficiency of scripture, or the grace of the Spirit to use it under the faithfulness of

our blessed Head's love to the Church. On this, in all our weakness, we lean. You say, "If you say in the written word," well, the Socinian professes to find his there too. Did you never hear this from other mouths, arguing against Protestant platforms, or clergymen elsewhere? I tremble—nay, but it confirms my faith— when I see arrows drawn from such a quiver. You say, "Would you receive a Roman Catholic?" If a Roman Catholic really "extolled Jesus" as a Saviour, and His one sacrifice of Himself as the sole putting away of sin, he would have ceased to hold the error and delusion by which the enemy has misled some souls (who are still, I would trust, precious to Jesus), he would have ceased to be a Roman Catholic in the evil sense of the word; and on these terms only could he be with us.

I repeat, then, we receive all that are on the foundation, and reject and put away all error by the word of God, and the help of His ever blessed, ever living, and ever present Spirit. If you have neutralized the Church's energies by mixing it with the world, so as to be unable to do this, it is matter of sorrow surely, not of boast. Justification by works is preached in the majority of pulpits to souls. You refer me to a scrap of paper which the poor people have never read, so that your provision against error is null. Such preaching would not be borne for one time by one single person professing to be a minister amongst us; and to your suggestion, "God knows what mischief you may inflict upon them," my only answer is, "God knows what mischief you have inflicted upon them." The stranger's voice, sir, has been heard in hundreds of pulpits of the Establishment. Has it not? Well, the sheep have fled from it. Do you rebuke them? You may tell them to stay and hear it. They dare

not, by virtue of their weakness and timidity. It is not the Shepherd's voice: their safety is in flight, not in pretended strength or artificial reasonings. You have scattered the sheep by your system, and as yet your conscience is not awakened. I have little hope that it will be, or rather the change is impossible. Parliament is your legislator, not yourselves—a body I suppose you would charge with evil enough now: I thank God I have nothing to say to it.

It is really a little too bad to be told we cannot testify the second advent, and the agency of the Spirit. Forgive me if I ask how you could really honestly say this, when they are the two great topics to which testimony among us has been specially directed—to urge which meetings have been held both yearly and wherever God has opened a door; so that our adversaries have charged us with being a Millenarian Church, and Irvingites, on account of these two topics being so much held up before the saints? But I need hardly answer this charge. A charge that the "Brethren" cannot teach the second advent, and the agency of the Spirit, will have but small weight, unless to shew that you were a little hard set for an argument.

As to "Where is your security for continuing to exclude error? "I reply, In God alone is continuance. We have found error in your teaching, which is excluded from amongst us now. So far we have clear gain, for we were continuing in error while with you. Yet nothing but grace will keep us onward. This may seem a poor dependence to you; it is our only one. I press this point, sir. When Paul said that after his decease grievous wolves should enter in, not sparing the flock; yea, that of their own selves men would arise teaching perverse things, to

draw away disciples after them; he desired them to watch, and remember how he had not ceased night and day with tears to warn every man; and then, stating that his own hands had ministered to his necessities, and that he had shewn them how that so labouring they ought to support the weak, he commends them to God and the word of His grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified. To what he apostolically commended them we look, to God, and the word of His grace; and we would endeavour as far as possible, so far as we have grace, to watch, and by His own blessed mercy we have in our feeble measure done so. Without His grace we are sure we should go astray; but we lean upon it, and in the trial consequent on the absence of apostolic energy, here forewarned of by the blessed and zealous servant of the Lord, we have endeavoured in principle to turn to and use that to which he has directed us. If you think creeds more efficacious, our answer might be, they have not proved so. Witness all the different Protestant Establishments, and indeed the whole professing Church in its departure from the faith once delivered. But my answer goes farther, and I say the ground of your appeal to them is that of the insufficiency of scripture, a recurrence to other means of securing truth, or therewith a practical denial of the presence of the Spirit of God—the Spirit of truth, the Comforter—to use it. Here we openly take a plain ground against the principles or apostasy of Catholicism, and the identically same ground taken by the defenders of the Establishment. We are on ground of the very last importance to the Church of God now. You rest in tradition in some shape, ancient or modern, it matters not: I do not. I rest under divine grace—my only hope for

unworthy and helpless sinners— in the perfect sufficiency of the word, and the presence of the Spirit in the Church, according to the faithfulness of God. This, I believe, is a cardinal point for the Church of God now— this great and blessed truth being taken in connection with it, that the Holy Spirit is present with the Church, abiding for ever. Popery and the Establishment take ecclesiastical succession and creeds, and assert together that the Bible is not an all-sufficient guide, leaving quite aside the continual presence of the Holy Ghost. Tradition and successional authority are their resource; and let me add that you cannot even plead here that you refer to tradition, or authority, or some other resource than scripture and the Holy Ghost, merely for rites and ceremonies; we are discussing creeds here. Your argument is, that it is insufficient in practice for matters of faith, and to banish error— assuming, as I have surely title to do, the faithfulness of God by His Spirit. If you deny it, do so openly. I see no reference to it in your letter, or that on which your system rests. As to this, my answer then to the charge is, we admit of no heterodoxy, but all Christians. If you ask, How can you do this? I answer, By the word, and Spirit, and grace of God. Your system receives the population, and calls unity a popular idol, and (Mr. M'Neil being witness) is arranged so as to appoint pastors, because they are unfit. The fact he admits; and I have already asked you, Is not the person so appointed recognized as the only lawful minister of the parish, and all else as intruders?—instituted by the bishop as such, recognized by the ecclesiastical court as such, and by every authority (except the Lord's) in the country?

If you say the bishop cannot help it, I say, “Just so, because it is the legal system, and not an abuse of it at all.”

I can apprise you, if public rumour has not, that the members who have increased our fellowship latterly have been, I think I may say, chiefly (at least in England) from among dissenters, feeling the evil of their system as well as of yours—at any rate quite as large a number, and of the Establishment very many, by the conversion to God often of those long accepted as members among you; in other cases of poor neglected souls, whose ears the truth had never reached by that which claims to provide for all as of the Church of England. But the most remarkable accessions, and the action of our testimony among Christians, has been de facto chiefly among dissenters. Two dissenting ministers who came to the Clifton meeting to get all the good they could, and not to challenge us all and banish away all our errors, found happy and joyful liberty in fellowship with us, and we with them; and this testimony, I trust, will spread. Many Christians from the Establishment also have found their joy and fellowship along with us.

When you speak of our violating our principles by teaching other than what is common, as I have already stated, it is only that you do not know them. If you mean “by authoritatively setting them forth, as lords over their faith,” certainly we disclaim it. As helpers of their joy we teach all we can; we will teach or be taught by you, if you can edify us in the Lord, and be thankful for it. If God has given you any gift, we are there in no dilemma at all j we meet on the ground of the foundation—Christ; and we learn, and, as God has enabled any, teach all that is in the Bible, trusting God to keep us from error; and if

“there must needs be heresies,” trusting it shall be through His grace that they which are approved may be made manifest. This continual responsibility of the Church in its perpetual conflict with Satan, not yet cast down and bound, you seem to have lost sight of, or to suppose that you can provide for the exclusion of. But then the Church must lose its heavenly-mindedness and character, for we do wrestle with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; and all the profit of the exercise of faith, and the deeper acquaintance with the whole armour of God, and the faithfulness of the God who gave it, and gives it to us still.

I believe only one material point remains unnoticed still, on which indeed many preceding facts and statements bear: honouring the Holy Ghost, which introduces in your letter the question of ministry. The facts to which the system you advocate leads have been already noticed, and if you think the sale of advowsons, the giving of the appointment of the chief pastors or bishops into the hands of the Crown, honouring the Holy Ghost’s rule in the Church, certainly there are many (such as the Irish Christian Journal describes as having morbid consciences) who cannot. This, I say (which is the regular order of the Establishment, the constitution of it) is not honouring the Holy Ghost. It is not merely there being the fact of an ordained ministry. I see nothing like an appointment of elders in an existing body of Christians, in the ordaining young men of twenty-three or twenty-four, in the nomination of a pastor who has got an appointment from some lord of the manor, or his being made a priest, presbyter if you please, on the same appointment. You do not arrogate to yourselves, you say, the selection of your ministers, but you give

them authority to exercise their gift, when they say they are called, and the bishop has ascertained by certain testimony they are of good morals, not heretics, and can answer in Latin. Now supposing this sufficient and right (both of which I entirely deny, and say that it is entirely unscriptural, and opposed to scripture, but it would lead me into another large question), you do in the appointment of this person to some cure—not by the Spirit, but by a landlord—preclude others from exercising their gift there in the Church, and thereby, as the appointment is secular, you dishonour the Holy Ghost in that; so the direction of the word of God, “as every man hath received the gift, so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,” is set aside. It is not, “he that teacheth, let him wait on his teaching, he that exhorteth, on his exhortation.” All gifts must be assumed to be in the secularly appointed minister, or the Church is deprived of them. This is what I call dishonouring the Holy Ghost.

Again, when you speak of not selecting ministers, what is your system? You have divided the country into ten thousand parishes. Who has authorized you to say that the Holy Ghost would raise up just ten thousand ministers at all times to minister by His help and power in these parishes? Yet by your system you are bound to provide for them, and in order to the attainment of this, secular advantages are attached, and titles of nomination put into the hands of interested persons. This I call dishonouring the Holy Ghost, “who distributes to every man severally as He will.” It all hangs on the same great system, that it is the world, and not the Church. Suppose your ecclesiastical authorities sincere, though I do not admit their title at all, they are

administering a system which sets quite aside the sovereign Ministry of the Holy Ghost in distributing as He will. The ten thousand parishes are to be filled; men have a secular right to fill them, or to sell their title. This is not waiting on, honouring, or owning the authority and only power of the Holy Ghost to bless and minister by vessels of His appointing and qualifying in the Church. And then, when thus filled, the Holy Ghost's title to raise up one to teach in one of them, or to exhort in one of them (though indeed they are not churches at all), is positively denied, such an one is disorderly and schismatic. The Holy Ghost is limited by your system to the ten thousand clergy, and their curates perhaps, and is assumed to provide them for the nomination of the owners of advowsons, and none else. I am not speaking this lightly, for I believe it is a most horrible and crying dishonour done to the Holy Ghost. If I were to speak to the majority of your clergy of the "Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He will," they would account me an enthusiast and a fanatic; or to the owners of advowsons, of His raising up elders and pastors of His selecting and appointment, they would treat me as wild and dissenting. Their affair was their rights, and they exercise them.

Where there are ten thousand offices specifically to fill, and an education to fill them provided as a qualification, it is a profession, and not a ministry depending on the Holy Ghost, distributing as He will. The statement that a man is moved to it comes in by-and-by, and itself lumps all possible ministries, to the exclusion of all others, into one, nominally a deacon's, and then an elder's—very excellent offices in their place, but neither of them really undertaken, or ought not to be, at that age; neither of

them properly or necessarily ministries of the word, though they may be united with them. But this may be called confusion, not dishonour to the Holy Ghost, and is only collaterally connected with the question. But while I might turn to abuses enough to drive almost an infidel from the professed Church in disgust were I to turn to the preparation for the ministry at the universities, I confine myself to the plain facts and arrangements of the system. These abuses indeed are its genuine consequences, because it has been made a regular, settled, lucrative profession: it must be if the Church goes by a geographical division of the population, not the gathering of the saints. But the plain facts and arrangements of the system permit no one to preach save those called by man, and who have received authority from man; so that in the principle of it Paul could not—for he asserts the contrary principle—provide livings for so many, say ten thousand ministers, whether the Holy Ghost has called them or not, and forbid any else to exercise it, so much so that a bishop cannot ordain without a nomination, though the man would profess that he was called and moved by the Holy Ghost still. They are educated for it, without possibly knowing whether they will be so moved or not, being as boys designed for the ministry or for a living by their parents; and when placed there, their one gift, if they have any, must exclusively be exercised—a pastor with perhaps no saints, or a young evangelist with old Christians to feed, and this regulated by secular appointment.

There is not then the least reference to owning or following the Holy Ghost as the source of authority, and various gifts in the Church of God; and if a person should act without this secular system, his work is

treated as disorderly. I say, then, that the Holy Ghost is not really honoured at all in this system. To make a parcel of young men, educated for the purpose, come and say they are moved by the Holy Ghost, when it is in nine cases out of ten secular and family arrangements which have induced it, I do not think this honouring the Holy Ghost; nor, if all really were, do I believe that it would be honouring His authority, His paramount authority in the Church of God. I challenge you to shew me anything in the scripture the least like the organization of the Church of England—a parochial arrangement of the population, justified by a set of written documents that they are Christians, which all are called on to use.

As regards what you state of the Clifton meeting, you must know that it was not an assembly of the saints as a church for teaching or worship at all, but a private meeting to which we were all invited by the two persons who arranged it, and yourself in like manner. I see nothing inconsistent in their asking such as they thought likely to edify to lecture and pray at a morning service, or indeed any other arrangement they might make, provided those individually called on felt disposed and led to do it. No such thing is ever done when the brethren meet for worship; all who can edify the church may speak, subject to the apostolic rule for order. If any taught error, or acted in the flesh, it would be subject to righteous discipline, as any other fleshly act. The scripture, if we have grace to use it, we find abundantly sufficient for this. We recognize, moreover, distinct and ordinary abiding gifts, as it is said “there were certain teachers in the church.” If you think the Spirit of God cannot make good His power by the word spoken in the

conscience, or detect error and the pretence of the flesh, you have a blessed truth to learn.

How do you know we have not fasting and prayer when any special work may be on hand, or any brother to be commended to the Lord for any special service? Is it right to assume the truth of such charges? We may have been deficient; but had you been among us, you would have known that fasting and prayer have often and often been the resource and comfort of our souls before God in any various circumstances, and sometimes merely to seek more of His presence and blessing. I dare say we have not done it sufficiently, nor as we ought.

We have no election of ministers at all, so that all your remarks on this are gratuitous. God in His mercy has provided us with many who have been a comfort to our souls, and spread, I trust, much truth by them. We find still the harvest plenty, and the labourers few, and therefore earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. Whatever He gives we shall receive thankfully, and if any special work arises to which they may be called, be ready, I trust, to recommend them to the grace of God for it.

The way you speak of authority hindering the Spirit shews you understand our principles in nothing. True authority is by the Spirit just as much as any other gift, and, instead of hindering, is one service of it. That the church is in the same order and energy as to this as in apostolic days, we do not pretend, as you do; though the majority of your authorities, from the nature of their appointment (which Mr. M‘Neil says is by an iniquity of abuses truly disgusting), are not from the Spirit at all, and generally opposed to the truth. We believe the

church to have fallen and gone astray. Your condition is the plain evidence of it. We do not pretend to have competency to set it all right, but to act in righteousness, strengthening those things that remain ready to perish, and to walk in love, which is the bond of perfectness. We do not say we can restore the Shechinah, or the Urim and Thummim, or the Ark of the covenant; but we will do all we can that the word of God authorizes and enables us, by the Holy Ghost even yet with the Church, to do. You pretend to all these things, but we say they are false; and that is worse than nothing —a wretched picture which the spiritual eye detects as not even like the scriptural originals.

I believe I have answered all the questions, charges, and observations in your letter. If I have not tired you, I certainly have myself: but I could not answer your questions and charges lightly, and a short question perhaps involved the investigation of important principles; but I have endeavoured to confine myself to what was properly in answer to your statements, and not diverge into others, though perhaps important topics. Though you have in nowise followed your proposed plan of certain questions which I was to answer, I have fairly, I trust, gone into all which your paper suggests, not as a mere arguer, but on the substantial grounds of the merits of the question, for it is not a mere question between us. The enemies of the Establishment might be displeased with me that I have not run through its abuses, and I have not wished to do so. It is hard to be occupied with dirt, and not get dirty. I am persuaded we have not much business with evil, save in direct spiritual denunciation of it when actually before us, or warning against it. I have dealt with the principles of the system,

which I believe deprive it of the title to present itself to the consciences as the, or a, Church of God, and make it guilty of much dishonour done to His name.

I am not conscious of having used an ungracious or harsh expression, nor even ascribed motives to any. I believe there are many saints within its pale. You will not have any aspersions to answer, unless stating acknowledged facts are such. You will hardly accuse me of evading discussion, though I have endeavoured to confine myself (under the Lord's guidance) to what I proposed, answering your questions. At any rate, I have stated the ground on which my mind actually rests, as regards the particular points you have referred to. That the gross and palpable consequences met with in every-day life act on the conscience, I admit, and so in the Lord's mercy it will be with multitudes unable to trace the principles. But any poor saint conversant in scripture is soon convinced by practical comparison that the Church of England is not the Church of God, by what he meets every day in his own parish; and it requires an uncommon deal of theology and tradition to shew how it is, and many a chain put upon plain conscience: as when I go to the parish church on what is called Sacrament Sunday, or Easter, and am told I am bound to own all I find there as Christians, when I know well all the other days of the year they make no pretence to it; and am perhaps plainly told by my minister, if he knows the truth, all the other days in the year that they are not, and the difference pressed upon me. However, you have the principles and system here, not even its consequences.

And I ask you, Does the Establishment contemplate having all the population within her ordinances, or

distinctly gathering together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad? The latter I would desire and seek, preaching to all. In whose hands is the appointment of the pastors of the Establishment as instituted and recognized by the bishops themselves? If the Holy Ghost be He who gives and orders the gift of pastorship, and their exercise, on what authority do you divide the country, without reference to the actual presence of living faith, into ten thousand and some one hundred portions, and assign a pastor to each, to the exclusion of all other spiritual gifts? Do you de facto acknowledge the mass of members of the Establishment as really Christians? Ought there to be anybody to whom it could be said that they should love one another with a pure heart fervently, seeing they had obeyed the truth through the Spirit, to the unfeigned love of the brethren? Ought the saints of God to be gathered together in unity? I have written offhand, trusting to the Lord my God to direct and guide me, as indeed my letter will witness. I do not think I have omitted any point in your letter.

Believe me truly,

Yours in the Lord,

J.N.D.

I have written to the Record, I confess with little hope at any rate of their putting letters so long as these in. I do not write to the Patriot, not wishing to have the appearance of identifying myself with what I have seen of its spirit; I shall hardly be suspected of this with the Record. But if you will write to the Patriot, who will be above suspicion on that side, I should have no objection.

The Patriot is more opposed to us at this moment than the Record.

The remainder of Mr. J. Kelly's Letter, dated Dublin, March i8th, 1842, referred to in the Introduction, With Some Notes In Reply By Mr. J. N. Darby.

I did remind you that in my former letter putting you on the defensive, as you wished, I asked you not why you had left the Church, but why you had left the Church of England. What I wished was to avoid "begging the question." You knew what body the phrase "Church of England" denoted, and that you had left it. I wanted to ascertain your reasons for leaving it; but although I used the common term "Church of England," I did not intend to give up the point that the body thus denominated was the Church of God in England; and, however you are disposed to exclaim at my intolerance, this is my position. I cannot allow the title "Church"30 to apply to your union as Plymouth Brethren, as you are called, or to any class of separatists; at the same time when I unchurch you collectively, I do not unchristian you individually. I may admit that those members of Parliament who attend political unions are bona fide members; but this is a very different thing from admitting that the meeting is a meeting of Parliament. Thus my belief concerning you and all dissenters is that you may individually be Christians, but your meetings are schismatical—a sinful rending of the body of Christ; 31 and a meeting of this kind, though composed of Christians, is not to be confounded with the Church of God meeting in the name of Jesus.

I would now briefly touch on the contents of your letter in general, calculated as they are to make unreflecting

Christians impatient of what is their path of duty, namely, adhering to the Church of England.

And first allow me to say that you confound the question of the establishment of the Church with its constitution. The establishment of, that is, in other words, the receiving the State32 into the Church, with the interference naturally allowed to the State in certain ecclesiastical arrangements, has, I admit, through the unwatchfulness of the Church, led to many evils; just as the accession of men of rank and fortune creeping into your little community might operate unfavourably upon it, and hinder its efficiency for good. But establishment is not the essence of the Church; its truth and apostolicity, as it came not from the State, nor is maintained by it, so neither can it be taken away by the State. Should the State, that is, the Queen and her executives, to-morrow forsake the Church of England, and adopt33 one of the sects of the day, suppose yours, making the profession, etc., you require—and I see not how you could decline this union—the Church of England would not cease to be the Church of God. Her endowments might be rapaciously seized on, her buildings for worship alienated from her use, the different orders of her ministers proscribed, her members reduced to meet in a “little upper chamber,” but still might she, and I trust would she, be God’s chosen witness in the land: unestablished she might be, but not unchurched. Parliament, with its vaunted omnipotence, could not reach to this. You may perhaps take an exception to this assertion, from the fact to which you allude of ten bishoprics in Ireland having been extinguished by Parliament; but, I maintain, this could not have been done had the Church herself been

faithful, and for her disloyalty to her glorious Head in this matter much chastening has fallen, and (I am persuaded) will fall on her. Her language to the State, when this aggression was threatened, ought to have been—what many, though not alas! the majority of her members, felt— “You may confiscate our properties, though it is personal robbery; you may grasp our diocesan and parochial revenues throughout the country, though it is sacrilege; but you must not dare to lay your hands on the ark, or spiritual functions: as the Church of God, we shall, despite of all pains and penalties, maintain the succession of our ministers.” Such, I say, should have been the language of the Church on the occasion in question, followed up, if necessary, by the election of bishops to the condemned sees as they fell vacant. Her sin has been that she submitted to the usurpation of the State, in not keeping up the succession of her chief pastors; yea, that she did not exercise discipline in excommunicating the perpetrators34 of so presumptuous an act, even though the highest personage in the realm might have become thereby involved.

But I ask, did not the church of Thyatira act somewhat after the same manner, when her great Head thus speaks to her: “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20)? Yet you admit Thyatira to have been a true church of God. I do beg the attention of our readers to this. The Church of England, it is acknowledged with sorrow, does suffer the State to encroach too much on sacred things, but the church of

Thyatira connived35 at similar evil. And if you say that this was consistent with the latter being a true church of God, why not say the same in regard to the former?

Let our readers remember you have subscribed to this scriptural principle, that we are not to leave a true Church because of corruption in her; and I fear not the effect of your letter upon them, for the denial that the Church of England, whose martyrs are before the throne of God, is a church at all, is so monstrous, and the reasoning to prove it from the adventitious circumstance of her being established so inconclusive, that every one must see the untenableness of the position which reduces its dependers to such shifts, such revolutionary assertions.

I consider that, with these observations, all your allegations concerning the appointment by irreligious statesmen to offices in the Church are fully disposed of. They relate, I repeat, to the question of the Church's establishment,36 the arrangement of which may be more or less prejudicial to her; but they touch not her essential character as a true apostolic church; and moreover let it not be forgotten that, though an infidel minister may nominate to bishoprics, yet he must select for the dignity from amongst those whom the Church herself has sanctioned with her confidence,37 so that, if the Church were faithful to the word of her God, the bishops laying hands suddenly on no man, she might, notwithstanding her connection with the State, defy its deteriorating influence.

I come, secondly, to your strictures on the Baptismal Service of the Church. And here I would request our readers to observe the important place the ordinance

occupies in the New Testament, standing as it does in relation to every blessed feature of the divine life in the souls of believers. For example, as to the forgiveness of sins, we read, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,” Acts 22:16. As to our identification of Christ in His death, “we are buried with him by baptism unto death,” Rom. 6:4. As to the participation with Him in His resurrection-life, “wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God,” Col. 2:12. As to the “unity “even of the Church, about which you say so much, we find it also associated with baptism, “for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,”38 1 Cor. 12:13. Now is not this continual connection of baptism with the operations of the Spirit of God an ample warrant for the importance assigned to it in the Liturgy of the Church of England, whilst strongly contrasting, I must add, with the liberalism of your party, which leaves its reception or rejection an open question?39 As to the efficacy ascribed to the ordinance by the Church of England, in that after its administration we “thank God for regenerating the person baptized” (and I take these words in their plain obvious sense), it is quite consistent, I conceive, with the word of God, for the foregoing passages, tracing back as they do the spiritual life of Christians to baptism as its source,40 certainly indicate the efficacy of the ordinances in their case—that is, of the real Church, the elect of God. But who are we, to discriminate between them and the non-elect? We cannot do it, and therefore in the judgment of charity we speak of the visible Church in terms that belong to the elect Church, because we cannot distinguish them, and, that this is scriptural, see the apostle’s language concerning the Israelites of old:41 “They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and they did all drink the same

spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ: but with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness," 1 Cor. 10:3-5. Here we perceive the participation of Christ, which belonged in reality only to some, predicated of all, because all partook of the sacramental sign. It would be well, my dear sir, if, before you revile the Church of England for the vocabulary she employs in this and her other formularies, you had examined the scriptures more accurately; it might have changed your scorn into reverence to observe that invariably the receiving of the sign is spoken of in language belonging to the reception of the thing signified.

The next thing to which it occurs to me to allude is your reference to my expression "the popular idol, unity," by which you seem greatly shocked; but why? Is there not such a thing? Are not men of all classes endeavouring to coalesce for the promotion of their favourite object, by foregoing the assertion of inconvenient truths? and is not this a characteristic of your party? Look, for instance, at the ordinance I have been just speaking of, baptism; because its scriptural use, as introductory to the Church, is adverse to the sentiment of some among you, it is omitted. The same, if you were consistent, would apply to your preaching, for there being no agreement among you as to what constitutes "the truth," beyond the elementary point devotionally held that Jesus is the Christ, to proceed further in the Christian faith would tend to hazard the maintenance of your unity, and so there could not be edification. But you are inconsistent, happily for this end. Accordingly, though in a covert way, uniting to undervalue baptism, on which

God lays such stress, you have a secret Shibboleth,42 I repeat, made up of other things, which gives you a sort of latitude in your teaching. Were it not for this secret Shibboleth, you could not exclude even the popish priest, if he chose to be one of you, for he could say he believed in Christ as the Saviour of sinners, the Lamb of God; but then you have set it down in your minds that the doctrines of popery are an abomination; that is, you have your Thirty-nine Articles, your interpretation of truth, though not printed; and therefore, if he got up to teach you about the sacrifice of the Mass, you would silence him, and put him from among you. In short, if you acted consistently with your boast that you have no creeds or interpretations of truth among you, then you could have no unity—at least it would only be that of different colours in the dark; and thus whereinsoever you have unity, by acting inconsistently, it is obvious your system cannot get the credit of it.

As we are upon the subject of the unity of the Church, allow me to add that the passage in John 17:21, upon which you lay such emphasis, I mean our Lord's prayer that they may be one, etc., does not contemplate the Church in her present state, dispersed through the world,43 but rather in her future glory which awaits her at the coming of her Lord. Then indeed shall she be manifestly one in union with her glorious Head, and then will the world believe that the Father sent Him. Your interpretation antedates this consummation.

One remark more, and I shall have done. You misrepresent me in saying that by my plan, or rather the Church's, "I would take the Church of God out of the field of faith and dependence on the energies of the Holy Ghost." Such is not the case. I would have the most

implicit faith exercised, and the Holy Ghost honoured in all His offices by the child of God, but I see not that the use of means is incompatible with this. The Holy Ghost works by means. Paul, who, as you quote, in the prospect of perverse men arising after his decease to deceive the Ephesian church, commended “to God and the word of his grace “as the real safeguard, omits not to instruct Timothy, who presided over that Church; thus, “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,” 2 Tim. 2:2. In like manner Peter says, “Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.” According to you, no provision ought to be made for future exigencies in the Church of God, but all should be left to the Spirit when the crisis comes; and, consistently with this, we should not multiply copies of the word of God by printing, using that human invention, type;44 but the Holy Ghost should be expected to speak orally in the various assemblies of believers, using some individual as His organ, and thus superseding our ingenuity!

Let me tell you, my dear sir, it is not honouring the Holy Ghost to disdain the helps which prudence and experience suggest for preserving the precious deposit of the faith, and maintaining the unity of the Church; it is rather tempting and grieving Him. Satan would have honoured thus when he plied Jesus with his artful reasoning, that if He were the Son of God He should cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; but Jesus replied, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”45 True faith will depend on God in the use of all lawful means; and, in regard to the edification of the

Church, will not risk it by abolishing all form of sound words, and preparation for the ministry, and then leaving that ministry open to all who may choose to take it upon them, running before they are sent; but putting into requisition46 every reasonable precaution, will then wait upon God for His blessing, which alone can prosper; and this is as compatible with dependence on God's grace, as the culture of the soil and the scattering of the seed is with the dependence on His providence.

I perceive that, whereas I intended only a few short notes, I have been drawn out to write a long letter; I shall now close, leaving you to have the last word, if you please, before going to press.

If you like, by the way, you may answer to our readers the following queries:—

I.—Where was the Church of God in England at the time of the Reformation?47 and was that Church identified with the use of creeds, and an ordained ministry separate from the people? If so, are you not separatists from the Church?

II.—How are teachers appointed among you?48 Is it competent to any one who feels he has the gift to stand up and minister in the word, and then if he teach Socinianism how can you consistently silence him? May he not say49 he speaks in the Spirit as well as you; and thus are not all your meetings for worship and edification liable to become arenas of controversy? And III.—Is it a hindering of the Spirit of God to provide against this confusion by submitting the pretensions of gifted persons50 to such an officer in the Church as Titus, appointed "to set in order the things that are

wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5)? And, IV.—Pray who is this officer among you?

A clear and concise answer to these questions will, I am sure, be acceptable to all our readers.

Praying that in these times of temptation through division, God may render the perusal of this correspondence (so humble at least on my part) profitable to His children, I remain, my dear sir, Yours in christian truth and love, James Kelly.

27 An additional letter has since been sent, which is added at the request of Mr. Kelly.

28 Now the last but one.

29 [There may be now nearer twice the number.—Ed.]

30 I feel it to be of little importance what name is given to those who meet in the name of Jesus, provided they follow faithfully the word of God.

31 According to this, the Church of England is the body of Christ, and those not of the Church of England are not of the body of Christ. "Rending the body of Christ" may alarm timid consciences, but neither the expression nor the idea is scriptural. The body of Christ cannot be rent—His sheep may be dispersed; and the national system has abundantly succeeded in that.

32 It is singular how false systems darken the intelligence. To a person who has learnt to think with scripture "receiving the State into the Church" presents no conceivable idea. Put the assembly of believers, or "the assembly of God," in place of "the Church," and what is the meaning of "receiving the State into the assembly of God"? God may add such as should be saved; three thousand souls may be added to the

church; false brethren may creep in—in a word, men or souls may be received in, but how the State can be received in it is impossible to conceive. And what is “the interference naturally allowed to the State,” when the Holy Ghost can alone really govern and act in the power of God? It is easy to talk of ecclesiastical arrangements, and “naturally allowed,” when the title of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost are forgotten; but that the State should interfere in the work of the Holy Ghost is very unnatural to those who are accustomed to look at the Church as the Church of God, where all that is real is of the Holy Ghost.

33 The Queen could not adopt the “Brethren,” as they are called. If through the grace of God the Queen be converted, and take her place among God’s children, she does it not as Queen, but as any other sinner saved by grace, though God’s children will render her, and even every subordinate magistrate, all honour in the place in which God has set them as rulers.

34 And among the rest all the bishops, who, as lords spiritual, figure among the enactors of the bill.

35 How the church of Thyatira connived at similar evil I am at a loss to discover. That assembly of God was fearfully culpable in not exercising discipline when seductive errors were taught by one pretending to be a prophetess. The Establishment makes all the unconverted Christians in a lump, and ascribes to the State and other authorities, as a civil right, the nomination of all those who have places of pastors and other authorities in her pale. The church of Thyatira was very guilty, but was a guilty church; the Establishment is all the world in England, having substituted a civil

arrangement for the power of the Holy Ghost. I cannot discover the analogy. To use the expression of an eloquent foreigner, “the Establishment has made of unfaithfulness an institution.”

36 Establishment or not, it is the fact that the bishops and priests are presented to their places by the persons alluded to. There lies the whole point. That act of revolt against the authority of the Spirit is the legal, the only legal, position of a member of the Establishment, and he treats, according to the writer, as schismatics all who do not acquiesce in it.

37 The Church has sanctioned with her confidence—for what? to be a bishop or the pastor of such a flock? If Hero or Domitian had appointed Diotrephes bishop of Ephesus or pastor, would that have been the sanctioned act of the Holy Ghost? or John, whose surname was Mark? or Luke? or any other? Would not such an act have a deteriorating influence?

38 “Baptized by one Spirit” is not the baptism of water, but of the Holy Ghost, which is the true power of unity.

39 There are those among the “Brethren” who are not content with the baptism which they received in infancy, and have thought it more scriptural to have adults baptized on their believing; thus the manner or circumstances of baptism have been differently judged of by many amongst them; but, instead of its being an open question, I never heard of baptism itself being a question at all among them. A few who left the Quaker body naturally passed individually through this question, that body not receiving the sacrament; but it was only to lead them to attach due importance to it.

40 None of these passages traces spiritual life to baptism. They speak of the position in which believers were placed by baptism as their formal entrance into Christianity by a public confession, but none attributes life to baptism as its source: “Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.” It would be singular, if it were the case, that the apostle should thank God that he baptized none, God having sent him not to baptize (not therefore that life might be received) but to preach the gospel, the reception of which in the heart, it appears, by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, does not communicate life, though it be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. “He that hath the Son hath life.” It may be true that he who refuses to confess the Son in baptism, is not to be counted as having life; but to speak of baptism as the source of life would be quite a sufficient error to oblige the rejection of the Established system, as in its root papist and heretical; it is an essential and vital point. It is a source of life too, hypothetical on the secret of election it appears, without any action on the conscience, or testimony of the word of God. Hence also every case of conversion or regeneration of adults in these countries, at least in the pale of the Establishment, is absolutely false. Such a thing cannot exist, for being proved elect by their fruits and the seal of the Holy Ghost it is evident, according to the writer, that they have been regenerated at their baptism. All his preaching of the truth, that souls may be begotten to God by the word, is false from beginning to end, for all the elect who are there have been already regenerated in their baptism. Would he tell them so—the drunkards, fornicators, avaricious—that, if elect, they have been regenerated already really at their baptism, and of course cannot be

so again? they have only to mend their ways? Where faith comes in it is hard to tell; but these regenerate persons are as to their hearts unbelievers, and perhaps oppose the truth of God strongly. But to what a labyrinth does error introduce us! Or would he say that these unhappy sinners, or the self-righteous, who are really just as bad, can never be regenerate, and cannot be among the elect? Alas, alas, where does systematic error lead him to whom the system is truth!

41 Why does the writer omit the part of the verse that relates to baptism which does not hint at anything spiritual? “They were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” To apply figuratively— and in the part of the passage quoted it is avowedly a figure—the name of the thing signified to the sign is altogether another thing from affirming its efficacy in the individual who partakes of it. This latter is what the writer attempts to justify as to his use of the passage he here quotes for it, having omitted, as we have seen, the part relating to baptism. The Article of the Church of England itself will be a complete refutation; it takes pains to make the distinction Mr. Kelly would do away. Article 28 is entitled, “Of the wicked who eat not the body of Christ in the use of the Lord’s supper.” Although they carnally press the Sacrament with their teeth, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ. The writer’s view is merely the ex opere operato doctrine of the Papists applied to the elect—not a tittle else. The passage in the Corinthians is to shew that men may partake of sacraments and not of life. Mr. Kelly uses it to shew that we may rightly affirm life of all those who partake of the sacraments. It is a singular perversion of the passage to the exact opposite of its intention.

42 We have a public Bible, the sufficiency of which the writer seems exceedingly to call in question.

43 “Dispersed through the world.” But the Saviour gave Himself to gather into one the children of God which are scattered abroad, or dispersed through the world. The Lord does not speak there of gathering into one in heaven, for no question could be as to that; He speaks of an economy distinct from the nation. He gave Himself for the nation, and to gather the children of God into one. “There is one Spirit, and one body,” which applies to this world, because the Apostle speaks of what the joints supply for the increase of the body, as elsewhere of the members suffering with each other. Also the passage in John is in contrast with the unity in glory; the Saviour prays that those that believe through their word may be one, that the world may believe, and then adds, “The glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know.”

44 Does the writer mean to place the use of the word of God on the same ground with human arrangements, and learning, and academies, and the education of young men for a profession who perhaps are not faithful at all, as if that was the ministry of the Church of Christ?

45 Tempting God was making essays to try whether the Lord was among them, saying, “Is the Lord indeed amongst us?” not a humble confidence that He was, and therefore doing His will being based on that confidence.

46 It is hard to see how educating young men for the ministry, without knowing whether God has called them at all, and then waiting upon God for His blessing, is a reasonable precaution. In the national system young

men are educated for the ministry, and afterwards called upon, when their life has received this direction as a profession, to declare that they are called of God. I find it hard to call this a reasonable precaution, if I believe the Holy Ghost to be the only real source of ministry. Besides, reasonable precautions are a very precarious ground, when our point is to follow the word of God. There is no precaution like obedience. All that this sentence means is, that when man has arranged things according to his own wisdom, then he will expect God to bless. That which is condemned by the writer puts God's blessing and will first, and looks to that as the source of comfort and edification. The fact is, that every one who wills enters on what is called the ministry of the Establishment, if he has a decent education in a college, and a decent character, or three persons to say he has; whereas what is condemned admits no ministry but that which flows from the gift, and presence, and power of the Holy Ghost. Which is most scriptural?

47 Scattered by the wickedness of men and the unscriptural intervention of princes, having been never in Saxon England founded on any true basis, it was buried under the heaps of popery, from which it never half emerged.

48 As in the Ephesians, Christ gave some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers. What passage warrants their appointment by men? "Let two or three speak," says the apostle, "and let the rest judge."

49 The Socinian, as well as the Church of England, so called, is to be judged by the word of God. "If a man come and bring you not this doctrine, neither receive him into your house, nor bid him God speed." The writer

seems to forget that there is a word of God by which what men say, and all their pretensions to the Spirit, or to be the Church of God, are to be judged of.

50 It was not to such an officer that this task is allotted in the word of God. Next I deny that Titus was any constituted officer in the Church, or other than a temporary delegate of the apostle. Acts 20 proves that all application of the title of diocesan episcopacy to Timothy is utterly false, for the apostle puts the elders on their own responsibility, without the smallest reference, and to the exclusion of any such officer. Such delegate of apostolic authority does not exist, because the apostle is not here to delegate him, whatever the various measure of gift may be. Episcopal pretension to it is to be avoided for a very simple reason, that the power does not exist; and the kingdom of God is in power. If those who are called bishops in the Establishment, or in popery, examine the qualifications and source of mission of Timothy and Titus as given by the apostles, a very small share of modesty, not to say of truth, would make them resign all pretensions to being in the same position. Their service after all was very different in its character, but in both instances temporary. Do the archbishops or bishops seriously pretend to confer the Holy Ghost on men marked out by prophecy, when a bishop named by the prime minister is consecrated? It is serious trifling with these subjects—a grave thing to pretend to give, or to have received, the Holy Ghost, and above all to take one’s place in the Church of God as doing so. I tremble in thinking of the responsibility and the facts: the Lord keep me from judging.

Review Of A Sermon Preached By The Rev. G. M. Innes,

In The Quebec Cathedral, On Sunday, April 5th, 1868, and Published in the Quebec Mercury, April 9th Dear Mr. Innes, Had you confined your sermon to the church in which it was preached, I should never have taken any notice of it. You were within the sphere of your own labours. If you thought we were an evil people, you were right to warn your congregation against us. At any rate, I have no thought of answering the thousand-and-one attacks which are made upon us. The best way is to work on and take no notice of them. If we are according to God in our doctrine and walk, the Lord will answer for us; if not, it is well we should be judged. I am convinced that, though failing, as every Christian will own he does, in carrying his convictions out, and admitting that all who advocate the truth are not wise in their way of advocating it, I am convinced, I say, we are right in principle and practice; that our position is the only true scriptural one; but that it should be spoken against can neither surprise nor much distress me. It has been the fate of the most undoubted truth ever since truth was published. I have not even read the attacks in the Record and Echo; I never see them unless someone sends me some special numbers, and I go on my way and work quietly. But you have put your sermon in a common political journal, and made it public property, not a pastoral address. This paper has been sent me from Quebec; and some statements in it lead me to take notice of it, because truths important to all Christians are canvassed in it; and it does not merely consist of

attacks on “Brethren,” which I should have left unnoticed. I believe you to be a servant of God. I trust not a trace of unkind feeling is in my heart, I am not conscious of any; but as the truth of Christ is in question, I shall speak plainly. I cannot but think you have been misled by the flattering demand of hearers in thus bringing the episcopal body into prominent notice as a security for truth. I will say more: seeing the inroads of popery (I may now add infidelity) long after I left the Establishment, I looked to it as a providential bulwark against these inroads. I satisfied the claims of my own conscience; but I would not have lifted a finger, had I had power to do it, against it. I have not the remotest sympathy now with the coalition of dissenters in England with papists and infidels to put it down. They are seeking to do so. It is part of the blindness and infatuation of these last days, and they will find it so to their cost. But everything is called in question in these days, whether we will or not, and it is of the utmost importance to know on what the soul can rely as sure ground with God. It is this which is now driving hundreds of souls into the snares of Romanism. It proffers certainty, and in this sense gives quietness to the spirit which has no hold of truth, nor sense of its importance for itself. Is the Anglican body such a security? That is the question Mr. Innes has brought before the public.

To come more directly to his sermon:—there are three points it suggests to me. He is thankful for a fixed standard of doctrine. The preacher’s words are these: “Never before, beloved, has my mind been more deeply impressed with a sense of the value of such a fixed standard of doctrine as we possess as members of the

Church of England in our scriptural formularies, as of late." This, then, is the first point I shall speak of: does the Anglican body afford a security for sound doctrine?

The next I shall notice is the false doctrines he ascribes to those whom bis sermon denounces.

The third question raised by Mr. Innes is that of an ordained ministry.

The first point, were I an enemy, an infidel, not a Christian, would furnish subject for laughter and mockery. As it is, I feel far more inclined to weep… as I believe a Christian ought in these evil days. Who are opening the high road to popery? Is it not the sticklers for the formularies of the Anglican body? Is Mr. Innes ignorant of the monastic institutions of Anglicanism? Is he ignorant that transubstantiation is taught by a vast and increasing body of the English clergy, perhaps I might say a majority? Is he ignorant that the Eucharist is worshipped by a vast and increasing number, on the ground that Christ is there, and, wherever He is, He ought to be worshipped? If he has not, let him get a book called "The Church and the World," and he will see, not perhaps how many have embraced it, but what they embrace at any rate. He may be aware that at the Pan-Anglican synod, the prelates could not venture to touch the question, and that a royal commission has met on ritualism, which I adduce only as shewing that the gangrene affects the whole Church, so that it is felt something must be done: only they know not what to do, and meanwhile time is gained by the ritualists for the wide-spreading progress of their popish errors. And I beg Mr. Innes to remark, all is founded on the rubrics and formularies of the Church, which have tied the

hands of the prelates so that, when inclined, they cannot act; their popishly inclined clergy defy them. But many of them concur.

A large meeting was held at Salisbury of clergy and laity, and parishioners were recommended to go to another parish church if they could escape the popish leaven thus; if not, to some godly dissenter's chapel, provided he did not speak against the Establishment.

Does Mr. Innes recollect the last election of a diocesan in a town called Quebec, where the laity would not have Puseyism and the clergy would? and the present prelate, of whom I would speak without the least idea of disrespect, suddenly found himself such in a way as unexpected to himself as to everybody? He might almost with truth take the Archi-episcopal title, "by divine providence," in lieu of the more modest Episcopal one, "by divine permission." Is Mr. Innes aware that the patents (for that is the authority for episcopal pre-eminence now of all the colonial prelates) have been judicially declared void wherever there was a legislative assembly? And if rumour be not false, he who, as I suppose, ordained (certainly was the diocesan of) Mr. Innes, declared to his clergy, on his return from England, that he did not know whether he was their bishop or not. I dare say Mr. Innes can inform us how far rumour was exact. I do not know whether an Act of Parliament has not been passed, regulating this. I am thankful if it is so, for peace is always desirable, and doubtless the clergy, from higher considerations, would have submitted to prelates who had no legal title at all, and they would have done well while they remained in the system.

But we are considering the comfort of having a fixed standard of doctrine. It is really going too far to speak of such a thing when the whole empire is reeling under the effects of the question whether what is substantially popish is not most truly Anglican, and the prelates are unable to interfere, and seek with hopeless anxiety to tide it over, while in the meantime the tide is carrying the clerical body into popery—not all, I admit, but this I reserve for further on. But meanwhile crowds, tired out, join the Roman-catholic body, and crowds leave the Establishment to be Christians unattached. But the formularies are what Mr. Innes refers to: I turn to speak of them. Come.

Does Mr. Innes believe that by baptism, every infant baptized is "made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven"? Mr. Innes does not use the Catechism perhaps; but it is surely a formulary of the body he belongs to. But he does say "that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church." He gives thanks to the "most merciful Father that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thine holy Church"; and this after having prayed "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration," and exhorted all to pray "that God will grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have."51 I believe the whole of this to be false doctrine as to baptism, which does not refer even as a sign to the membership of Christ's body but to Christ's death; but this I leave. Does Mr. Innes think this formulary gives us a fixed standard of doctrine on which our souls may rest?

Again, if Mr. Innes uses the Visitation of the Sick, he has occasion to say—must, if he uses the formulary, say—"and by His authority committed unto me I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name," etc. Nor is this a vague matter. In the ordering of priests the formulary says "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of my hands; whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained." Does Mr. Innes believe this, that he has received the Holy Ghost, giving him this authority, by his ordination? And this is the more distinct and definite; because when the deacon is ordained there is nothing of the kind. It is merely, "Take thou authority to read the gospel in the church, and to preach the same if thou be thereto licensed by the bishop himself." So that it cannot be pleaded that the pretension to confer the Holy Ghost is merely communicating an orderly authority. That is done to the deacon so called. But in the case of the priest the ordaining prelate professes to confer the Holy Ghost so as to make a priest competent to forgive sins. Hence the deacon, when he reads the morning service, is not allowed to read even the declaratory absolution which follows the confession of sin. Alas! does Mr. Innes accept all this as a fixed standard of doctrine? It was not these things which drove me out of the Establishment, but the discovery of what the true Church of God was, and consequently that the Establishment was not it. But can we be surprised at the nation's running into popery, or at the perplexity of souls attached to the Establishment, when the fixed standard of formularies fully authorizes the clergy, yea, binds them, if they are honest, to believe such things as these? It may be alleged that this practically only

concerns the clergy, and that the laity do not enter into these questions. It is an unhappy state of things, if that were true, that all the teachers are bound to doctrines which are popish in their character, even if the taught do not find it out. But it is not so. Every one knows that it is infecting the whole Establishment, or dividing it. And as regards the Catechism and Baptismal Service, it concerns the flock as much as the pastor. I have no desire to seek objects of attacks, or I might say much on the Liturgy. I notice only the second of thirty-nine Articles. I suppose it means to affirm the vital doctrine of atonement, or propitiation, the just appeasement of God's wrath by the blessed sacrifice of Christ—a vital doctrine assuredly; but it is put in a way in which no intelligent Christian could sign it, "to reconcile his Father to us." As if atonement was not something which met the immutable righteousness of God and glorified it, but meant that the love being in Christ changed the Father's mind where that love was not. This is a most evil way of putting it, though I am willing to think they meant right, and erred through ignorance and tradition. But scripture affords no ground whatever for such a statement.

But I have said that there is not in all the clergy that tendency to Romanism, and adoption of its essential principles in baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, and the worship of the Eucharist.

But what is the character of the other chief part of the Anglican Establishment? The name of Colenso is in every mouth, and the Essays and Reviews familiar to every person acquainted with current literature: that is, open infidelity in the highest authorities of the Church. But this is not all. Suits have been instituted and

decided in the highest court of ecclesiastical appeal. And as to the Essays and Reviews it has been decided that no English clergyman is bound to believe in the inspiration of the scriptures or in eternal punishment, and Colenso remains recognized by the same authority, and we have had the scandal of his shutting his cathedral against the Metropolitan of the Cape, and the latter breaking it open with axes and hammers; the said Metropolitan having deposed Colenso and determined to consecrate another, and the English prelates remonstrating and declaring it illegal if done in England. I do not blame the Metropolitan, who, however, has the reputation of semi-Romanism. But what are we to say as to the certainty of a fixed standard? All this is notorious from the public papers. It is a very serious thing its having been decided that no clergyman is bound to hold the scriptures to be inspired, and that infidelity has full swing in the clergy. A very large body of them indeed are known to be rationalist.

Let no one suppose that I say all this without profound sorrow. I believe the Lord is soon coming, and that all this is the power of evil allowed to rise up rampantly before judgment comes. But our enquiry is whether, in this uprising of evil, such a system can afford any security or standard of truth. I might in conscience leave it on ecclesiastical grounds, yet believe it was in the main a bulwark against error and the power of evil. But it is not so. It is torn into popish and infidel factions, a few pious earnest souls in vain struggling in the stream. It is no security for one single truth (save such as it holds in common with popery) and is the sanction for a great deal of popish error. I have stated above from its own formularies in what that conformity to Romanism

consists. I think we need some sure fixed standard; but it is not to be found in that which allows denial of the inspiration of scripture and infidel chief ministers on the one hand, and on the other holds the baptized child to be regenerate by the Holy Spirit in baptism, and the power of the priest to absolve from sin by an authority distinctly committed to him of God. I mourn over such a need; but I do feel, in the present upheaving, that it is well to know what we can trust to for truth. I believe the word of God, the scriptures, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be the only standard or fixed rule, while the gifts of teaching and the faithful confession of the Church of the living God may be useful as means of acquiring and holding the truth fast—the word of God the only rule, and grace the only power. Selfwill will go astray, the humble soul be kept and prosper; and God means it should be so.

I may now take up a far less important part of the subject, the points on which “Brethren “are attacked, some of them by name. Mr. Innes says, Mr. Mackintosh practically denies the entire humanity of the blessed Saviour. This is simply (I may say it as it does not concern myself) a foul falsehood. He holds, and states he holds, the full true humanity of Christ. I do not charge Mr. Innes with inventing the false statement. But he who picks up dirt, made by the wheels of others, to throw at his neighbours is likely to get dirty hands at least himself. I dare say Mr. Innes may have the statement second-or third-hand. Mr. Mackintosh called the Saviour a heavenly man and, I think, a divine man too. I think the words most seemly of a man who was also God, and divine in all His ways, of One who could say “the Son of Man who is in heaven.” The charge was made in an

attack by one in the greatest spiritual ignorance; and, two pages beyond that in which the accused terms occurred, there was the denouncement as vapid and worthless theories of the very thing he was accused of holding, and the true humanity of Christ fully insisted upon, and in the clearest terms.52 Either Mr. Innes knows this, and it has been fully pointed out, or he has taken up a false accusation against an active servant of the Lord at second-hand without giving himself the trouble of ascertaining whether it be true or not. It is for Mr. Innes to say which it is. Mr. Mackintosh's writings are too widely spread and too well known, more especially that very one to which Mr. Innes's accusation applies, to make Mr. Innes's judgment of him of much moment.

Mr. Innes's statement as to myself and imputed righteousness is not much more honest. I have published four considerable tracts on the subject, as it raised a great deal of enquiry at the time, and the subject itself was important. Either Mr. Innes has read the controversy or he has not. If he has, he is personally dishonest in his statement. If he has not, he has no right to say what I hold.53 I have stated there and I state here, I have no idea of any one being righteous before God but by righteousness being imputed to him as contrasted with inherent righteousness, though never actually separated from it, or the life that produces fruits of righteousness. I hold the statement in the articles of the Establishment to be sound and just. What I deny is the doctrine that, while the death of Christ cleanses us from sin, His keeping the law is our positive righteousness, and that His keeping the law is imputed to us as ourselves under it, and that law-keeping is

positive righteousness. I believe that Christ perfectly glorified God by obedience even unto death, and that that is to our profit in such sort that, while His death has cancelled all our sins who believe, we are accepted according to His present acceptance in God's sight according to the value of that work, being held to be risen with Him, that our position before God is not legal righteousness, or measured by Christ's keeping the law, but His present acceptance, as risen, in the whole value of the work, and we accounted righteous according to the value of that.

The statement of Article n I hold to be perfectly sound, that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own merits or deserving. What I object to is the doctrine of such books as Theron and Aspasio, and the imputing Christ's keeping the law to us as our positive righteousness; we being under it and not having kept it, and Christ having kept it for us.

The controversy arose out of a statement of Mr. Molyneux, a clergyman, in Exeter Hall, that if a man was cleansed from his sin in the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, he cannot then go to heaven; and that there was written up over the gate of heaven, "Do this and live!" To this I demurred. I hold, then, righteousness imputed without works to be a vital truth: Christ's work being of course the sole ground of it. I do not hold that a Christian is under the law, and that his keeping it is the righteousness which entitles him to heaven, but that, he not having kept it, Christ has kept that law for him, and thus has given him the title. I hold that he is in Christ, risen and Himself as man glorified according to the whole value of His work, and

accounted righteous (the true sense of righteousness being imputed), according to the price of that blessed work in God's sight, and withal as in Christ Himself. Yet I have no quarrel with any Christian who holds this legal righteousness to be his title. All I think is, he is not clear on this subject, and deprives himself of a very blessed and glorious privilege in connection with a risen and glorified Saviour.

The next point is the Lord's prayer. Here, too, I have no quarrel with any; I leave every one perfectly free to use or not to use it. No Christian, in his senses, but thinks whatsoever the Lord did or said was absolutely perfect in its place. The question is, what is the place He gave it? I add, further, I think the argument against its use drawn from asking forgiveness is weak. The forgiven state is the witness of our being that in which we have forgiveness, like all other proof of life. But, for all that, the demand of it is generally a proof that true forgiveness is not known; but this is a question of spiritual perception and judgment. But Mr. Innes is singularly unhappy in his way of insisting on it. He takes the Lord's prayer, in Luke, because it is said: "When ye pray, say!" But nobody says the Lord's prayer as it is in Luke, but as it is in Matthew.

But more than this: probably Mr. Innes's military education has given him little opportunity for critical enquiry; nor is this any blame if he attends to what is more important; but if he had attended to it, he would know that the superstition as to the Lord's prayer has led to the interpolation of Luke, in order to assimilate him to Matthew, and that in fact we have two Lord's prayers, both assuredly perfect in their place, and given by inspiration. The prayer in Luke really runs thus: "Our

Father, Thy name be hallowed; Thy kingdom come; give our needed bread for each day; and remit us our sins, for we also remit to every one indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation." Now, for the purpose for which the Holy Ghost gives this version of it here, I believe this to be perfect, and for that for which it is given in Matthew it is perfect there: only there too "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever," has been added from ecclesiastical use of it, and is interpolated. But this makes sad havoc of its use as a prescribed formulary; for which are we to use, Luke's Lord's prayer, or Matthew's Lord's prayer? for they are not the same.

I repeat, no Christian in his senses, doubts of the perfectness of the Lord's words; and in principle every desirable thing is summed up in this prayer. But there is a very important feature in the nature of this prayer which Mr. Innes has overlooked—it is not, and could not then be, in Christ's name. The Lord's own statement is distinct on this point: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." Now that Christ has accomplished redemption and gone up on high, as the Saviour who has finished His work, our Great High Priest, the essential character of true prayer is that it is in Christ's name. The Lord's prayer, as decidedly, was not, because it was perfect.

But the truth is, that the "Brethren" assailed have never given any judgment or prescribed any rule whatsoever about it. Individuals may have done so. Its habitual use has dropped out, as it has amongst many other Christians, generally, I believe, save among Romanists and Episcopalians.54 Just as we never find it in the prayers of the New Testament after Pentecost, because

the Holy Ghost led them on each occasion according to the particular wants of the moment: all surely consistent with the summary so beautifully given in this prayer; but in the freedom given by the Spirit to express every want as it arose. The use of it as mere paternoster, having some virtue in it, is a superstition and nothing else. Mr. Innes's statement is a pure blunder, because nobody ever says it as it is in Luke, and it is, in fact, not simply recited, as it is in Matthew, but as tradition has given it from the Church use, the passage in Matthew having been interpolated to suit this, and nearly half added in Luke to make it in some measure agree with Matthew. Tampering with God's word is the constant and sure effect of ecclesiastical traditions, when that word is not set aside by them.

The third point which calls for remark is an appointed ministry. Now, that God has appointed or given a ministry in His Church for its edification and for the evangelizing of the world, is as certain as the word of God can make it. The question does not lie there, but in this: Is the clergy that ministry? Mr. Innes would permit irregular ministrations. He is very kind, no doubt, if God sent them. But there is another question: Is not his position the false and irregular one, and a hindrance and denial of true ministry? If there be a ministry given of God, and man has set up another, it is this which is in fault, this that is false and evil, worse than irregular.

I will make what I mean very plain. If Paul were to come to Quebec, he could not preach, according to Mr. Innes' system. He has never been ordained. It will be said this is ridiculous. He is an apostle, and would preach of course. I agree: sovereignly ridiculous. But the ridiculousness is in those who have concocted a system

which leads to such a result. Paul would preach assuredly, and no thanks to Mr. Innes or his clerical system, because God sent him. And so would every one sent of God. The irregularity, according to the word of God, is in the clergy, not in the preaching of those whom God has sent. I will put another case, one which Mr. Innes knows to be quite common, alas! the most common: an unconverted clergyman in a parish, and the parish spiritually in the dark; or, if the clergyman be converted, a determined Puseyite, teaching to worship the Eucharist, as hundreds do now in England. Well! an evangelist sent of God is blessed to the conversion of many souls: that is, the Holy Ghost has wrought by him, and souls are brought to Christ. Which is irregular—I appeal to Mr. Innes' conscience—the evangelist who has wrought with God, or the unconverted clergyman? Who brought the latter there? Not God: it were a heinous blasphemy to say so. Who brought the evangelist there? God's grace. But this on Mr. Innes' system is irregular. Well! in this world it is so. But it is a mercy there is such. But perhap? Mr. Innes will say, let him keep to his place as evangelist, and put these unconverted souls under the existing orderly pastoral care. What pastoral care? That of an unconverted man, or a worshipper of the Eucharist, or a rationalist? ay, or even a man who, if he is honest, believes he was made a child of God and a member of Christ by his baptism? Is this regular?

What is the real state of the case according to the system, imperfectly carried out perhaps in a colony, because they cannot help themselves, and are happily more irregular? The country is divided into parishes, and universities and other schools supply incumbents, without the smallest or most distant reference to the

Church of God, or gift fitting on God's part for the office. If they are good men, so much the better—if indeed it do not help on delusion; but, good or bad, the ordaining prelate gives, if they are priested, the Holy Ghost to all alike, in order that they may have power to forgive sins. Is this what Mr. Innes calls regular, and the free action of the Spirit of God, according to the word, irregular ministry? A sober, godly mind, a mind taught by the word, let me tell him, will count such a system worse than irregular. He may—ought —to mourn and weep over it, not expose it, save as the growing power of evil forces us to enquire what can be trusted in as — true, and what cannot. This feeling alone makes me speak thus. An Edomite "Down with it, down with it," I have no sympathy with whatever. But we are forced, and, as an occasion, forced by such statements as Mr. Innes's, to enquire what is of God and what is not—to separate the precious from the vile. I would receive every saint, episcopal or anything else, with my whole heart; but the system is leading souls by thousands into popery and falsehood on one hand, and infidelity on the other, because there is no plain solid truth in it. Evangelicals do not believe what they sign and acquiesce in. Can Mr. Innes be surprised if I doubt that he believes Dr. Cronin conferred the Holy Ghost on him that he might have the priestly power of forgiving sins? And it is a serious thing to trifle and make empty forms of serious things—a serious thing for the state of the soul. The state of things is forcing all this into view. It may be so best in God's wisdom, for all is surely hastening to the end; but at any rate it is sorrowful. Whether it be wise in Mr. Innes to draw attention to it, he must judge. I should have a great deal more to say on this head, but I refrain. The great principles are what we have to enquire into. I turn

to more general points, and I will state some general principles, I am bold to say, incontrovertible according to the word of God. Mr. Innes will see it is not against his system more than another, but that I speak of what the word of God teaches.

Member of a church is a thing unknown to scripture. The words, the thing, the idea are unknown there. Christians are members of Christ, and, if you please, one of another, and of nothing else. And membership of anything else is only schism, and denying the true meaning of the word.

A flock other than God's flock is equally unknown. God's flock alone is known in scripture, of which Christ is the chief shepherd. There is one flock, and only one, meeting it may be in different localities, and elders belonging to those localities; but all the faithful there at any time were of it, because they were of God's flock. A pastor and his flock, in the modern sense, is wholly unknown to scripture, and an utter denial of its contents, if it be not of the words: "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," etc. These statements I leave for every honest-minded saint to see whether they are according to scripture or not.

I will now take up the proofs by which Mr. Innes attempts to justify the ecclesiastical forms of his system. I only press the fact, that these forms say nothing as to the substance of the system—namely, sacramental birth to God, priestly forgiveness of sins, pretending to confer the Holy Ghost by ordination in order to that power. Anglicans must accept this, they must pretend to do it; at any rate they all sanction it. It is important to keep this clearly before us. A man may prove meat to be

good; but if poison is in it, the proof of its goodness means nothing, or a snare.

But I will take up the alleged proofs of the forms, and shew what scripture teaches as to the ministry. In doing this, I must apprise my reader that there is a constant confusion in most minds between ministry and local office. I do not reproach Mr. Innes, in particular, with this; I remember when, from habit, I made the same confusion. But for all that, the difference is important. Nay, my own conviction is, that the gradual decline of gift led to the confusion of the two, ministry and office; and thus establishing the clergy led the way for papal anti-christian claims. The elders and deacons were local officers; ministry, in the sense of the exercise of gift for edification, was not. It was a given member (eye, foot, ear, as is said) of the whole body of Christ. Elders were ordained in every city, but God set in the Church various gifts. This difference is all important as to the nature of ministry, and the whole clerical and denominational system crumbles together under the unquestionable scriptural fact. Let me add a question here, which I have often and long ago put, as shewing the practical result: —"If Paul were to address a letter to the Church of God which is at Montreal, who could get the letter?"

It was necessary for me to begin with this distinction, because Mr. Innes' first question involves the denial of it. His question shews, indeed, ignorance of what he might see all over Canada and Europe and everywhere else. It is this: Has God ordained a divinely appointed ministry to rule and teach in the Church? Now, it is perfectly clear that scripture recognizes teachers who do not rule, save as far as general influence goes, and rulers who do not teach; that teaching was a desirable

qualification for those who ruled, but that all had it not. The whole Presbyterian body, whatever their other defects may be, recognize ruling elders who are not teachers. But further, Mr. Innes, having his mind filled with the identity of ruling and teaching, supposes that the admission of a divinely given ministry is rested by those whom he opposes on 1 Timothy, and that they think that 2 Timothy has set it aside. He deceives himself and his hearers altogether. It is because we believe in a divinely given ministry, that we do not believe in the geographical system of parishes, and a ministry ordained of man and not of God. Some clergymen may be ministers; but a divinely given ministry sets aside the clerical system, in which Paul and all the early labourers of scripture could not have been permitted to exercise their ministry.

I shall quote the passages which speak of a divinely appointed ministry, quite distinct from local elders, that we may know how scripture presents the ministry to us. In Ephesians 4, which Mr. Innes quotes when condescending to sanction what he calls “irregular labourers,” we shall see what ministry is. Christ, who descended into the lowest parts of the earth, is ascended above all heavens, and has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; a glorious origin and source of ministry. And He gave some apostles and prophets, some pastors and teachers, and some evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect Man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. We cannot conceive a more full or glorious expression of ministry than this;

complete in every possible respect—in its source, in the sphere it belongs to, in the completeness of its objects, and in the enduringness of its character. And note, we have no miraculous gifts, no tongues, no healings, no miracles. It is proper ministerial service. The apostles and prophets, we read in this epistle, were the foundation; they have had their place, but pastors, teachers, evangelists abide.55 Nor is there an idea of ordination: Christ gave. They are, Mr. Innes being witness, the irregular labourers, though Timothy, he tells us, proves there were regular ones. And note, these are the talents conferred when the nobleman went away to receive the kingdom, and to return; and woe be to that servant, who, in order to trade, waited for any other authority than the possession of the talents committed! And it is very striking here, that so distinct is the character of gift by an exalted Christ that the apostle knows nothing here of the apostles till Christ was gone on high. He recognized, of course, as we know, the fact; but he cannot know them other than endowed from on high, as he did not, in the same sense, know Christ after flesh. But this is certain—we get the regular ministry in the Church (pastors and teachers), to the world (evangelists), by gift from on high, without the most distinct hint of bishop, presbyter, or ordination. It speaks, Mr. Innes does not deny, of the irregular labourers on his system, I should say, of a divinely appointed ministry in its fullest character, and without any so-called merely supernatural or miraculous gifts, but that by which the Church was to be edified till we all come to a perfect man. I pity the regular ministry somewhat, if this was the irregular.

But let us search if scripture warrants this view elsewhere.

We have a more general list, in 1 Corinthians 12. Here the Spirit divides to every man severally as He will, and the gifts are given to every man to profit withal. These are various members in the one body. God has set in the Church—the sphere of action is the one body, the Church—apostles, prophets, etc., amongst which we have gifts of government distinct from teachers. Some of these gifts are lost, others not; but I suppose what remains are to be used; yea, I might almost dare to say it is not irregular to use them, to trade with the talents, if they are given to profit withal. Scripture will surely, and does, regulate their use, both as to order and morally. Not more than two or three were to speak. That is a wise rule of order. “Be not many teachers” is a moral instruction and warning. But neither could have any application at all in the clerical system. They could have had no application to the system Mr. Innes belongs to. We are not talking of what are called extraordinary or miraculous gifts but of teachers, of divinely appointed ministry. Or does Mr. Innes intend to tell us that the Holy Ghost is no longer in the Church to give teachers, but to make priests for the forgiveness of sins? Is that what he considers regular? But I proceed.

We have in Peter positive orders on the point. 1 Peter 4:10: “As every man has received the gift, so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Here again it is the irregular labour, but within, one to another.

Evangelical history tells the same tale, as Mr. Innes admits. “They that were scattered abroad went

everywhere preaching the word." And "the hand of the Lord was with them." Philip, one of the seven, purchases to himself a good degree, and an evangelist. Stephen has a still brighter crown—at least as far as man can say, and so in numberless instances. It is the history of the evangelizing the Gentiles. Paul boasts that he was neither of man nor by man. John in his second epistle has no rule for a woman to go by but the doctrine brought. Gaius and Demetrius are commended for receiving these irregular labourers. Diotrephes, indeed, objected. Such are the instructions, rapidly reviewed, which the word gives us of divinely appointed ministry. We may add, Romans 12, in which each is directed to confine himself to his own gift.

I now turn to Timothy. This does give us order and care of the Church, and watching over sound doctrine; which last was the immediate object of his being left at Ephesus. But it does not give us anything of appointment of ministry. Indeed, though scripture may and does regulate the use of gift, if God has given a teacher or other gift, he cannot, he dare not, wait on man to exercise it, and hide it in a napkin till then. Scripture does regulate, and where prophets were to speak, the rest were to judge; but the gift of God is to be exercised and not wait for the permission of man, as to the general fact of serving by it, though all of us have to be subject one to another, and we are to obey God rather than man, if man forbid us to speak in Christ's name. Timothy was left specially to watch over sound doctrine, and watch against false teachers; but the general order of the Church is unfolded. Yet there is no establishment of a ministry. He was to communicate to faithful men the things he had learned; but here there is not the remotest

hint of appointing to office, and its absence is most significative. He was to instruct, not ordain. No such thought was or could be true. We have seen that the ministry was in full exercise and its order established in 1 Corinthians. It depended on gift, and gift had its place in the whole body. If Apollos was a teacher at Ephesus, he was a teacher at Corinth, and so of all. Indeed every Jew was familiar with this, and the rulers of the synagogue were distinct as to office from the teachers. Christ could stand up to read and teach; so Paul and Barnabas were invited at Antioch. As to the form, there was thus a well-known liberty of teaching, and the distinction of teaching and ruling thoroughly understood. They might, doubtless, be united in one person, but they were distinct. It was the habit of our blessed Lord, of Paul, and of Apollos to teach and preach in the synagogue; none pretended to be ruler there. And in the Christian assemblies elders were local. Thus Paul and Barnabas chose56 elders for them in every church (Acts 14). So Titus was to establish elders in every city. Gifts were exercised everywhere, as such or such a member of the body: so the whole history and doctrinal teaching of the New Testament shew. Elders were local officers. For this office it was desirable that they should be apt to teach; but their business was to oversee and guide the flock of God where the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. And we know that some recognized elders did not teach, though they might rule well. The apostle in this same epistle distinguished those among them who labour in word and doctrine; 1 Tim. 5:17. But, so far from ordaining teachers, or the elders alone being the regular teachers, there is in the epistles a prohibition which makes such a notion ridiculous. “Let your women keep silence in your churches.” “But I

suffer not a woman to teach." Can any one in his senses conceive such a phrase where the only orderly teaching was in the hands of elders? But it is certain that in the synagogue and in the early churches all who could do it to profit were to teach. Elders there were. It was desirable that elders should be apt to teach; but of their being the teachers there is not a hint but exactly the contrary. Women were not to teach; all men who could were free to do it, according to their gift, and bound too so to minister the same as good stewards. No honest man can doubt if he takes the word of God. In France, Switzerland, Germany, it is not now denied by those who have considered the subject. It was considered a whole day at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance at Berlin. Do not suppose I mean that they act, or mean to act on it. That is a very different thing. One German professor, after an evening's discussion with a third person, said to me: It is impossible that any upright Christian can deny it is so in scripture; but think of the folly of acting on it after eighteen hundred years!

But Mr. Innes appeals to the word. Let him produce the appointment of any one to preach by ecclesiastical authority. Timothy is directed to communicate the truths he has learned to faithful men able to teach; but to ordain teachers, never either he or any one else. Having gone through the teaching of scripture, let us now see what Mr. Innes has to say. He will already have perceived that I believe in a divinely appointed ministry, and (because I do) I do not own his office, his system, which denies wholly that of scripture. He will have seen that it is not from I Timothy I draw the proof of such a ministry, for there is nothing about it, but about the order of the house of God, in which the ministry of all is

supposed possible to the exclusion of women, aptness to teach being desirable in an elder. All the New Testament shews there was such a divinely given ministry. I Timothy gives the order of the Church. It is not even said that hands were laid on elders: I dare say they were, as it was the common expression of commending to God, and communication of blessing or curse; but it is not said. Such has been the wisdom of God. He knew what was before the Church in the way of clergy. We have how Timothy was to behave himself in the house of God, to have it in order: as to elders, deacons, widows, etc., 2 Timothy altered no principle as to ministry, as 1 Timothy established none; it gives individual guidance in the last days and perilous times when the Church should be in disorder.

Mr. Innes, I cannot help saying, shews much ignorance on scripture questions, and even as to what he is attacking. He takes Bishop Lloyd's chronology for gospel as to the date of the two epistles to Timothy, and even founds on it his argument as to the differences he supposes we make between the two. I do not pretend to decide any question in so intricate a matter as chronology, still less so vexed a question as that of the two Timothys. Some have thought the second the earlier: I cannot conceive why, I confess. At any rate it involves the question of Paul's release from captivity, on which volumes have been written. He speaks in 2 Timothy of events which it is impossible to find in the history of the Acts. Hence they are to be supposed to have happened after the end of that history. Thus he had left Trophimus sick at Miletus, but when last at Jerusalem, Trophimus was there, and he did not touch at Miletus on his way to Rome. On the other hand, in Acts

20, at Miletus he did not expect to see their face again. However, now (in 2 Tim.) he saw his end to be close. In Philippians he expects to get free from his first captivity, and in Philemon tells him to prepare a lodging. It would rather seem that 2 Timothy is the very latest of all his epistles. If so, it is at least four years later than the first, for we have four years of imprisonment in the Acts, perhaps eight or ten or more later, unless the first was written after getting free from his first imprisonment, which is full of difficulty if we take Acts 20 as a divinely given presentiment; but this is partly met by the direction to Philemon to prepare a lodging. These questions I do not pretend to solve here.

On the face of the epistles, one gives us the order of God's house, the other tells of departure and perilous times; all the beloved ones of Asia, whose order he had established, had turned away from him, and, while insisting more than ever on Christian courage, grief comes out in every passage. The scriptures and immediate apostolic teaching are the resource when the power of godliness was gone and its form there, and the house, once set as the pillar and ground of the truth, had become a great house full of vessels to dishonour from which a man had to purge himself, as well as to honour. Nor has Mr. Innes paid attention to the directions of this last epistle touching the last and perilous days. To this I beg his attention, and that of every one who may deign to read these pages. The second epistle to Timothy states that in the last days perilous times shall come, which it describes, when there would be a form of godliness denying the power of it. 2 Timothy does not contemplate the godly order of the first epistle, but a state of things in the professing

church analogous to the state of the heathen as described in the epistle to the Romans. And it does direct us to have done with it. “From such turn away.” It is not a question of breaking up the Church. Alas! what Mr. Innes calls the Church is breaking up by its own decrepitude, by the contradictory principles it contains within itself and by the absence of all power of self-government, leaving us exposed to, or rather dragging us unto, the deadly evil of popery and infidelity; so that we have to enquire where the resource of the individual is when he has to turn away. In 2 Timothy that resource is declared to be in the scriptures, not in the professing church, and not in the clergy. If Mr. Innes cannot find out the difference between the directions for godly order (1 Tim.), and the directions to individuals when false profession has brought in perilous times in 2 Timothy, his position must have singularly blinded his eyes.

Nor is this all. In chapter 2 we have a totally changed state of the Church contemplated. In the beginning of the Acts we read, “The Lord added to the Church57 daily such as should be saved.” To that one well-known assembly at Jerusalem, where the whole Church then was, souls were added. In 2 Timothy how different the language! False doctrines are overthrowing the faith of some; but the sure foundation of God abides. There is this comfort: “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” They may not be brought out into the blessed unity of a manifested assembly as at the first; they may be hidden in the recesses of Rome, or the dark ignorance of Greece; but the Lord knows them, and that is a comfort.

But there is a direction addressed to our responsibility also. “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ58 depart from iniquity.” If a godly man thinks it iniquity to

say that a person has received the Holy Ghost, perhaps from an unconverted man, so as to have the power of forgiving sins, and such like—if his conscience tells him it is iniquity to establish crowds of unconverted men who hate the gospel, as ministers of God in parishes, what is he to do? Mr. Innes may call it breaking up the Church, but the word of God commands him to depart from iniquity.

But while this is a direction of the plainest kind for individual conscience, the passage in 2 Timothy goes farther. The apostle gives what I may call ecclesiastical teaching. When the Church becomes a great house, we must expect this evil. In a great house there are all kinds of vessels, and some to dishonour too. What is to be done? The great house is Christendom: no one thinks of leaving this. We turn neither heathens, nor Jews, nor Mahommedans, we renounce not Christian profession, but are called to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonour who are in Christendom. Mr. Innes may object to this, and call it breaking up the Church; but the word of God directs us to purge ourselves from these, and we must follow it. But if Mr. Innes cannot see the difference between this and the beautiful order of God's house as depicted in 1 Timothy, I repeat, his position must have sadly blinded his eyes.

A divinely appointed ministry is then not only admitted but insisted on, in contrast with the apostate and antichristian principle of a clergy which calls the blessed action of the Holy Ghost, and what is admitted to be such, irregular, and puts a human establishment in its place. The first epistle of Timothy does not speak of the appointment of ministry, nor does the second epistle take it away. A divinely appointed ministry subsists to

this day. The first epistle of Timothy shews the order of the house of God, the second epistle tells us what to do in the perilous times of the last days, when we have to say, “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” There was order in 1 Timothy. There is disorder everywhere now. The clergy mean that the title to ministry depends not on gifts and teaching the truth, but on human establishment, in the immensely vast majority, of unconverted men by unconverted men. The Romish priest or Greek pope is a clergyman. So is Mr. Innes. Mr. Innes is bound to own as a brother minister an ordained man who teaches the contrary of what Paul taught. Why? Because he is a clergyman. But he cannot own the one sent of God as a brother minister, because he is a clergyman. He may condescend to own from on high the Holy Ghost’s irregular labourers. Let him not be offended by my referring to Romish priests as clergymen. So far does this principle of clergy go that, if a Romish priest came over to the Anglican body to-morrow, he is owned as in holy orders and a fellow-clergyman. If the greatest instrument God had in the world, who was not a clergyman, were to come, he could not be owned. It is this horrible wickedness that I reject, and from which I withdraw, the principle of clergy; and I do so, just because I believe in a divinely appointed ministry. I know there are good men among the clergy, and I love them; but the system is a denial of the Holy Ghost and His work, and a substitution of man in His place. Nor did I ever see one who was a good man, who had not suffered in his soul by being of the clergy, by falsifying his conscience in solemn things.

A few words will suffice for Mr. Innes’s select passages. He tells us Christ ordained twelve apostles. No doubt:

what Christ ordained, we own of course. Yet even this most assuredly was not the Christian commission, nor the Church of God. When they were sent out, they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles or to any but Jews; they would not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man were come. Is this what Mr. Innes presents to us as ministry in the Church? It was after Christ's death and resurrection that they received their commission for the world, and were then told to tarry at Jerusalem till endowed with power from on high. It is in this character accordingly Paul owns them as apostles in their church character. "He ascended up on high and gave gifts unto men, and he gave some apostles," etc. But it is natural for those imbued with the idea of clergy to overlook all the doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

As to the seventy being deacons, it is a new notion, not, if I am not mistaken, very long got up, and as absurd as it is new, or, if indeed not new, an old absurdity. "The seven "are not called deacons, but Mr. Innes cannot reject their being so, for the Anglican Service for the ordination of deacons treats them as such, and they are generally so accounted; they were to serve tables, as contrasted with the word; as every one knows, they were the ministering servants of the Church. The seventy were sent before Christ's face, wherever He was coming, as a last warning to Israel, on Christ's last journey up to Jerusalem, to warn their cities that the kingdom of God was come unto them, the devils being subject to them as a testimony (Luke 10:9, 11, 17). No one, I conceive, but a clergyman, could have dreamed of connecting this with deacons. I am aware that the idea has been put forth by a Scotch Episcopal examining

chaplain of the name of Farquhar: whether he is the father of the bright idea, I know not.

The next proof is that the apostles ordained a successor to Judas (Acts 1). This is an unfortunate example. Peter takes up Psalm 109 to shew that the word of God expressly taught that another was to take his office; of ordination there is nothing. “Ordained “is an interpolation, with what good faith others must judge. All that is said is “must be a witness.” They (the hundred and twenty it would appear, for no others are spoken of in the plural) set forth two as answering Peter’s description, and then they cast lots which it was to be (after the Jewish manner, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given), and he was numbered with the twelve. The choice was given to the Lord by lot, and there was no ordination of any kind, nothing regular.

Deacons are set apart, if so we are to call them, to serve tables, that others might give themselves up to the ministry of the word. Was this setting apart to rule and teach, ordaining to serve that others might have full time for teaching? It is the only express case of laying on of hands for office we have in the New Testament. True, some of them who had gift became “irregular labourers”; but no wit, even of a clergyman, can make out of it an ordination to rule and to teach. We read that they that use the office of service well, would acquire a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus, would be efficient irregular labourers, as Philip and Stephen were in Jerusalem and Samaria, and in the desert of Gaza, according to the power of the Spirit of God.

In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas chose elders (“ordained “is really a false translation), who ruled in a true

scriptural sense; but of teaching there is no question. There is no doubt that the apostle appointed several elders as overseers or bishops, by the authority of the Holy Ghost, in churches which he founded. I say, “by the authority of the Holy Ghost,” because in Acts 20 Paul says of the elders of Ephesus, “the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.” They were to “shepherd” the flock of God (“feed” is a different word). It is poimainein, not boskein. Yet, as we have seen, it was desirable they should be apt to teach; and in such case they doubtless did so; but we also know, by the same apostle, that some did not.

As to Timothy’s being the first bishop of Ephesus, it is a mere fable. Every one who has enquired into these things knows that the superscriptions of the epistles have no authority whatever. Some, as on the face of it 1 Corinthians, are notoriously false. All of them were sentences tacked on by late copyists. But Acts 20 is a clear proof that Timothy was not so; for the apostle calls for the elders of Ephesus on his last voyage; and there is not the smallest hint of any Timothy, or any other bishop. On the contrary, language is used which excludes such an idea. “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops”; and then he commends them to God, and the word of His grace. It is not merely the word bishop applied to them, though it does shew those whom he owned as alone made their “bishops “by the Holy Ghost, but he looks to them as the ones to watch for themselves and all the flock, and the fancied bishop is ignored in the most absolute and unceremonious way. No man in his senses can suppose that there was another superior functionary to whom the chief care of the flock was

entrusted. Besides, Timothy, and so Titus, was called away when his special service was ended. They were employed as confidential agents by the apostle to complete needed order in new churches, but permanent bishoprics they had none. Gifted saints they were, and the apostle's own sons in the faith, in whom the apostle, as he declares, reposed especial confidence.

As regards "the angel of the church," who told Mr. Innes that he was the presiding officer? It is quite certain that, where all is plainly stated, there were several presiding officers or elders. The angel in the Jewish synagogue was not the presiding officer; this is well known. If the angel was the presiding officer, that is, if the original constitution of the churches had been changed, the Spirit of God would not own directly and openly any such change from His own constitution, but give a symbolical name. And it was when the Church had left its first love, and was already threatened with having the candlestick removed; while its history is preserved till, having had opportunity to repent, it had not done so, and was threatened with the sorest judgments on one hand, and on the other was found pretending to be rich, and was just about to be spued out of Christ's mouth. I do not believe that the angel was a presiding officer, but a symbolical representative of the Church viewed in those responsible in it. For this reason, that is the way the plural is used in Smyrna, Thyatira, and the interchange of it with the singular, as in chapter 2:10, 24, so indeed the language to Pergamos and to Philadelphia— in truth, I might say, to all the churches, makes it impossible to apply it to an individual presiding officer, and obliges us to see a symbolical representative of the Church. This is certain that, if it was a single

presiding officer, the Holy Ghost would not own him as such, by any direct name of office, and it was so only when the Church had left her first love, and was now threatened with being cut off.

I cannot enter into a discussion of the interpretation of the seven churches here; but the plain declarations of scripture present several bishops in a Church, never one. That this crept in early no one denies, when all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But it is certain that it was not so at first. Acts 20 demonstrates the contrary; and we have the best ecclesiastical authority, Jerome, confirmed by other so-called Fathers, telling us that there was no such difference in the beginning, no such presiding officer, but that it was introduced for peace' sake, when the presbyters or elders began to seek to make separate parties for themselves. Clement, the earliest post-scriptural authority we have, knows only presbyters in Corinth, and if we have Ignatius, who boasts abundantly of them, we have not only interpolations, but forgeries, as has been fully proved, to make good the ambition of men. It is a sad history, but a predicted one. Paul's remedy for the very case Jerome speaks of was not Jerome's: of this the papal abominations have been the gradual and legitimate growth. Of this we have too many remains (in the pretension to confer the Holy Ghost in priesthood, which as a distinct order is the denial of Christianity, in priestly absolution, in baptismal making members of Christ, where episcopacy prevails, to say nothing of making the whole population the Church), to feel any confidence in substituting such presiding officer for the word of God, to which Paul commends us in the perilous times of the last days, and for the Holy Ghost by whom

alone the humble soul can rightly use it, and who alone can give a true and effectual ministry.

For my own part, then, I am so far from rejecting a divinely-given ministry, that it is because I believe in one that I reject the clergy, which is not a divinely-given one but the fruit of the Church's departure from the faith. I beg Mr. Innes to believe that I have no enmity against him or any godly member of the body he belongs to. I receive them as members of the body of Christ; but in these last days, these perilous times, we are forced to see where the sure foundation is. Paul, that is, the Holy Ghost, assures us it is in the scriptures, not in the professing body. This would come, and it has come, to have the form of godliness and to deny the power of it. The part of the professing body he belongs to is of all others a scene of confusion and incompetency which confounds beholders. Presbyterianism—with its deserted Kirk, and United Presbyterians, and Free Kirk almost split upon the point of which they would unite with—has little to boast over it. I assure him that I say it with profound and unfeigned sorrow. The breaking up of these protestant bodies will only let in, and is letting in, popery and infidelity; and I have not one atom of sympathy with the worldly-minded ambitious dissenters who are joining papists and infidels in seeking to pull it down. I must leave all this in God's wise and holy hand.

But saints must in such a time look for some sure foundation. They have it, thank God, in the word of God, in the faithfulness of the true and exalted Head of the Church, soon coming to take us to Himself and set all things right in heaven and in earth—blessed time to think of! They have the Spirit of God to guide and help them if they are humble, and provision in the word of

God for the very times we are in, moral provision for godly rule and order when official has been perverted and corrupted; not, perhaps, the order of the external Church restored, but the presence and faithfulness of Him who can never fail it, an ark of God which, if its ordered place was in the midst of the camp, can go a three-days'-journey in condescending grace before the host, to find in the wilderness a place where we may rest.

I have done. The clergy I reject, because the system denies in principle and fact the title and prerogatives of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, the unity of the body, and the gifts by which Christ, its Head, edifies the Church and calls sinners; and it has substituted geographical divisions for faith, or sectional membership for membership of the body of Christ—has substituted human arrangement of one kind and another for a divinely-given ministry. There is no scriptural ground of any kind for church membership other than the unity of the body of Christ; none for a pastor and his flock; none for the divisions which have resulted from the attempts to rebuild the church when, three hundred years ago, excessive ecclesiastical corruption in the great professing body led masses, under God's mercy, to break loose from its galling and degrading chains. But the energy of faith which brought about that result has passed away, and the result is fallen into decrepitude, giving occasion to the energetic recrudescence of popery and the widespread influence of pretentious intellect and infidelity. It is under this we are now suffering; but we are forewarned in the word.

I cannot close this without pressing on my reader's attention, though briefly, the warnings I allude to. We

have the solemn declaration in Romans 11 that if the Gentile Christendom, which has taken the place of Judaism, did not continue in God's goodness, it should be cut off. Has it so continued? Was popery continuing in God's goodness? If not, Christendom will be cut off, Laodicea spued out of God's mouth, as Thyatira punished with grievous plagues, both to give place, as you may see, to the throne and sceptre of Christ, and, it is added in Thyatira, heavenly possession of "the morning star." The mystery of iniquity, begun in the apostles' days, would continue till it resulted in open apostasy, and the man of sin to be destroyed at Christ's coming. Evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse.

Is there fear then for the saints? None—not more than for the saints of Judaism, who, when it fell, were transferred into the Church of God. But their external props will fail them; they will have to walk by faith as they were ever called to do. The Lord is coming, according to His promises, to receive them to Himself that where He is they may be also. He will gather the wheat, not into a church on earth as the remnant of Judaism, but into the heavenly garner. Meanwhile they have the word of God, and the Spirit of God; God Himself and the word of His grace; a word able to make them wise unto salvation. Let them recognize every gift God gives for yet calling sinners, or edifying His saints. These will continue in virtue of the faithfulness of Christ Himself, till all the work He has to do is done. The denial of gifts is the denial of the sovereign title of the Holy Ghost, and of Christ's authority in the Church, just as the clergy is.

Appointment to office is lost, the Church on earth being in confusion and ruin. If elders are to be appointed, I ask, not only who is to appoint them with authority (and there is no one), but where is the church over which they are to be appointed? A sectional body may choose for itself, an act of mere human will; but they can have no authority beyond the will of those who have chosen them. They cannot be what elders were in the early Church—bishops whom the Holy Ghost appointed over the flock of God. It is a mere unlicensed powerless imitation by human will over a little self-constituted corner of the church, perhaps indeed of the world. But scripture has provided for this case also, not officially, but morally, not only in the gift to rule, but in faithful service. (See 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:17.) In none of these is official authority given as the ground of subjection and obedience. It is an exhortation involving the spiritual state and duty of the saints themselves, founded on moral grounds, always true and available, and which, if the sorrowful need arise for it, can be enforced by the saints themselves according to 2 Thessalonians 3:14-16, and Romans 16:17, 18.

My object now is not to enlarge on this. I notice it only to shew that the blessed Lord has provided in His word even for the ruin in which our unfaithfulness has involved the Church. Only I beseech every saint to look in the face the confusion and ruin which exists, to see how surely we are in the perilous times of the last days, to be ready for the Lord, loins girded and lights burning, waiting for God’s Son from heaven; to arise and trim their lamps, and to see what is the sure foundation of God which will abide, and thus build up according to the grace given to them, and leave to the enemies of the

Lord and the selfishness of men and sects to pull down. We shall have enough to do in these days to deliver souls from abounding error, and help them in the path of grace and peace. Only may they remember that, wherever there is a priesthood, save that of all children of God, there is the denial of Christianity. A priest means one who goes to God for you—is between you and God. Christianity is the blessed truth that the veil is rent, and that through the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ we can go boldly into the holiest ourselves, that through Him we have ourselves access by one Spirit unto the Father. An ordained consecrated priesthood is the denial of true Christianity.

Since writing the above, a Montreal episcopal journal has reported Mr. Hooke's teaching a number of doctrines against which it warns its renders. Most of the statements are unfounded; the principal one arises from the ignorance of the writer, who evidently does not know what justification is, and is the result of confounding the perfect putting away of sin by Christ for us, and the absence of sin in the individual. But the statements do not deserve any further notice.

51 The Presbyterians and Lutherans also teach that a child is born again in baptism. Only the Presbyterians confine it to the elect.

52 Mr. Mackintosh's words are these: "It was a real human body— real flesh and blood. There is no possible foundation here on which Gnosticism or Mysticism can base its vapid and worthless theories. The early promise had declared that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and none but a real man could accomplish this prediction, one whose nature was as

pure as it was incorruptible," and he continues largely to the same purpose. This was not only published before the attack was made, but is in the publication which forms the subject of accusation.

53 My words in "Brethren and their Reviewers" are these: "A man is held to be righteous in God's sight. Here it is the estimate God forms judicially, not the intrinsic state. If the state be such, He will hold it such; but this is impossible for sinful men. Hence if a man partakes of the divine nature, loves righteousness, and, as to the new nature, nothing else, yet relatively and judicially because of the old man he cannot pretend to be, is not in himself, truly righteous in God's sight, because of what he is.

"Because of Christ God holds him relatively and judicially to be perfectly righteous, according to His own divine estimate: righteousness is imputed to him."

54 I have met providentially with an unlooked-for confirmation of what I have here said as to other Christians, in "The Worship of the Presbyterian Church, by Samuel Miller, D.D., extracted by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia"; so that it is accepted so far by the Presbyterian body:—

"The Lord's prayer, given at the request of the disciples, forms no objection to this conclusion. It was evidently not intended to be used as an exact, and far less as an exclusive, form. It is not given in the same words by any two of the evangelists. As it was given before the New Testament Church was set up, so it is strictly adapted to the old rather than to the new economy. It contains no clause asking for blessings in the name of Christ, which the Saviour Himself afterwards solemnly enjoined as

indispensable. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, when the New Testament Church was set up, we read nothing more in the inspired history of this form. And it is not till several centuries after the apostolic age that we find this prayer statedly introduced into public worship. Accordingly it is remarkable, that Augustine in the fourth century expresses the decisive opinion 'that Christ intended this prayer as a model rather than a form; that he did not mean to teach his disciples what words they should use in prayer, but what things they should pray for.'"

Poor unhappy Augustine!

55 I cannot stop to notice the wild fanaticism of those who pretend that we are all come to a perfect man, etc.: they are the striking proof that we are not.

56 'Ordained' is a mere ecclesiastical perversion. In Acts 1:22 it is a wilful interpolation; all that is in the Greek is "must one be a witness."

57 [Or "together" (which comes to the same thing in effect) according to the more ancient MSS.—Ed.]

58 [Rather, "the Lord," which only strengthens the case, as it is the best supported and the most appropriate reading.—Ed.]

What The Christian Has Amid The Ruin Of The Church;

Being a Reply to certain Articles in the Jamaica Magazine There is no harm done by the renewed attacks, made in various places, on those called Plymouth Brethren. It furnishes an occasion to bring scriptural truth before those who are honest enough to hear what they have to say. The questions stirred in the Jamaica Magazine have been discussed long ago in Switzerland, and quite recently in Canada. But Jamaica Christians know little of what passes in Switzerland, and not much of what passes in Canada. The papers in the Jamaica Magazine cannot be charged with being intemperate or abusive. They have taken their account of Brethren’s principles at second-hand, and, save a few important elements, that account is quite false; but I have no reason to suppose any bad faith as to what they have borrowed.

It gives an occasion to state more correctly what the “Brethren” attacked do hold, or, rather, what scripture teaches on the subject, which is the only really important point, and, as to that, the principles of the Jamaica Magazine are (as those of the English ecclesiastical system) wholly at variance with scripture, as I shall shew. Colonial ecclesiastical polity is, however, in theory, and in many places in practice, different from English ecclesiastical polity. Where democracy prevails, it enters practically into the church system, and the ecclesiastical polity has to be made popular. It is not so in England.

Here are the Jamaica Magazine's views on the subject: "There are three conditions commended to us by apostolic precedent which are necessary to the proper adjustment of the respective relations of laity and clergy in the church. The first is that the lay element shall have a free share in the deliberative assemblies of the church; secondly, that ministers should not be placed over a church without the consent of the members; and thirdly, that the whole body (not the clerical element only) shall have the power of inflicting church censures. All history teaches that, where this has been exercised by the clergy exclusively and without control, the result has been an oppressive spiritual despotism."

Now I do not agree with all this; but where were our adversary's wits in writing it? Not one of these elements is found in the Establishment of England. They are wholly absent, wholly excluded, so that the system is not commended by apostolic precedent, and the result has been an oppressive spiritual despotism. Such is the Magazine's judgment of the English Establishment. It is contrary to apostolic precedent, and is a spiritual despotism. Now the question with me lies far, far deeper. I do not think it has resulted in England in a spiritual despotism, but in a total incapacity to act. It has not the spiritual despotism of popery, nor the popular democratic energy of dissent. It is governed, even in doctrinal points, by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, who have decided that no clergyman is bound to hold the inspiration of the scriptures, or eternal punishment: on which decision the clergy are freely acting, and no one can tell what they hold. One judge holds they may have lighted candles in the daytime; another, that they cannot; and the Privy Council has now

to decide.59 The truth is, being tied to the State, the episcopal body has no autonomy, no power of self-government whatever; and the popish clerical principle struggles against the government of the Church by the State, so as to threaten a separation within the ecclesiastical body, and nobody knows where it will end. The controversial articles were framed against popery. Other and vital questions, really infidel notions, have now sprung up; there is no power to deal with them, because the ecclesiastical body can do nothing. The courts will decide, taking the Thirty-nine Articles as law. But questions vital to the Church of God are not touched on in the Thirty-nine Articles—many that are raised now are not, and the ecclesiastical courts have no law to go by, and everybody holds what he likes, is an open infidel if he pleases, and remains a prelate in the system, and defies them all; as Dr. Colenso, and plenty of the inferior clergy less generally known. It is not spiritual despotism, as the Puseyites perhaps might wish, but a tending to utter dissolution, from want of bands and self-controlling power; a state of things which may now perhaps soon cease by the progress of democratic principles abolishing the Establishment as such altogether. It will then split or become Puseyite, as now threatens the system in the United States. But this is for England a revolution, to which I have nothing to say, in which I have no pleasure; but which is in the hands of a wise and holy God, who will make all things work together for good to those who love Him. It will lead England into popery and infidelity, and, I have little doubt, lead to her losing practically her independence, and with it, in more ways than she is thinking of, what remains of her boasted national glory.

The Establishment is not a spiritual despotism, but, as every one sees, is inefficient for everything requiring self-judgment. But it is breaking up, such as it is, under the conflict of popish and protestant principles contained within it—a mixture once accounted its wisdom; pushed by infidelity it cannot meet, and the helpless object of a democratic revolution, which, as everyone sees, increases its force daily. It is strange that I should have to defend it against the charges of the Jamaica Magazine. But by the confession of the writer it is not commended by apostolic precedent; a serious thing when we speak of what is ecclesiastical. The principles would be despotic; but the control of the State has taken away the power, and with that made it inefficient for everything that is vital to a church. But the colonial or democratic theory of the lay and clerical element supposes the clergy, and this is the real point. But it depends on a more fundamental one: What is the Church?

These are the questions we have to solve: What is the Church? What is the ministry? And now to clear the way by correcting several mistakes. As far as I can answer for “Brethren’s” views, and certainly I can state my own, I do not deny a human ministry. I hold to it as God’s ordinance, as an essential part of Christianity. The word of reconciliation is committed to men, and if in the highest sense this were apostolic, still there are gifts, “evangelists, pastors and teachers, till we all come,” etc. The question is as to the scriptural character of this. Again, I fully recognize that there was an- organization in apostolic and scriptural times, but affirm that what exists now is not the scriptural organization at all, but mere human invention, each sect arranging itself

according to its own convenience, so that, as an external body, the Church is ruined; and though much may be enjoyed of what belongs to the Church, I believe from scripture that the ruin is without remedy, that the professing church will be cut off. I believe that there is an external professing Christendom, holding a most important and responsible place, and which will be judged and cut off for its unfaithfulness.

The true body of Christ is not this. It is composed of those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, who, when the professing church is cut off, will have their place with Him in heaven. It is the Church Catechism, not the Plymouth Brethren so called, which confounds these two things when it says, “Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” But the Church, as we find it in scripture, was externally one united organized body; that is, Christians were one set of people, known as such on earth; and elders were locally appointed to guide and oversee—at any rate among the Gentile churches, for any formal appointment is not so clear among the Jews. But there was only one church, one assembly as a whole; and in each place one body with its elders, God’s Church in the place; and only one really in the whole world, visibly, externally one. If Paul in his day had addressed an epistle to the assembly of God which is at Kingston, there would have been no question as to who would have received it; if he addressed one now, there is no such body to get it; it must go to the dead letter office. Membership of a church is a thing unknown to scripture; what scripture speaks of is a member of Christ, as of one body, a hand, an eye, etc.

It is not that there was no organization. There was, but it was not a number of voluntary self-constituted sects as now. God's organization is lost in the world, supplanted for centuries by popery. Men have escaped from the horrors of this, each in his own direction: first, in national churches formed by the civil magistrate—a thing unknown till the Reformation; and then, when this was judged unscriptural, diverging into countless sects, each organizing itself in its own way, and having its own members. This kind of organization, which is wholly contradictory of the scriptural one, is what we reject; and we do not pretend to begin and found the Church over again, but believe that scripture gives us full guidance in these last and perilous days for the position which the general ruin, fully prophesied of in the New Testament, has brought us into. There are saints scattered in all denominations holding the faith of God's elect. But Christ gave Himself to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. Why are they scattered now? They were to be one that the world might believe. Now they are the scorn of men for their divisions. The Church, as responsible on earth, is in ruins; its organizations, for they are many, are not God's. Paul could not anywhere call for the elders of the Church, and say to them, "The flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Where that exists, I will joyfully fly to submit myself to it.

I will not refer to Acts 2 and 4 to shew how fearfully we are departed from our first estate, solemn as the testimony is. When the Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost, He formed the Church into one body. That, we know from the Acts, was the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost. And we learn from 1 Corinthians 12 that by

one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. Now that this body was a public, manifested, external, perfectly united body, is manifest from the chapter. One could not say to the other, I have no need of thee; if one member suffered, all did; if one was honoured, all rejoiced. The various gifts were various members of this body, the Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He would; and there were diversities of administrations, but one Lord. The gifts were set in the Church (the whole body). There were gifts of healing, and tongues, and interpreters of tongues. All this is on earth; it has no sense at all save as applied to the Church on earth. Individuals might pass out, as soldiers who had served their time, others be recruited into it; but it remained the army—the one Church on earth—by one uniting Spirit; the body of Christ as manifested on earth, with apostles, prophets, helps, governments, healings, tongues, in it as a whole, given as the Holy Ghost willed.

This is incontrovertible. Whatever may have become of it afterwards, this was God's institution, the one manifested body, with its various gifts or members. If I am told, It will be perfect as the body of Christ in heaven. Be it so. I bless God for it. I believe the end of Ephesians 1 shews that it is to be so. But this does not set aside 1 Corinthians 12, that it was established as one, known, visible body on earth. If I am told on the other hand, That did not last; it was but a momentary expression of power which passed away. Although, as to external unity, this is hardly true until the middle of the third century, when the Novatians sprang up through the dreadful corruptions of the professing body admitted and described by Cyprian, yet substantially I do not deny it. The apostle says, the mystery of iniquity did already

work (2 Thess. 2); that all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2); and he tells us (Acts 20) that after his decease grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock; and that from within also perverse men would arise to draw away the disciples after them. As long as apostolic energy remained, though the evil was there, it was met and restrained; but after that was gone, after his decease, the evil would break out and in; for he knows no apostolic succession, but that his absence would open the door to the activity of evil. And he tells us prophetically that in the last days perilous times would come; there would be a form of godliness, denying the power thereof: from such he who had an ear to hear was to turn away.

But 1 Corinthians 12 fully describes the original constitution of the Church as the body of Christ on the earth, God's constitution. If that has passed away, then God's orderly constitution of the body of Christ on earth has passed away through the sin of man. The wolf has come and scattered the sheep, because the shepherds were hirelings. Let no saint fear because of this, for no man can pluck them out of the great Shepherd's hand; but the sheep have been scattered, viewed as a flock.60 We forget that we have passed through the dark ages of popery, the corruptest and foulest evil, under the name of His Church, that ever God's holy eye rested on.

But who can say that we are arrived at the last time? The Apostle John can. Already, he says, there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. So Peter: "The time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God." Jude tells us he was compelled to write of the evil already crept in, the very persons as a class that would be judged by Christ as corrupters and

adversaries when He appeared. In the seven churches we And Christ judging the state into which the churches had got. Has the Church improved since? Let the dark ages tell the tale; and divided, infidel, bewildered Protestantism!

Nor let the Christian be astonished that the failure began so soon. It has been always so. God's patient love has borne and saved, yea known seven thousand, that one, who was faithful enough to go to heaven without death, could not find; but the external state of things was under the corruption of evil, and the time come for judgment. The first thing we read of man, after his being placed in paradise, is his fall; no child was born to an innocent Adam. The first thing we read after Noah's altar of thanksgiving is his being drunk; the reins of government entrusted to him were loosed, and scandal and shame and the curse came in. The first thing we have after God spoke out of the midst of the fire to Israel, before Moses came down, is that Israel made the golden calf. The written law never reached man in its own simple character: he had broken it already. The tables were smashed at the foot of the mountain and never came into the camp! How could they come beside a golden calf? The first day of service after their consecration the sons of Aaron offered strange fire, and Aaron never went into the holiest in his robes of glory and beauty! (See Lev. 16.) The first son of David turned to idolatry, and the kingdom was ruined. The Gentile king, to whom power was transferred, made his golden image, and got a beast's heart; and the whole times of the Gentiles were characterized by this.

I do not doubt that all pictured here—man, law, priesthood, son of David, rising to reign over the

Gentiles—will be, or is in some measure accomplished in the second Adam, the Christ; but that is another matter, most interesting, but which I cannot follow here. As entrusted to man's responsibility, everything set up by God has failed; that is, man has failed in it and failed immediately. The Church as the body of Christ on earth is not an exception, and if in John's time there were many antichrists so that they knew it was the last time, and Peter declares that the time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and Paul that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, it was nothing new; it was the sad course of man with everything God had entrusted to him. The first man is the failing man. But this does not alter the fact that God made man upright, nor that the Church as the body of Christ was set up in unity, with all the gifts needed by it, and suited to its good and prosperity, as 1 Corinthians 12 bears witness, and that it has sunk down into popery, divisions, and infidelity. No so-called church can pretend to be the body of Christ now; the one universal Church as described in scripture was then. They have no pretensions to be an unfallen body.

My reader may remark, though we shall come to ministry just now, that in the very full list of gifts for the ministration of all blessing in the body, given in the chapter referred to, neither bishops nor deacons appear. Nor do they in Ephesians 4, where the gifts for the permanent edification of the body and perfecting of the saints are spoken of; but of this anon. The Church was established as the body of Christ, one in the earth: no such body or unity can be found now. It is in ruin.

But the Church thus formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven has another character in scripture—

the house or temple of God. And this is presented in a twofold way, which I beg my reader to remark: one infallibly secure, Christ's own work not yet finished; the other connected with man's responsibility, a present thing on earth.

Let us see what the word of God says on the subject. "Thou art Peter [a stone], and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here we have Christ building, and no power of Satan shall hinder His building it up to completion. In this building Christ is the Builder, and in the work no human instrumentality is ever spoken of. Peter tells us, "Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also as living stones are built up." Men may minister the word, but the work is Christ's (man disappears) "unto whom coming ye are built up." The work of building is not man's, and the building is not finished yet. Living stones may be added from day to day till the top-stone is laid on. This in a certain sense is invisible, an individual work to produce a temple at the end. So Paul: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." It grows up by grace; it is not finished. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament were laid as the foundation, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. The apostles are stones, not workmen.

But in 1 Corinthians 3 we have another aspect of the house: "As a wise master-builder," says the apostle, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." Here man is builder, and man's responsibility immediately comes in. We have a visible external building—" Ye are God's building"; but, though such,

man was the builder; he might build in gold, silver, precious stones. All well. But he might build in wood, hay, stubble, and his work be good for nothing, and be all burnt up and destroyed. Three cases are supposed here. The first is where the builder and his work are good: both of course are owned. Secondly, where the workman is true, but the work bad: he is saved and his work destroyed. Thirdly, there is a corrupter: he is destroyed himself, by God, as evil. Here I have not all perfect, fitly framed together, growing to an holy temple, Christ being the Builder; but men the builders, a present building seen on earth, called God's building, but liable to have all sorts of stuff built in, yea, to be corrupted by those who intend evil. Has nothing of this happened?

I do not doubt Christ will have in the end His holy temple; that what He builds will never be thrown down, but grow to an holy temple; that it is in this character an invisible—not Church, indeed, as a present ordered thing, for it is not yet complete, but a work to form it such going on, the living stones added; growing up, in spite of the gates of hell, to be a holy temple, I do not deny. In that temple I trust I am, by grace, a stone; I trust our critics are too. But what we have to deal with responsibly—what occupies us now—is what man has built; not the invisible Church which Christ builds—this is sure to be perfect; but what men, since Paul the wise master-builder, have built or even corrupted; what you are building who call yourselves the Church of England, or the Presbyterians, or the Independents, or Wesleyans, or the Baptists, who are all very visible indeed. Is your building such as a responsible man down here can own? I do not doubt for a moment there are living stones in all of them, whom Christ will have in His temple, and has

placed there already— beloved brethren, whom I own cordially and joyfully as such; members of that Church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, and whom, as part of it, He will present to Himself glorious. I rejoice with all my heart to think so, and am assured it is so. But you see, Mr. Editor, I do distinguish between you and what Christ is building for final presentation to Himself; and my responsibility attaches, as to present church questions, not to my relationship to the invisible Church, but how far the word permits me to own you, and the various sects which have split off from you, who are not, and do not pretend to be, that invisible Church.

And here another part of scripture comes in. If corruption has set in, as we have seen it had in the apostles' days, and the state of the Church has to be judged, and every one that has an ear is to hear what the Spirit says to him, have we no scriptural directions for such a time? We have. 2 Timothy treats of this time of confusion and evil, as 1 Timothy of the order of the visible Church. In 2 Timothy 2 I read, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." This supposes, in a great measure, at any rate, that the true Church, the members of Christ, are invisible. The Lord knows them. It was not so originally. In the beginning, "the Lord added to the church [together] such as should be saved." They are publicly manifested as added to the Christian Church, the assembly at Jerusalem. Now we read, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." We admit then the invisibility, of, at any rate, many members of Christ. The Lord knows them. But is that all? No, we have to do with the visible profession, and the Spirit of God continues, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [the

Lord] depart from iniquity." Whatever is iniquity I must depart from, and surely not least in the house of God. This is the responsible side of the seal. With the Lord's knowing them that are His I can no further meddle than to bow to it as a truth. But the second part directs me as to my path in the visible Church—those who name the name of Christ: I am to depart from iniquity. But there is, further, what I may call ecclesiastical direction. In a great house I am to expect vessels to dishonour, and I am to purge myself from them, that I may be a vessel to honour, fit for the Master's use. I am to make the difference in the great house between one vessel and another, and follow faith, charity, patience, with those who call upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. Thus, when the Church is become like a great house, I am to act individually, as to avoiding evil, and seek the pure in heart to walk with them. And, in the third chapter, where there is the form of piety, denying the power, I am told "from such turn away."

It is in vain to tell me I am not to judge. I am called on to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, bound to depart from iniquity, bound to purge myself from vessels to dishonour, bound to turn away from the evil vessels, bound to turn away from the form of piety in the professing body where the power is not. And though I admit that judging individual motives is condemned, yet I must judge evil for my own walk, or I cannot turn away from it. If popery be evil, I turn away; I do not judge all that are in it; I dare say some may go to heaven. I do not doubt many will from protestant sects; but if they are unscriptural, I turn away from them.

But it is really a very evil principle to say, in an absolute way, we cannot know who are Christians. Many we may

not know from the darkness and confusion which exists, and we must leave it to the judgment of God who does; but to preclude knowing any as such is a disastrous principle, because I cannot love as my brethren those whom I do not recognize as such. “By this,” says the Lord, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And they tell me I cannot know who are to be thus loved! If so, the testing proof of being Christ’s disciple is gone. Where would family affection be if we were to tell our children they could not tell who were their brothers and sisters?

But this in itself shews the total difference between the present state of things and the apostolic state sanctioned of God. There, love of the brethren as a distinct set of people, is given as a test of Christianity (see John’s epistles), as much as practical obedience and righteousness. By this “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” 1 John 3:14; so 10 and 16. “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” It was not all the world, but a known set of people. An epistle is commanded to “be read to all the holy brethren.” They were to greet one another with a holy kiss. So “all the saints salute you.” False brethren soon crept in unawares; but there were true ones among whom to creep unawares. Some apostatized and left also, that it might be made manifest they were not all of us. They were gathered in every place into an assembly, so that they could put a wicked person out from among them. No one can read the New Testament without seeing that these were a well-known distinct class of persons, known to each other, known as brethren; and he who belonged to them in one place belonged to them in all, took a letter of commendation as such if he went

where he was unknown. Among whom, as contrasted with the world, brotherly love was to continue. To say we cannot know each other, even if some are hidden, is to deny all the Christian affections to which we are bound, and to say that the whole condition of Christianity has entirely and fatally changed. There was a company of people, “their own company,” who met as a united body in the whole world, believers in Christ, though false brethren might creep in. The internal power of their unity was the Holy Ghost. It was the unity of the Spirit—one Spirit and one body. The symbol and external centre of unity was the Lord’s supper. We are all one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread; 1 Cor. 10.

Now what is the position of the English Establishment, Dissenters, and the so-called Plymouth Brethren as to this? The Magazine says the two former take people on their own profession, and that he does not know an instance where a discovered adulterer or fraudulent person has been permitted to go. But this is a very false representation of the theory of the English Establishment. They do what they accuse the Brethren of—confound the external professing body and the invisible Church in the worst way. They teach (and so does even the colonial system, though circumstances modify the state of things) that “in baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” These members of Christ, who have received, we are told, remission of sins by spiritual regeneration, are to be brought by their godfathers and godmothers to the bishop to be confirmed, so soon as they can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and have learned what is briefly set

forth in the Church Catechism. That is, they are members of Christ and children of God by baptism, and, as such, being confirmed, they are to take the Lord's supper. They are members of Christ by baptism to start with, when they know nothing about it, and are carried on to the sacrament when they have had adequate instruction. And in theory all the population are supposed to belong to it, passed over to it at the Reformation from popery, for a long time were forced to be of it, and, if they are not, it is by their own act and they are reckoned to be in schism and dissent. The way of being a member of Christ is not by faith and the Holy Ghost, not by profession, but by a sacrament! To talk of discovered adulterers, feeble and delicate as to evil as such a precaution is, is nothing to the purpose. They are made members of Christ, children of God, members of what is called the Church of England, not by faith as scripture teaches as to being a child of God, not by the baptism of the Holy Ghost as scripture teaches as to members of Christ; but by a sacrament. Discovered or undiscovered they are members of Christ without any professed faith of their own. The truth is, all the reformers held baptismal regeneration, falsely so-called, for 'regeneration' is not so used in scripture—English, Lutherans, Presbyterians, much as the last kick against the proofs of it, which are perfectly clear both in Calvin and their own symbolical books. Scottish, Dutch, and others all have the doctrine in their documents. The only difference is that the Presbyterians hold that the invisible grace is not so absolutely tied to the sign as to be true of any but the elect. But this only proves the more that they do hold it to be so conferred where it is effectual. Luther insists on it for all in his Catechism, and the English one in the worst terms possible.

Further, as distinguished from this, the gathering of companies of believers is nothing new. This all Dissenters profess to do. They may have thrown themselves into the world and politics more rabidly than the Establishment, and in a large measure fallen into rationalism; but they profess to make churches of believers, unless we except the Wesleyans who have a peculiar polity of their own. But they make churches to be voluntary associations, of which so-called churches those who associate are members—a thing wholly unknown to scripture. A member of a church is a thing unknown to scripture. All Christians are members of Christ, and there can be no other membership. We, all who have the Spirit of Christ, are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Baptism even as a figure has nothing to do with giving life, or membership. It is baptism to the death of Christ for one previously a child of sinful Adam. The Lord's supper is (besides other precious truths) the expression of the unity of the body of Christ. Every saint is a member of it; and this is the ground "Brethren" meet on, supposing of course that the person is not justly subject to discipline.

The Establishment makes all the nation (if it can) members of Christ by baptism when infants. Dissenters make members of churches by voluntary association, with various particular conditions. The so-called Plymouth Brethren recognize the one body of Christ formed by the Holy Ghost, and meet to break bread on that ground, owning no membership but that of Christ, believing that there are many in all sects who hold the doctrine of Christ, but that they meet, the national churches by a sacramental process for all the world, the dissenters as voluntary members of particular churches

formed by themselves; neither of which systems is in scripture. “Brethren” do not confound the outward professing church and that which Christ will present to Himself: the former will be judged and cut off; the latter be with Christ in heaven. But they see in scripture one recognized body on the earth. They see all to be in ruins; that, on the principles of existing professing bodies, they must continue in the Establishment, which is false in all its principles, or join one sect and not be of another—be a member of it, which is not in scripture: that the state of things is a state of ruin, but that God has provided for it in His word; and that they can meet on the ground of the unity of the body of Christ, if only two or three, and find Christ in their midst according to His promise, glad to see any child of God who is walking godlily, who calls on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. They cannot compel unity, but they can act on it. God alone, they well know, can, by making Christians unworldly and Christ precious and all to them, bring it about. But what about ministry? They are as far from the Establishment and from the denominations on this ground as on that of the unity of the body, while owning that real ministers may be found, even if in a false position. Indeed the two subjects cannot be separated. For all ministry is the exercise of the gifts which are in the members of the one body. And now I must beg to say, that what the Magazine denies is, alas! (for I say it with unfeigned sorrow) true as to the English system. It has a mediatory absolving priesthood. The deacon cannot say the Absolution, the deacon cannot consecrate the sacramental elements; it must be a priest. In the Visitation of the Sick it says, “By his authority committed unto me I absolve thee from all thy sins.” And in the Ordination of the priest it is said, “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a

priest… whose sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose sins ye retain they are retained.” Nor is this for orderly ministry; for the same man as deacon had received authority to preach the word when licensed by the bishop. Not only so: in the last Conference on the Liturgy, the Presbyterians asked that “priest” might be put out, and “minister “used throughout, and it was peremptorily refused. And where the question was of importance on the very point, it was changed from “minister” to “priest,” that there might be no mistake. Where the people are to join, as in the Lord’s Prayer, the “Amen” is printed as the prayer; but, as has been carefully noticed by liturgical authorities, in the other prayers it is printed differently that it may be understood that the priest is to say it for them as a mediator, and they are only to signify their assent by saying, “Amen”; and that it is quite out of place for them to accompany him. The English system makes an infant a member of Christ and a child of God by a sacrament, and has a priest on whom the ordaining prelate professes to confer the Holy Ghost that he may have the power to forgive sins, which accordingly, as the service reads, he does. What more could the most regular mediatorial priest do?61 The English priest forgives sins: it is the distinctive point of his ordination. The English priest says the prayers alone for the people, who are only allowed to add, “Amen.” Priesthood supposes the other worshippers cannot approach God in the sanctuary themselves; this belonged to Judaism. Ministry is the outgoing of God’s love to others through the instrumentality, according to their gift, of those who know it; this belongs, I hold, distinctively to Christianity. So far I am from denying ministry. On the continent of Europe the liberty of exercising gifts is called universal

priesthood, but the term is a blunder. Priests go to God for men, ministers to men from God. However, the principle of a universal title to minister is admitted; in theory the battle is won on this subject. Competence to do so is a question of gift.

But we have now to enquire what is the scriptural view of ministry and gifts, and whether ordination is required for their exercise. The Magazine makes the common confusion between gifts which are exercised in the whole Church, or in the world to call sinners, and local offices which might be without any gift at all, though one particular gift was perhaps desirable for one of these offices. A teacher was a teacher everywhere; an elder was an elder only in the city where he was appointed.

Let us first take the gifts. The Lord gave talents to his servants when He went away; the point of faithfulness—of being a good servant—was to use them without any further authorization. The mark of unfaithfulness was the not doing so through want of confidence in Him who gave them, and looking for some other security and warrant in doing it. Peter tells us, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,” 1 Pet. 4:10. If we do not minister the same one to another, we are bad stewards. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, gives us a full survey of the whole question. The Holy Ghost distributes to every man severally as He will, and the administration resulting from the gift is under the authority of the same Lord. Each member fills up its own place in the body—another very important truth. These gifts are set in the Church—are not local; but act as such or such a member in the whole body. He hath set in the

Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; and so on. Some have disappeared; but all are alike set in the Church, the body. A worker of miracles was not such in a particular church: he wrought them where God pleased he should, nor an apostle, nor a prophet, nor a teacher, a bit more. They were alike gifts which were set in the Church as a whole. If Apollos taught at Ephesus when there, he taught at Corinth when there; as a prophet was a prophet wherever he might be. Gifts and ministry were not localized; they were not in a church, but in the Church, and so set by God. In Ephesians 4 we have a list where, unless we except apostles and prophets (which the same epistle tells us were the foundation), the gifts are the ordinary gifts of ministry. Christ ascended up on high, and gave them (not as local offices, but) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. In Romans 12 it is the same thing. “We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching,” etc. They differ according to the grace given, they are in the one body. He who has a gift is to labour in his own gift. There is nothing local, no hint of ordination, nor of anything but the gift. In none of these passages is there a hint of any other authorization than the possession of the gift or talent; in none is there an idea of their being local, or in a church. As a man has received it, he is to minister it, to wait upon it, to trade with his talent, not to go beyond his measure; and in none of them is there a question of elders or local offices. They are exercised in

the whole Church. This is singular, if the later local system is the true, original, godly order.

But are there not elders and deacons in scripture? There are. In Acts 6 they are not called deacons, but they answer to that office, and the Anglican Services treat them as such. Now what are they? They serve tables in contrast with the ministry of the word. “It is not meet,” say the apostles, “that we should leave the word of God to serve tables; wherefore look out from 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.” That is, they are appointed to quite another business, in contrast with the minister of the word. Two out of them, to use the language of Paul, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in Christ Jesus, and set themselves of their own zeal to minister in the synagogues and elsewhere. Philip goes to Samaria, giving up consequently his office—“this business” —at Jerusalem (we afterwards find him as an evangelist); and the other five ordained to serve tables we never hear of ministering the word at all. That is, deacons were established over temporal matters that others might be free to minister the word. Two of them, gifted and earnest, set about preaching of their own movement: one certainly leaving his local office for it, and becoming an evangelist; the other, sent to heaven, the first and blessed martyr.

Ordination for the ministry of the word we have not found yet; but ordination to serve tables. The next chapter but one gives us the ministry of the word, so as to preclude all idea of ordination: “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.”

Was the whole Church ordained? But would God sanction such proceeding? I read in Acts n:21: “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.” The solitary case of Cornelius, as an all-important testimony to the principle (as to the admission of the Gentiles), excepted, the gospel to the Gentiles began and was established by the voluntary zeal of unordained men, who preached everywhere.

As to Paul, who soon appears on the scene, and stamps his charaaer on gospel activity, he is careful to tell us that not only he was not of men, but that he was not by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. But did not he ordain? For we have no hint of the twelve ordaining any but the seven to serve tables.62 First, as to the ministry of the word within, for we have seen it was wholly free without. We have that ministry carefully regulated in 1 Corinthians. Every one had a psalm, an interpretation, a doctrine; there was disorder to be corrected. I think it is evident that sometimes two spoke at once. At any rate there was disorder—a disorder impossible if the apostle, who had been some two years at Corinth, had ordained a regular ministry. The disorder was corrected, but how? Not more than two or three at the utmost were to speak, and in succession; that they might all prophesy one by one, that all might learn and all be profited. The prophets were to speak two or three, and the others judge: if they had not the gifts, of course they were to be silent; but of an ordained ministry not a hint. The use of gifts is ordered for common edification; no symptom of an ordained ministry appears. If they tell us, All gifts (teachers, pastors, evangelists), have ceased, I answer, from Ephesians 4, Then all that was

given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, has ceased. But the apostle says there they were all given till we all come to a full grown man in Christ, not blown about by every wind of doctrine.

But the directions for the exercise of gifts exclude the idea of an ordained ministry. The passages I have quoted from 1 Peter 4 and Romans 12 confirm this same truth. But do these directions exclude elders? They do not. Elders were local officers appointed by authority; for whom indeed one gift was a desirable qualification, but not indispensable. In Acts 14 they returned to the cities where they had preached, and they "ordained [chose] them elders in every church," v. 23. Gifts, we have seen, are members in the whole body. A real teacher was a teacher everywhere. An elder was chosen for a particular church. I say "chosen," for the word "ordain" is false.63 It is never said in scripture that hands were laid on them. I dare say they were, for it was the common sign of imploring and commending to blessing, or healing the sick, or conferring gifts (the last an apostolic privilege); the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the apostle's hands. But it is never said that hands were laid on elders. I think it is fairly judged to have been so; but scripture is silent as to any direct statement. God knew what the clergy would come to. But elders were chosen in every church. And the word "chosen" is of importance here; the false translation by "ordain" is a mischievous one. The people did not choose their elders. Barnabas and Paul chose them for them—cheirotonesantes autois. (Compare 2 Cor. 8:19; Acts 10:41, where "chosen" is the only possible sense.) Elders were local officers. In Acts 20 we find they were

the same as bishops, where again the English translation has hidden the fact of bishops and elders being the same by translating it (which it has not done in Phil. 1) “overseers “—an excellent word, for it tells us their office very clearly. They were overseers of God’s flock, shepherds in this sense, not ministers of the word as such. It was desirable they should be apt to teach: such divinely given power in the word evidently increased their efficiency in oversight. But all did not. They were worthy of double honour, we read in Timothy, “specially such as labour in the word and doctrine.” But this shews the ministry of the word and doctrine was a distinct thing from their office; very desirable, but not the elder’s work. The addition of this made it more efficient. Hence we see that the main qualifications for elders in Timothy and Titus are gravity, a well-ordered family, children in subjection, self-government—qualities for ruling and guiding, and such already demonstrated in practice, so that they should be shewn to be fit to guide the church. Ministers of the word might be young or not; elders and deacons were to be grave, approved, fathers of families. Elders in one place were not elders in another. Titus was to establish such in every city. Gifts were gifts everywhere. God had set them in the Church.

A few collateral proofs may be cited of this scriptural character of the ministry of the word. “Let your women keep silence in the churches.” What can such a direction as this mean if an appointed minister alone was there—“For I suffer not a woman to teach”? Here I have a limit, but not where modern theology has placed it. Again, John, in writing to the elect lady, tells her not to receive those who did not bring sound doctrine as to Christ. The

only test of preachers going about was their doctrine. Gaius did well to receive them; Diotrephes did not like it. Ministry then was gift; there was no ordination for it at all. Whoever had the gift was bound to use it— "to profit withal." The word regulated the use of these gifts as to the orderly exercise of them in the assemblies, and he who possessed one exercised it according to these rules everywhere; for there was only one body, and he was that member in it wherever he was. Elders were local officers, overseers, who might, or might not, have gifts.

But was not Timothy ordained? What is the scriptural statement, "the gift that is in thee by the laying on of my hands"? Timothy was pointed out by prophecy, and Paul conferred a gift on him by the laying on of his hands, not an office, but a gift. He had no local office; he might be left at Ephesus, as Titus was in Crete, for special purposes, as the representative of the apostle; but both he and Titus were confidential companions of the apostle: one to leave Crete and come to Nicopolis; and the other seen, soon after, in the company of the apostle elsewhere (Acts 20:4; Titus 3:12). In Timothy's case the presbytery joined in laying on of hands, not to give, but associated with Paul's communicating the gift. I know that Roman and English prelates profess to give the Holy Ghost; and, as we have seen, not for the ministry of the word, which the deacon was already called to, but to forgive sins as a priest. Are we to believe they have this apostolic power? Did the apostles ever confer it with such an object in view?

If it be asked, Why then have you not elders, official elders, if there were such in the primitive Church, even if gifts be free? the answer is, To have true elders I must

have what the apostle says, “The flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” Where is the flock of God, the one flock, so as to have elders of the assembly? In the next place, we have seen, the assembly never chose them; the apostles chose for them; as he left Titus to establish them in every city. The churches could not do it; nor even do these churches exist now. If a body of Christians choose elders, it is very possible that not one of those the apostles would have chosen—the Holy Ghost would have made overseers—is there amongst them. No assembly can call itself the flock of God in a place, and of no elders chosen by them could it be rightly said, The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. The state of things is different. The external church is in ruins, cut up into a hundred sects, or gorged with error and evil in popery.

Is there no order, no means of it? God has provided it. First, as to the exercise of gifts, if such there are, the rules are there where needed.

In the next place, I find in 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16, those who had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; and they were to submit themselves to such, and to all who helped with the apostles and laboured. There is a moral action on the souls of those composing the assembly available when official rule does not exist; and it is remarkable, there are no elders alluded to in 1 Corinthians where such disorder was, nor directions to appoint any: the word of God meets the evil. Again, in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, “Now, we beseech you, brethren, know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” And in Hebrews 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you

[egoumenoi, the same word as “chief men among the brethren” used of Silas] and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” All this can be practised when there is no official appointment. For that, apostolic authority is needed, and does not exist, nor the one external body in which it was exercised. This rests on the action of the word in the conscience of those who have to submit. If one comes to me as an official elder, he has no scriptural authority to make good his claim. If I am unruly and unsubdued, those who labour, or indeed any Christian, can bring these passages, and I must submit to the word, or brethren can withdraw themselves from me—have no company with me, that I may be ashamed. This is moral power, not official.

In sum then ministry flows from gift, and is exercised in the whole Church of God; or, if an evangelist, in the world. If a man has the talent, woe be to him if he does not trade with it! What was the one Church in the apostles’ time is sunk into corruption, or cut up into a multitude of sects—does not exist in its integrity and normal condition. There is no authority competent to choose and establish official elders, nor a flock of God existing to which such official appointment could apply. But there is provision in the word for this ruined state of things wherever two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, or for the service of any saints, as one gifted to serve has opportunity in redeeming the time, or to poor sinners as an evangelist.

A clergy is a thing which has no foundation whatever in the word of God, still less a priesthood, save as all Christians are priests. A ministry still exists in definite permanent gifts as pastors, teachers, evangelists; but

the increase of the body comes also from the ministration of that which every joint supplieth according to the measure of every part. A gift of wisdom — “the word of wisdom”—may keep peace and happiness among God’s people, though perhaps in one who never exercises any public ministration of the word. We can ever count on the faithfulness of the Lord for present need, and bringing His people to glory.

It was not the details of the sacramental and priestly system which drove me from the Establishment, deadly as they are in their nature. It was that I was looking for the body of Christ (which was not there, but in all the parish perhaps not one converted person); and collaterally because I believed in a divinely appointed ministry. If Paul had come, he could not have preached, he had never been ordained; if a wicked ordained man, he had his title and must be recognized as a minister: the truest minister of Christ unordained could not. It was a system contrary to what I found in scripture. It was clear, a multitude of sects did not furnish the one body I looked for. At the beginning, when the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved, and during the whole scriptural period practically (though false brethren even crept in), the true body of Christ and the external sacramental body were the same—had the same limits. Soon they became very different, and perplexed good men, as Augustine on one side, who talked of an invisible Church, and Novatian and even Tertullian, who left it—the last for fanaticism. But scripture warns us that the external sacramental system would get into a state that would call for withdrawal—a form of godliness denying the power, from which we were to turn away. This external church fell into the

grossest corruption, beat the men-servants and maid-servants, and ate and drank with the drunken, became the sure subject of judgment from the Master, whose return they said would be delayed. The Establishment in its formularies, and Papists and Puseyites in their doctrine, attribute all the blessing and security of the true body to the sacramental body, making all uncertain of salvation, and sacraments—and these only—certain grace. Dissenters have left on particular points of conscience, and framed (thinking they could) churches for themselves. The "Brethren" would own God's Church; but, while looking for true unity as of the one body, symbolized in the one loaf, distinguish (as forced and directed to do) the external form, from which, by the apostle's direction, they have turned away; but have not found in churches formed by man either true separation from the world, or what scripture presents as the path of the saint when the corruption had set in. The so-called churches do not own as a duty on earth one body and one Spirit; a body formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, waiting for God's Son from heaven; and the ministry, as stated in scripture, is not more owned among them than in the Establishment. May all give heed to the solemn warning, "Upon thee goodness if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Has the Christian system continued in the goodness of God or left its first works?

As to the three points in which the colonial churches claim superiority to the mother church, I cannot see that they have any scriptural ground for them. One is the introduction of the lay element into deliberative assemblies. The clerical element is unknown to scripture, and the establishment of a caste of the kind,

existing as it does in every fleshly and unscriptural religion, is a mark of the Church's ruin. At any rate, in the only deliberative assembly we have, they determined that certain should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about the business. And, further on, the apostles and elders come together for to consider of this matter. Confidence was there; and they write in the name of the whole Church. But there is not a hint of any lay deputy or representative; apostles and elders only are mentioned; and Acts 16:4: "They delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem."

The next is, that ministers should not be placed over a church without the consent of the members. Who ever heard in scripture a hint of a minister being placed over a church? Such an idea has no possible place in scriptural ministry, not even in a church. God set in the Church various ministries; but a minister over a church is utterly impossible in scriptural ministry. Think even of setting a servant (for that is the meaning of minister) over a church! The usage of centuries, acquired under popery, may have accustomed us to it, and the progress of democracy force a modification of it.

The third is, that the whole body shall have the power of inflicting church censures. I hardly know what church censures mean here, or whether it applies to personal discipline in a local assembly. A mass of unconverted persons doing this is only confusion twice confounded. If it be merely on officers, it is a human arrangement referable to the clerical system, which scripture wholly disowns.

I would add one all-important word in these days. People seek with affectation nowadays what is primitive. It is a gross blind, and perversion of a most important and definite scriptural principle: “That which was from the beginning.” What we are certain is found in the word—in the word only. The mystery of iniquity began already to work, and the time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God. But what was from the beginning was set up of God; nothing else was or could be. Histories may come in afterwards, and, after all, they are very late, and there is nothing at all certain for the earliest times after the apostles, save that all already sought their own and, the Church was in decay. All is confusion. What was from the beginning is as clear as it is certain. Let us hold—we may have lost much irreparably—to that which was from the beginning, its sole and exclusive authority.

Since writing the above a fourth number of the Jamaica Magazine has been put into my hands. It attacks the “Brethren” on the question of the law and sanctification —two very important points, on the latter of which, though the “Brethren “are perfectly sound in general in controverting the very imperfect and even false evangelical scheme, some writers among them have given a handle to their adversaries—have fallen into Scylla in avoiding Charybdis. In combating what is exclusive and wrong, what really upsets the full true gospel, they have fallen into what is exclusive and wrong on the other side. I recognize that these articles are not written with acrimony, and I feel the fairest and truest way is, not to defend what is one-sided and so far false, nor to excuse it, but to set the matter on its true

scriptural ground, confessing that statements may be found which are thus one-sided.

The evangelical notion is, that a man is justified, and then sanctified and made meet for heaven. This throws his justification back into uncertainty and clouds; for, if he does not become meet, either he enters heaven unmeet, or he is justified and never gets there at all, but has to answer for his sins though justified by the blood of Christ. This is human confusion, not scripture, yet this is the evangelical doctrine. In denying this, and shewing that sanctification has another place in scripture, which it has, some (and many outside brethren) have denied progress in holiness, which scripture does speak of. Negatives are dangerous things. I state a truth. One passage suffices to prove I have reason. If I say there is no such thing in scripture, I must know every passage to be able to say it. The Holy Ghost teaches by positive truth. They are wise who hold fast to it.

But first as to law—too wide a subject to treat fully here—it has been fully treated in tracts expressly on the point: but it may be well to refer to some scriptures on the subject. The law is not the Christian's rule of life. He keeps it as walking in the Spirit and in love. But Christ is unquestionably the pattern and model of the Christian's life: "That the life of Jesus," says the apostle, "may be manifested in our mortal flesh." He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. He that says he abides in Him ought himself so to walk as He also walked. To say that the law was the measure of Christ's walk is to deny grace, to deny that He was God in goodness down here. But it may be urged, How can we follow His example in goodness? It is exactly what we are called to do. The sermon on the mount is not a

spiritualizing of the law. Murder and adultery are spoken of; but what other commandments are? And even these are treated of, not as part of the ten commandments, or Christ could not put His will in contrast with them and say, “but I say unto you.” But God’s conduct in grace is expressly given as our pattern: “Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” He sends rain on just and unjust; He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; He loves those who do not love Him. The blessed Lord gives His view of what is called for if they would enter into the kingdom. The ten commandments are not referred to. But so far from what was said of the old being a rule of life, Christ gives His own views of morality in contrast with all said of old. But the Father’s conduct in grace is expressly given as our rule, which certainly is not the law. It is a mere idle fancy, though so often repeated, that the sermon on the mount is a spiritualization of the law. Redemption is not spoken of in it, but the terms on which Jehovah was on the way with Israel to judgment; the character of the godly remnant, but not the law: if it is, let it be shewn.

But again, Ephesians 5, “Be ye therefore followers [mimetai] of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrifice and an offering to God as a sweet smelling savour.” We are to forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32). This surely is not law, and we get a principle shewing how it goes, in the motive and measure of the heart, wholly beyond it. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” says law; but we are to give ourselves wholly up for others, a sacrifice to God, as Christ did; to lay down our lives for the brethren. Again, Colossians 3:12-14, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and

beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,… as Christ forgave you, so also ye.” So Philippians 2. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”; and then we have His making Himself, when in the form of God, of no reputation; and, again, humbling Himself to obedience to death. The manner or rule of the Christian’s life is Christ, and Christ in forgiving lowliness and grace. It is monstrous to deny Christ to be our rule of life; monstrous to reduce the model to the keeping the law. “Forgive “and “Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” make the declaration, that the law is the Christian’s rule of life, a monstrous denial of practical Christianity.

Christ walking in grace is our pattern and model. The principle of the law is different. It exacts love from us, and really from the flesh; for it has power over a man only as long as he lives. The subjective principle of our life is the Second man with the Holy Ghost dwelling in us (Eph. 4). The doctrine of deliverance from sin, from the power of sin, is not by a law exacting what is contrary to it, but our having died with Christ and put off the old man. Thus, where the question is discussed (Rom. 6), “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? … knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” The whole chapter is the discussion of this point. And the reason sin will not have dominion over the Christian is, that he is not under law; and we are shewn that obedience in a new nature to God takes the place of law. We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we might be to another, Christ raised

from the dead. So in Galatians: “I through law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The law, we read in 2 Corinthians 3, is a ministration of death and condemnation; in 1 Corinthians 15 it is the strength of sin; in Romans 7 the motions of sin are by the law. It entered (pareiselthe) that the offence might abound. It was added (Gal. 3) because of transgressions till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; but, faith being come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster. In a word, the diligent instruction of the apostle is to shew that we are not under law, and that the path of holiness is not that, but our being dead to sin, crucified with Christ, and His living in us (so Col. 3:9, 10); that we cannot (Rom. 7) have the two husbands, the law and Christ risen. And, note, the question in chapters 6 and 7 is not justification, but deliverance from the power of sin. So Ephesians 4:22, 24. This is what the scripture calls learning Christ. The writer should shew us how it is we are not under law, yet it is our standard and rule of life. It is all very well to say “we have not space to prove, nor would our readers require to be convinced by proof.” Quoting one or two texts would not require so much space: can we not have one?

It is not true that any hold that the whole of our blessed Saviour’s life is disconnected from the process of redemption. But they say that Christ’s keeping the law is not our righteousness. And this many of the godliest and most esteemed ministers of the Establishment hold. But what is the process of redemption? Scripture speaks of redemption through His blood, of being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, not of any process; and that

without shedding of blood there is no remission. To make living righteousness redemption is a fatal error. And, in spite of all assailants, it remains true that “if righteousness come by law, Christ is dead in vain.” “When we were in the flesh the motions of sins, which were by the law wrought in us.” “We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in us.”

As regards sanctification a few words are needed. Progressive fitness is not scriptural. Growth and progress there is in scripture. But fitness is by the work of Christ. The thief was meet for paradise or he could not have gone there. All Christians are called on to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We are called on to grow up to the Head in all things; to be transformed into the same image; to follow after holiness; and the prayer of the apostle is, that the God of peace might sanctify them wholly. We are called on to labour to enter into the rest of God. But for all this the evangelical system upsets the gospel.

Sanctification is spoken of in two ways in scripture. The person is set apart for God. And in this case it is simple and absolute; and, where connected, it habitually precedes justifying. Hence Christians are constantly called “saints,” that is, “sanctified ones”: “all the saints,” and so on. They are sanctified, holy. So we are sanctified unto the blood of sprinkling, that is, brought by the separating power of the Spirit under the power of that precious blood: “ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified.” “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” They are set apart and brought under the efficacy of Christ’s work, which perfects them for ever for God’s presence. Hence there

is no unsettling the justification. Set apart for God, they are perfected for Him by the work of Christ. They are accepted in the Beloved. Still, if left down here, they have a great deal to learn; a great deal in which their senses are to be exercised to discern good and evil; to grow more conformed to Christ; much in which the word forms their souls into His image; and here the diligent soul will be made fat. And in this they pursue, follow after, holiness; and God makes them partakers of His holiness. But the moment it is put as meetness for heaven consequent on justification, then justification is uncertain and incomplete, and salvation and the true gospel are set aside. We are in Christ, accepted, and yet unmeet for heaven; or else all is uncertain, and peace with God is unfounded at all times.

As far as I can see, the writer has no true or clear idea of the flesh, the old man and the new. He speaks of the moment of saving faith not being the moment of complete deliverance from the power and inbeing of sin —of the desperate tenacity with which it clings to life. Scripture tells of the old man, the flesh, and which is never in its nature any better— “is not subject to the law of God nor indeed can be”; “which lusteth against the Spirit.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” But it speaks of that which is born of the Spirit, of a new man, of Christ being our life. And the Christian is called upon to reckon himself dead to sin. He has put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new (Col. 3). As to deliverance from the power of sin, the moment he has understood he is dead with Christ, sin has no title or power over him. Such is the doctrine of Romans 6. He may be careless and let it still exercise it. But he is delivered from it as to any claim or title or power it can

exercise, if he be faithful and look to Christ. He is not a debtor to the flesh, but is made free from the law of sin and death. The nature of the flesh is unchanged, but in the power of the Spirit of God the Christian is to reckon himself dead, as having put off the old man and put on the new. As to the fact and nature of the flesh, the inbeing of sin, as our critic speaks, there is no change; but power is ours in Christ to mortify the deeds of the body and walk in the Spirit.

But in the result of this there is progress (Rom. 7:20-22). I am to grow up- to Christ the Head by the growing knowledge of Him. Christ as life is a holy life; but as a child grows up to be a man, so the Christian by grace (Eph. 4:15; Phil. 1:10,11; Col. 1:9-11.) Compare Colossians 3:1-7. We are not under law then. The Christian who knows his position in Christ is delivered from the power of, and being a debtor to, the flesh, though he may carelessly yield to it, but he grows up to Christ the Head. The nature of the flesh never changes; but he is not in it but in Christ, and Christ is in him power to walk in godliness, and God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear. In these things are the exercises of daily Christian life. He, if walking Christianly, cleanses himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Having the hope of being like Christ when He appears, he purifies himself as He is pure.

59 The candles have since been decided against.

60 “One fold,” in John 10:16, is a false translation; it is “one flock.”

61 The only additional act would be offering a sacrifice and that high churchmen insist is really done.

62 Nor were hands laid on Matthias. “The lot fell on Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles” —a most lame induction to office on the ordination scheme. (See next note.)

63 In the end of Acts 1 it is a falsification of the text (there is no word at all in the Greek), which runs “must one be a witness.” This is serious.

Remarks Upon “The British Churches In Relation To The British People; By E. Miall.”

I find for my own spirit that the Christian has to watch against being brought under the pressure of what is going on around, if he give heed to it, even as a part of the ways or judgments of God. We are called to heavenly things, to have our conversation in heaven, to be occupied with Christ, sanctified by the truth, in that He has sanctified Himself, that we may be sanctified by the truth. We have to be simple concerning evil, and wise concerning that which is good; a blessed and most admirable precept, such as Christianity alone can bring about. We are warned that in the last days perilous times shall come. The terrible description of that state of things morally is given; but how simple the remedy when the perception of such a state exists! “From such turn away.” Turned away we are free to be occupied with Christ, and those heavenly things which sanctify us practically now and are our everlasting portion. No state of things can alter the word. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to purpose. We are purified to Christ to be a peculiar people—a people appropriated to Himself. May we remember it! With this caution, which I find needed for myself as well as others, it is well to be aware (and the Spirit of God has made us aware) that there are perilous times, and this in the last days, in which we are.

One of the great questions in these days is that of ministry, or, as I may also call it, the clergy. It may

interest your readers to see how this subject is viewed by leading and intelligent dissenters. I refer to and shall quote from a book published some time ago; but which, occupied with my own labours, I had never seen before. The occasion of it was the discussion, in the Congregational Union of England and Wales, of the question of the general indifference of the working classes to our religious institutions. With many things in it I cordially agree; but there are in it the fatal and general errors of looking for good in the natural man, and looking for the development of that good by the liberty of the will. The Christian kindness, which in taking a place with the poorest—a hearty, willing, and ready place, as all alike before God and in grace—seeks to win sinners to Christ and to their own blessing, which takes this place as the very spirit of Christ and Christianity, I cordially accept and desire to walk in. We are all alike before God, and, if there be any difference, He thinks most of the poor; and so ought the Christian, and so did Christ. But to confound this with letting loose natural will is a deception denying the sinful state of man. The confusion of these two things is so common nowadays, that, where we do not keep close to Christ, there is such a pandering to evil instead of bringing good with the hope to win thereby, that it is well to note the difference.

Let Christians be the meekest and humblest on earth as Christ was: it is what they ought to be, and that will bring them into contact with every need as it did Christ; but let them not flatter sinful man to his ruin, and fancy that this is the same thing. The path of wisdom is one which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: death and destruction have heard the fame of it; the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of it, the path of Christ its perfection in this world; a new divine path He is and was, that divine wisdom in His walk here—the wisdom of God and the power of God. I have been led to say thus much in alluding to this book, as a principle needed always and especially in these days; but I turn to the book itself, to bring into notice the statements as to ministry and how scripture affects other minds too when searched into. I find a confusion (which in earlier times, I myself fell into, so that I could ill reproach anyone else with it) of gifts and ministry with elders, as if this last was the exercise of a gift; and there may be other misapprehensions such as we are all liable to. But, in the main, what brethren are so much reproached with is here admitted to be the true scriptural path; and what they are reproached with giving up is treated as one great hindrance to usefulness. The writer attacks pulpits: I would not do so, provided they are not used in what are the assemblies of the saints, properly speaking.

The gifts of ministry exist in the assembly, not properly in an assembly; and we may exercise them individually, and either evangelize or teach in our individual capacity, or as meeting in the assembly of the saints. In this last a pulpit is out of place. In a pulpit one is no longer with the saints. But when I teach as an individual (and as a servant of Christ I may do so), I am not with the saints, but teaching them according to the gift given me. The positions are different, and yet both scriptural and right. With this remark I give the quotations. They are from Mr. E. Miall's "British Churches in Relation to the British People," 2nd edition, p. 172. "Next, in the natural order of the arrangements now under our review, comes ordination. If there is little in the New Testament to

sanction the common notion of a ministerial order, there is less to sustain that of ordination. A few passages in which mention is made of specific appointment to ‘eldership ‘in the churches—two or three which imply such appointment to have been expressed, as indeed appointment to office usually was in the East, by imposition of hands—and an apostolic phrase, here and there, intimating the communication of some supernatural gift at the time of this designation to office — constitute, scanty as it is, the entire sum of scriptural materials, out of which ecclesiastical ingenuity has fashioned the doctrine of ordination. I believe indeed that, to a considerable extent, the estimate now set upon the necessity and virtues of this rite by Nonconforming churches is moderate in comparison of what it once was. It is not maintained nowadays, at least by them, that ordination actually confers any right upon the subject of it which he did not previously possess, nor that it is absolutely requisite in order to ministerial character and authority. More generally, it is regarded as a solemn observance, seemly and profitably on a public entrance upon office, and well calculated to promote order in the churches. Whilst, however, the intelligence of our dissenting religious bodies thus interprets the ceremonial, the sentiment of the same bodies, more unconsciously and deeply tinged with traditional prejudice, seldom shews itself abreast with that intelligence. The young ‘brother ‘who has been invited to take the ‘oversight’ of a Church, and who has accepted the invitation, does not ordinarily feel that he has ceased to be a layman, or that he may becomingly discharge all the functions of his office, until after his ordination. Many of his brethren around him, and most perhaps of the people of his charge, would be a little

scandalized at his presiding at the administration of the Lord's supper, even amongst the Christian disciples whom he teaches from the pulpit, before he has been set apart in the customary manner—and much more would they object to the celebration of that ordinance by a church bereaved of its elder, conducted under the superintendence of one of its own members. In some cases the feeling excited, probably by the force brought to bear upon it by the doctrine maintained in the Anglican Establishment, is so far indulged as to condemn the exercise of this ministerial prerogative, even by those who have been admitted by ordination to the ministry, but who may have subsequently quitted office and engaged in secular pursuits. On the other hand, there is a still larger number of persons who connect with ordination an initiation of the subject of it into the sacred order, and who regard him, whether occupying office or not, as retaining until death all the special rights and responsibilities of ministers of Christ. Here, again, it will be felt, there are common notions, sometimes repudiated by the understanding, but insidiously mingling with the feelings, which give additional strength to the professional sentiment. Those imaginary lines which separate the ministerial class from the rest of the Church, and place it, as it were, in exclusive possession of the prerogatives of spiritual ruling and teaching, are deepened and rendered almost ineffaceable, partly by the rite itself of ordination, chiefly by the yet lingering superstition with which its effects are generally regarded. In a modified sense, and with a few exceptions, the ministerial character is treated as indelible.

“The almost universal practice—to which, however, the different sections of the Methodist body present an exception— of limiting spiritual teaching in each church, so far at least as it is stated and official, to a single individual, is another of those arrangements in which the professional sentiment finds development and sustenance. In apostolic times, there seems reason to conclude, all the Christian disciples of one city or town were united together in spiritual fellowship, and constituted the one church in that town. No evidence exists that the Christian community in any one city was divided into as many separate organizations, as there were separate places of assembly for public worship. From the intimations of scripture we may infer, with a high degree at least of probability, that the officers both of oversight and of teaching were as numerous in each church, as convenience might prescribe, or as the distribution of gifts amongst the members would allow. In the apostolic epistles, where a single church is addressed, allusion is commonly made not to the bishop, but the bishops; and when Titus is instructed by Paul to finish in Crete the work which the apostle himself had left uncompleted, he is told to ordain, or appoint, not an elder but elders in every city. From the same apostle’s letter to the Corinthian church, we gather, that the gift of teaching was possessed by several of its members, and some important regulations are laid down for its orderly exercise. To some such.mode of manifesting and nourishing their spiritual life the Christian churches in our land will probably return by slow degrees, as the spirit of their faith becomes purified from the dross of worldly-mindedness. Meanwhile it is but too apparent, that the needless multiplication of spiritual organizations in one locality, and the appointment of a

single minister over each, but ill succeeds in eliciting either the life or the power of religious association. Our very mechanical arrangements, modelled of course in conformity with our ecclesiastical ideas, put a needless distance between teacher and taught, and exert a repressive influence upon the sympathies which should connect the one with the other.

“In each place of worship there stands the pulpit—a visible symbol of the monopoly of teaching—a fixed memento to the Church that it is to one individual they have to look for all those declarations, illustrations, and enforcements of the word of God, by which their minds are to be informed, their consciences stirred or comforted, or their hearts impressed and improved. From that spot, sacred to ministerial occupation, the devotions of the people are to be led by the same man who preaches the word every time the Church assembles year after year. The most seraphic piety, combined with the most splendid talents, can hardly, on this plan, prevent both devotion and instruction from becoming invested with an air of formality deeply injurious to freshness of religious feeling. The service insensibly slides into a performance which the assembly try to witness with becoming emotion, instead of participating in and adopting as their own. It is as if the voice which addresses them came from an isolated and inaccessible quarter representative of authority, instead of issuing from their very midst, conversant with their own thoughts, and warm with their own emotions. The occupant of that pulpit, who alone has right to interpret God’s will and minister to His saints, and plead with unbelievers, cannot be thoroughly identified as one with ourselves; and not a little of that sympathy, with which

we should otherwise listen to his statements or exhortations, is chilled and paralysed by the sensible contact into which it comes with the insulating lines of office. Oh! those pulpits— and all the influences they infer! Would that no such professional conveniences had been invented! Would that some change of feeling or even of fashion amongst us could sweep them clean away! How much they themselves, and the notion of which they are the visible expression, have done to repress the manifestations of spiritual life and energy in our churches it is impossible to calculate.

“The evils always attendant upon monopoly have not been wanting here; and the pains taken, but unwisely taken, to secure by means of it the best results, have produced the worst. The limitation of public spiritual service to a single functionary has greatly, and, as I think, most unhappily, favoured the diffusion of the professional sentiment amongst both churches and ministers. The attribution of a large class of duties in which the body ought to take a lively interest, and concerning which it ought to feel a weighty responsibility, to a particular order of Christian men, has been fatally encouraged, nay, rendered all but inevitable, by the arrangements to which the foregoing observations refer. The pastor and the flock alike suffer disadvantage, and it is hard to determine which is most to be commiserated. Not a few, we apprehend, in both relationships, would rejoice most heartily to go back to primitive methods. But, for the present, the tyrant custom overrules their wishes; and, perhaps, in this instance, as in others, lurking traditional feeling refuses to keep pace with intelligent conviction.

“But we have not yet exhausted the illustrations of the professional sentiment to be met with in our churches. The canon laws of an ecclesiastical Establishment, itself a re-adaptation of Papal machinery to purer doctrine, exert in some respects a more powerful influence over their views of ministerial etiquette than the dictates of common sense, and the lessons of experience, backed though they be by the sanction of apostolical example. Else, how comes it to pass that the stated discharge of the functions of eldership should be so generally regarded as incompatible with secular engagements? Doubtless it is frequently desirable that men found by the churches ‘apt to teach,’ should be placed in a position enabling them to consecrate their whole time to the work; and so long as the ‘oversight’ and religious tuition of each church are committed exclusively to a single individual, secular pursuits, even when necessary to eke out for him a scanty subsistence, will be found to preclude the profitable performance of his duties. But is it requisite, or does the New Testament give countenance to the idea, that every spiritual teacher should refrain from seeking an honest livelihood by the work of his own hands, or that upon being appointed to office he cannot continue in a worldly calling without infringing the rules of ecclesiastical propriety? Just the reverse! The case of the greatest of the apostles need hardly be cited, for no thinking mind can miss it. ‘The preachers among the poor Waldenses,’ says Milton,’ the ancient stock of our Reformation, bred up themselves in trades, and especially in physic and surgery, as well as in the study of scripture (which is the only true theology), that they might be no burden to the Church, and, by the example of Christ, might cure both soul and body. But our ministers,’ he continues, in a strain of

severity which the conditions of his times fully justified, ‘think scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen—they would not, so many of them, for want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching.’ I have introduced this quotation, not until after a painful struggle with my own feelings; to some extent it is applicable in the present day, and the truths, thus pithily and forcibly put, deserve far more serious consideration than they have yet received. For my own part I do not believe that the ministry generally are justly chargeable with a mercenary spirit, or that gain occupies in their view so large a space as godliness; for if so, their choice of occupation has been, certainly, a most unwise one. But I wish to point out, in as vivid language as possible, the disadvantageous light in which our absurd prejudices place the ministration of the gospel of peace.”

Again, p. 179—

“To the foregoing illustrations I think it needful to add but one other—that presented to our notice by distinct clerical titles, official vestments, and all those external peculiarities intended to distinguish from others, the members of the ‘sacred profession.’ There are varieties of custom amongst different denominations in reference to these distinctive insignia of office; but the sects are very few, and the individuals are far from numerous, who treat all such outward marks as unworthy of notice. Looked at apart, they are confessedly trifles; viewed in connection with our present theme, they are not altogether matters of indifference. They are meant to express what it would be well for the churches altogether to forget—a difference of order. They indicate

the existence of views respecting the sanctity of the profession, which neither scriptural language nor the genius of Christianity support. They render more visible the line of separation between the disciples of Christ in office, and out of it. They originated in times of corruption; and they serve no useful purpose which pure religion can desire. They minister to unworthy tastes. They lend a countenance to popular superstition. They are a relic, and a very absurd relic, of the old sacerdotal system, which delegated the whole business of religion to the priesthood, and which placed the efficacy of priestly mediation chiefly in a minute observance of external forms and 'bodily exercises.'"

I might quote a great deal more; but from my pen it might seem like an attack, which is as far as possible from my thoughts. I shew merely the effect of scripture on others when honestly looked at. The author would preserve what exists, and gradually introduce what is scriptural. Others have thought that finding it in scripture they were bound to act on it. The writer speaks of the course to be pursued thus (p. 193):—

"The tide of infidelity is swelling, the plague of religious indifference is spreading. Can we afford to give indulgence to a sentiment which, while it greatly circumscribes the number of labourers in Christ's vineyard, detracts also from the moral power of those engaged in the work? The disadvantages entailed upon the churches by the long prevalence and mighty power of that sentiment cannot suddenly be got rid of within a generation or two. But our faces may at least be turned in the right direction. We may aim to destroy the living principle of the evil by treating the ministry as an office, not an order. We may make gradual efforts to evoke and

employ teaching talenrs, wherever they exist. And, by cautious changes, we may prepare more general and efficient instrumentality for the prosecution of spiritual objects, making the best use possible meanwhile of that which already exists."

But he pleads "conscience in giving utterance to these opinions." He has stated conclusions to which inquiry has gradually led his own mind. I can only say that, finding it in scripture years ago, I have acted on it. It is evident that a sober mind cannot call it a denial of ministry.

As I have spoken of these last days, let me add a word on another subject. I do not desire that Christians should be occupied with it, but get more fully their own place. I do not think that the dis-establishment of the Protestants in Ireland will much affect the state of the professing church in an adverse way. If there be spiritual energy, the contrary may be the case; but the import of it for England is that it has given up Protestantism to popery. That is the meaning of the act in Ireland— a very grave fact. If the Establishment be maintained in England, it is the maintenance of a traditional system—ecclesiasticism against dissent—not the maintenance of Protestantism. What has been done is the public giving up of that [Protestantism] by England. People must not deceive themselves. If the Establishment be given up in England, it is the country's giving up all religion—any professed recognition of God altogether. What conclusion do I draw from this? That Christians should look to the Lord only. I do not expect any great persecution or trial of this kind. There may be as much as is needed to sift Christians, and force them (alas! that it should be needed) to act on their own principles, and

trust the Lord. At the beginning Christianity had no outward support, but the contrary. It made its way by divine truth and power against every adverse influence. We do not exercise the same committed power; but we have grace and truth, and the promise of an open door to a little strength, when the word of Christ is kept. The word of His patience is that in which we have to abide. Patience will have to be exercised by the presence of the power of evil; but the Lord does not let the reins out of His hand, nor is evil ever beyond His power; but to walk right we must be on the true ground of faith. Englishmen are not generally aware how much they have leant on the supports which providence has placed around them; we seldom are so till we lose them. But God can use even infidelity to check the disposition to persecute. God forbid that any one should lean on or have to say to it even as a defence. Our resource is in the Lord; but He has all things at His command. To lean on it would be to deny Him; to lean on Him is to be sure of the loving care of One who nourishes and cherishes His Church as a man would his own flesh. May His servants take the word, the scriptures, the sure and only stay and guide in the last days to guide them, and live the life of faith in Him. He is faithful. The Lord will own their path, and them too, in the last day.

I may be permitted to add the exhortation to shew all cordial brotherly love to every true Christian, and to cultivate the expression of it, while holding fast as a duty to Christ, separation from all that is not of Him, according to 2 Timothy 2 and 3, the great direction for these days. Let me add, in these times of general upheaval and breaking up, there is a need of recollecting that we have a kingdom that cannot be

moved. Calmness is the portion of those who know this, and have the truth. “Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.”

Presbyterianism: A Reply To “The Church And The Pulpit”

Editor's Note 64

[Extracts]

“Fathers and Brethren,

“The spirit of union in the larger corporation of the Church has fostered other fellowships within our Zion. Our Sabbath school teachers in Sydney and its suburbs have formed an association for their mutual improvement and the more effective conduct of the schools under their care. With laudable zeal and perseverance they have instituted courses of lectures for teachers, arranged common lessons for scholars, and collected statistics of schools—all of which cannot fail to be beneficial to themselves and to the Church. Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Societies—now happily connected with almost every congregation in the city—have also formed a union for promoting their intellectual and Christian advancement, and for cherishing that esprit de corps which young men of a church like ours—so rich with historic memories and apostolic glories—should always realize. It is interesting and refreshing to mark these hopeful phases of young life in the Church, and it would be well if fathers and brethren gave their encouragement and aid to associations so calculated to maintain the doctrine and order of our ancestral church in this new land. Since our faith and polity are generally so consistent with the holy scriptures and the primitive Church, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose

by the enlightenment of the young, alike in our creed and our history.

“Fathers and Brethren—Our church polity is apostolical. It ‘is founded upon the word of God, and agreeable thereto,’ as our Confession so well states the matter. It is framed upon the practice of the apostolic age, while yet inspired men were in the Church to give authority to its doctrines, and accuracy to its history. From these halcyon days of Christianity our church derives its constitution. There we get the principles that regulate all our polity. We admit, as our Confession does, ‘that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.’ But we also hold ‘That the scriptural proof of any arrangement or practice having existed in the apostolic churches, ordinarily and prima facie imposes an obligation on all churches to adopt it—an obligation that is imperative and unlimited in regard to all those things which obviously enter into the substance of the government and worship of the Church, and the mode in which they are administered.’65 In the scriptures, then, we read that a church comprehended a society of the people of God, either in a single congregation, as in the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15), or in a city, as in Jerusalem (Acts 11:22), where there were at least eight thousand persons; or the whole community of a nation, as in Acts 7:38, where St. Stephen speaks of’ the church in the wilderness,’ or all the Christians in the world, as where the apostle says (1 Cor. 12:28), ‘God hath set some in the church’; or, finally, all the people of God in

heaven and on earth, as in Ephesians 5:25: ‘Christ also loved the church.’ The word has only one meaning everywhere, but capable of any extension. In the scripture we read that the office-bearers of the Church were elected by the people. Whether it was the election of an apostle to fill the vacant bishopric of Judas (Acts 1:23), or of deacons to look after the temporal affairs of the early Church (Acts 6), it was a popular choice. There we read what will not now be controverted by any scholar, that bishops and presbyters or elders were identical. In the apostolic Church, and in the many references of the inspired epistles to this office, there was no difference between bishop and presbyter. The names expressed the same office, and are used interchangeably by the sacred writers. In the New Testament we read that there was a plurality of bishops or elders in every church, in Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, as well as in the larger congregations of the greater cities. There, too, we read that ordination to the office of the ministry was an act of the presbytery, of a plurality of elders. This was preferred by the apostles themselves when they were all together in Jerusalem (Acts 6). Thus SS. Paul and Barnabas were ordained at Antioch (Acts 13:3). Thus Timothy was ordained (1 Tim. 1:14). And after this model it is most scriptural to set apart men to sacred office. There we learn that there was a right of appeal allowed to members of the church, or single congregations, from a decision among themselves to an assembly of apostles and elders, as the office-bearers of the Church. Apostolic dicta pronounced by inspired lips did not settle the controversies of the early Church. The appeal from Antioch was discussed in an assembly convened for the purpose, and in which the apostles

were members. The decision was authoritative and final. The decrees of the assembly at Jerusalem were binding upon the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, and were received with submission. The government of the Church was representative, and final decisions were given by the assembly of bishops or elders. There, too, we read that supreme power was lodged nowhere else, not in an apostle, or a prince of apostles, a president of assembly, still less in an earthly potentate, but that the Lord Jesus Christ was the sole King and Head of the Church. His revealed will was the only standard, and His officers the only court of appeal in all matters ecclesiastical. There was a gradation of judicatories; but the Church was possessed of an inherent right to settle all spiritual causes. There, too, we read that there were elders who ruled, as distinct from those who also laboured in word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17). They all had equal status, but not equal functions.

“These features of the apostolic Church are clearly revealed in the primitive ideal as represented in the holy scriptures, though in the actual realization they were speedily obscured by the corruptions which affected Christianity in the Roman Empire. They were however discerned, and copied with more or less exactness, in the great Reformation of” the sixteenth century, when the word of God was recovered from the dust of ages, and perused with all the freshness of a new discovery. Every national church in Christendom except the English, and in a very modified degree the Danish and Swedish, returned in their reform to the general principles of polity as practised in the apostolic age. The case of Denmark and Sweden will not bear argument, and the exception of England was an anomaly caused by

the Crown. Lord Macaulay, in his history, states that ‘the English reformers were eager to go as far as their brethren on the Continent.’ And he further avers of the Protestant party in that church, that’ it cannot be doubted that, if the general sense of that party had been followed, the work of reform would have been carried on as unsparingly in England as in Scotland.’ (Hist., vol. 1, p. 50.)

“These features of the apostohcal polity have been apparent, with varied degrees of clearness, in different ages of our church. The election of all office-bearers is vested in the people, and even where patronage has been imposed, as in established churches, the call of the people is recognized. There is no distinction between bishop and presbyter; and though every church court has its moderator, he is primus inter pares. There are several elders in every congregation, who constitute a governing body in all spiritual affairs. There is the right of appeal from local presbyters, whose judgment may have been biassed by party feeling or personal animosities, to a district or provincial synod, or assembly of elders duly elected and lawfully convened, whose decision is held to be final, and subject to no appeal to co-ordinate courts in the State. This polity protects the rights of the people on the one hand, and the rights of the members of presbytery on the other, and when properly worked is calculated to preserve the discipline of the church, and promote the welfare of the people.

“This mode of presbyterial action is specially adapted to a new country. In some of its features it is being followed by all dis-established churches. Synods are sought by the Episcopal church in all places beyond the

United Kingdom. The synod is becoming the supreme power of that church to which all officers are subject. The synod is the court of appeal where all grievances of doctrine or discipline are to be settled. The synod is the free assembly where all parties can express their sentiments and exercise their suffrages. Congregationalists are gravitating to the same mode of corporate action. Their writers of highest authority on ecclesiastical polity, such as Davidson and Stoughton, declare that 'they are wrong in splitting up what ought to be one church, the company of believers in modern towns, into several churches, each with its own pastor, which in their independent individuality are patches and shreds, often incapable of a right government, because they have lost sight of the unity and kind of government existing in the earliest churches.'66 Wesleyan Methodists have always had certain of these elements, and their difficulties of administration have chiefly arisen from the rules of a society, designed to be temporary, becoming the laws of a permanent and wide-spread church.

"In all new countries the apostolic principles of church polity have been proved to be most adapted to the new circumstances. In America our own church has advanced from a single presbytery, with a few members in the year 1705, to six thousand clergymen at the present day. Canada has already five hundred Presbyterian clergy; and Australasia, in less than half a century, and while the pioneer and father of our colonial Presbyterian church is still alive and vigorous, possesses three hundred clergy. Nor are our congregations in bondage, though bound to the church and submissive to its laws. Their liberty is not interfered with in all the

minor details of their services or their finances. So long as they act in harmony with the general principles of the church, they are as independent of one another as if they were unconnected by ecclesiastical ties. More and more it appears that towards the apostolical polity of our church all Protestant churches are gravitating and in this we rejoice, not because we expect in the pre-millennial age an incorporation of all churches into one, but because by corporate action freer scope is afforded for the maintenance and diffusion of truth, and for the exercise of a healthy discipline.

“Our church is Catholic. The spirit of catholicity belongs to its apostolical constitution. It is not exclusive. It professes to be a branch of the holy Catholic Church. It does not unchurch other communions not so scriptural in doctrine or so apostolical in polity as we profess to be. It does not deny the validity of ordination by other churches, or attempt to re-ordain those who have been already set apart to the holy ministry. It does not repeat the sacrament by which Christians have been initiated into the fellowship of the Church of Christ. It does not shut its pulpits to the ministers of other Reformed churches, though it has not been free from occasional bigotry and exclusiveness, both when established and when dissenting. It is not bound by consecrated buildings or by a clergy supposed to possess a transmissive virtue in their ordination which belongs to no one else, from holding intercourse with ministers and members of other branches of the Church. It has had its seasons of defection and of unfaithfulness, as all others have had; but it has never sanctioned as a principle that which cuts it off from the communion of saints who worship in other forms, and listen to other and

somewhat differently appointed teachers. It has recognized and encouraged the fellowship of all the Reformed churches, and has permitted its candidates for the ministry to frequent the universities and theological halls of Protestant Christendom. It claims to be a branch of the holy Catholic and apostolic Church, and lifts up its testimony to the word of God both in doctrine and polity, but holds out the hand of Christian fellowship to all, 'who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.' And we hope and pray for the return of all other branches of the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church to similar principles and the exercise of similar reciprocal charity.

"Fathers and Brethren—There are two other points to which I would also advert, as they are the glories of our Zion.

"1. The intelligent unity of doctrine believed by all Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian Churches. Amidst the separations which have been temporarily occasioned in the application of questions of our polity to relations to the State, there has been unbroken unity in the faith. The Confession of faith has been the standard of all. But it is no mere bond of peace. It is a bona fide creed. There has never been a debate as to its doctrinal meaning. It has never been questioned whether the clergy might hold opposite sentiments on doctrinal points. Hypocrisy might occasion and unfaithfulness might tolerate doctrinal variations, but these have been rare anomalies, and never an acknowledged boast. Any man teaching any divergence from the common creed would forfeit his office. That creed may be more definite and even more minute than those of other communions, but it has been rarely belied or outraged, and never

glossed over by other documentary standards or liturgical forms.

“The constitution of the church, and the free exercise of Christian rights, and the open character of all ecclesiastical courts, have prevented the imposition of a creed that was not believed, and the toleration of error that was openly acknowledged or capable of being proved against any preacher. The doctrine of all our clergy must, like the virtue of Caesar’s wife, be above suspicion. Our people have a guarantee that their preachers will not follow any doctrine contrary to the grammatical meaning of the Confession. All who receive the imprimatur of the Presbytery are orthodox divines.

“2. The paramount importance of preaching is another glory of our church. Our church does not depend upon gorgeous ceremonies, or prescribed liturgies, or a lordly hierarchy for its influence over the people, but upon its office of preaching—the exercise of scriptural instruction. This was the great feature of the apostolical Church. The founder of Christianity was a preacher. Its first apostles went everywhere preaching the word. Christianity owes its greatest social influence to the pulpit… Our church has recognized this apostolic view—the dependence of the people upon the preacher, and has sought to provide able ministers of the word of God to expound saving truth to their congregations. If we have not preachers of ability, we cannot keep our people. There are no other adventitious aids by which congregations will be sustained. They depend upon the minister alike for the public prayer as for the sermon, and therefore require men of high spiritual character, and of intellectual gifts and popular adaptation. It has

ever been a glory of our Zion to possess an educated ministry.

“The pulpit of our time is in different circumstances from those it has ever before experienced. The press has been gaining while the pulpit has been losing popular power. This has not been because the press has usurped the place of the pulpit, for it rarely writes on religion, but because it has sustained its work with more ability, with better adaptation to the wants of the people, and with more equitable rewards for the talent enlisted in its service. Accustomed to read well-written, intellectual, and instructive papers, periodicals, and books, whose style captivates, whose themes interest, and whose thoughts enlighten and elevate, people cease to admire and listen to preachers of feeble mind or of listless manner. It is also not to be denied that much of the preaching is too academic and dry, and too weak and coarse. Clerical education has lacked an element which brings the religious teacher into sympathy with the common people, and has paid too little attention to the art of speaking, which is ever an effective aid to popular instruction. People complain that they hear only good men, who do not command their attention or stimulate their thought… The pulpit needs higher intellect. The theme with which it is occupied is worthy of the noblest thought— has the loftiest elevation and the most extensive range, and grasps the two eternities of the past and the future with the grand area that lies between them… But preaching must also be adapted to the age and to the circumstances of the people,” pp. 3-10.

[Reply]

However unfeignedly one may rejoice in the prosperity of Christians, wherever they may be placed, as we clearly ought, and as I trust I do; however much we may desire the influence of Christian truth over the youths of a country, in contrast with the infidelity and popery now so influential and popular, and this is assuredly near my heart; yet in the volcanic heavings of the present day, when Christian bodies are so much mixed up with the world, and when, even among Christian professors, man and man's advancement are so displacing Christ, it is well to learn how to separate the precious from the vile, to learn what is the path in which the patient Christian should walk, and how far what is held out to us as good is good according to God.

The paper I am now reviewing affords me an opportunity of examining principles whose activity I have seen displayed in other countries, and whose working it is of moment to inquire into, as very prevalent in the present day, and at the same time of investigating the claims of a system free from the grosser elements of ecclesiastical corruption, and hence not unfrequently affording a kind of asylum and resting-place for those whose consciences make it impossible for them to remain in what is in its fundamental principles popish, if not Roman, but who at the same time have not faith to walk on the water to meet Christ, if they cannot remain in the ship. It cannot be for a moment supposed that the working or success of the system I refer to in so distant a land can be an object of jealousy, or that there I can have any motive of attack, save as that system embodies principles which have their importance everywhere, and in these days especially come home to every conscience. It is as able a presentation of the system, in a brief compass, as I am

acquainted with, and presents Presbyterianism in its fairest colours, and says as much for it as can well be said. As a general maintenance of the gospel and protestant truth against allied popery and infidelity, the system may have its value; and I can wish it success as a providential instrument. I believe that in the colonies Presbyterianism is the body which makes some counterpoise to Romanism and its infidel power and allies. The Episcopal body, having its distinctive importance from an ecclesiastical constitution analogous to Romanism, and not from truth of doctrine, forms none; or allies itself with only the popish influence, though for its own objects. I should therefore not write in the spirit of attack; but I shall discuss freely the pretensions and principles of the system advocated in the Moderator's speech to the General Assembly of New South Wales.

There are some general principles more important to me than the ecclesiastical ones, which are taken for granted in the speech, but which I cannot pass over, as they are the key to a large movement among Christian men now, and involve most serious questions, trying to the heart even when they are clearly resolved to spiritual understanding and conscience by scripture. To a very great extent these have no more to do with Presbyterianism than with other denominations. They involve the mixture of the Church and the world. The true character of Christianity is in question in them. I am not here to call in question any needed improvement or culture when the will of God has placed us in the path of such culture. If it be an end, it is evil, it is not Christ. If it be a means of doing God's will, it may be a dangerous path, and is so; but it has its place, and if it

be to be done, it should, as everything else, be done well; not in the case of a Christian, I repeat, as an object: Christ only can be rightly that—the one motive for everything; but, as in everything we do according to His will, and to serve Him, we should do it diligently and well, heartily as unto the Lord. Thank God, we can! All these things are apt to become objects: faith looks beyond them and uses them as means when called for. A man in labouring for his children may work beautifully; but that is a different thing from having beautiful work artistically as his object. The question here is, Are we called by a heavenly calling, as a new creation belonging to heaven, though obliged to be pilgrims for awhile on earth? Are death and resurrection the basis of Christian life, or the improvement of the old man as an object in and of this world, because we are still of it?

The discourse of the Moderator does not take up the improvement of natural talents for needed service in this pilgrimage, but connects it with the Church—makes it (as is so largely done in these days, more especially in new countries) a part of Christian life. Progress in the world, intellectual advancement, is a part, a large part, of Christian acting. The spirit of the age is to characterize Christianity, if Christ even lie as a germ at the bottom.

I quote the passage as expressive of the system:—

“Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Societies—now happily connected with almost every congregation in the city— have also formed a union for prosecuting their intellectual and Christian advancement, and for cherishing that esprit de corps which young men of a church like ours—so rich with historic memories and

apostolic glories—should always realize. It is interesting and refreshing to mark these hopeful phases of young life in the Church; and it would be well if fathers and brethren gave their encouragement and aid to associations so calculated to maintain the doctrine and order of our ancestral church in this new land."

It is impossible to imagine anything more clearly connecting the Church of God and the world, intellectual improvement and grace, the Church and ancestral descent, in one single idea and category of thought. Improvement Societies and scriptural faith and polity in one common thought! as if young men's improvement and spiritual life were identical objects, and the unconverted and the converted could pursue them together; for the association and the object of the association is common to all. And the ancestral church, in the judgment of its highest authority, is to be sustained in faith and polity, not by grace and the Holy Ghost, but by the enlightenment of the young in the creed and history of the ancestral church, and by their intellectual improvement and their esprit de corps. Indeed the intellectual improvement comes first; the rest is a fair cover to it. Is this the character of Christianity as the word of God presents it, that for which the blessed Son of God gave Himself on the cross? I will speak of the Presbyterian system in a moment. But this is a more serious thing. It uses the natural influence exercised, by an ancestral church, to cultivate the spirit of the world and the esprit de corps. It connects the thought of the Church with the world, and not with God, and Christianity with intellectual improvement, not with Christ and the path which He trod.

The principle I refer to is just this: the world, and its objects and spirit, are accepted; and it is sought to christianize it in form and moral influences. Deliverance from it to be the servant of Christ, by the power of the Spirit of God, is not thought of. It is not the details of the system I am concerned with—they may vary; it is the system and its principle. It reduces Christianity to a worldly level to bring the world under its influence. Its fairest form is when it seeks in large terms to provide a shelter for young men, separated, when beginning life, from their families and home influences (an object full of interest); but it works this by engaging Christians in objects and pursuits adapted to unconverted young men, and wholly foreign to Christ and the spirit of the Christian. Intellectual and Christian advancement are put together with intellect first; and wherever Christ is not all, other things will be always first. It runs to seed in a thousand shapes. Christianity is held to be gloomy, if Christians cannot dance and go to the theatre, which is approved by ministers held in reputation for piety, with reserve of gross immorality; unconverted young men are taken to teach in Sunday schools; and what is really gambling and levity of the most objectionable character goes on in “churches “ancestral or others, in order to make money, to have a fine building and an eloquent and intellectual minister who will bring a crowd. Hired professional singers entertain the congregation; and if the choir be composed of young people, it is the occasion of levity, into the details of which there is no need I should enter here. No one acquainted with churches in the Colonies (some, at any rate: I do not profess to know Australia) and the United States, but knows perfectly well the state of things I refer to, and the practical effect of intellectual improvement in the

young, and the mixture of Christianity and the world connected with it. I dare say the degree of evil may differ, and there are, of course, exceptions; but that of which I speak is sufficiently universal to be characteristic of the state of things. Every one knows that theatre-going and dancing is the common practice of professing Christians in the States; and, if they would tell it, they know a great deal more. Is this the just effect of the death of Christ and the power of the Spirit of God?

But my business is with the principle. Mutual Improvement Societies, for intellectual and Christian advancement, are calculated to maintain the doctrine and order of the “ancestral church.” Is that the Church of God? Is the Church of God an ancestral one? Judaism was an ancestral religion. They were beloved for the fathers’ sake, as they are still. But can a trace be found in the New Testament, in connection with the Church, of an esprit de corps connected with an ancestral church, a church “rich with historic memories”? I understand it in a worldly or patriotic system; but the Church of God is the body of Christ—baptized into one body by one Spirit. With the thought given of the Church of God in scripture, no one thought given here can coalesce. If it be said, We do not pretend it is the Church of God; then it is something substituted for it, which is to engage the affections and activities of all under its influence, forming an esprit de corps to the exclusion of that which is the true Church of God.

It is “our church,” “our ancestral church,” which is to absorb the energies and affections of the heart, not the Church of God: and I must add, of the natural heart, not the affections of the new man by the Spirit, because it is

the body of Christ, composed of the members of His body so dear to Him. It is an esprit de corps, not the Spirit of God, which is to govern; human and historic attachments, not divine affections and Christ Himself. Will this sanctify as Christian motives do? or will it give a Christian colour and name to what, after all, are but carnal feelings, the rudiments of this world (only that the heart is deceived by covering them with the name of the Church), not after Christ? It may enlist clever and improved young men in the Presbyterian system, plunge Christian young men into a low kind of Christianity, and fix their hearts on objects other than Christ, under the name of intellectual improvement, sanctioning worldliness and what they can pursue in common with the world; but it will never, attach the soul to Christ, never make Him all, as He is in all them that are His, will never build up God's Church, nor the individual, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Christ died, that they which live should live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again. He has called us to take up our cross and follow Him. If we would serve Him, we are to follow Him. He has purchased to Himself a peculiar people. We are not to be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind. If we live in the Spirit, we are to walk in the Spirit—to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. We belong to a new creation, not to the fashion of this world which passes away. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and the friendship of the world is enmity against God. We are to seek the victory which overcomes the world by faith. We are not our own, but bought with a price;

our business is to manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies, to walk as He walked. All that is in the world is not of the Father, but of the world.

Now, I ask, If that be the character of Christianity given us by the word of God (with the infinite motive of Christ's self-sacrifice for us, and the blessed object of being conformed to His image, and growing up to Him who is the Head in all things, and manifesting Him, so that the Church should be the effectual epistle of Christ), is there one trace of Christ in what is encouraged in the exhortations of the Moderator of the General Assembly of New South Wales? Is that not casting Christ and His cross into the shade, to clothe with the name of Christian the spirit of the world and an esprit de corps? Is it not the sanction of worldliness to mere attachment, not to Christ and His path, but to a body which the Moderator favours? It is, I know, what is current at the present day, and especially in new countries; but is it the world or the cross and Spirit of Christ, as manifested in the New Testament, and founded on the unutterable worth of the self-sacrifice of the Son of God? I repeat here, The question is, not if a Christian young man is to seek the cultivation and improvement necessary to the effectual pursuit of his providential calling, but whether Christianity and the Church, which Christ has redeemed by His precious blood, and the ministry of the Spirit, is to have for its object, not deliverance from this present evil world (to effect which Christ gave Himself for our sins), but the urging Christian and worldly young men into pursuits which are of the world, and which worldly young men can pursue as well as Christian, and which Christians can only pursue upon motives which can govern the

world as well as them? I confess, I can conceive of nothing more sad than this use of Christianity to colour worldly pursuits in the unconverted, and to engage Christians in objects which continually enfeeble and adulterate their Christianity.

I turn to what is to me a comparatively immaterial object — the Presbyterian system. One system is, I believe, little better than another, and the Presbyterian is dislocated and broken to pieces like the rest. Reunion has been attempted in the Colonies, with, at any rate, partial success; and the same is attempted between the Old and New Schools in the States (that is, between the Colonial and American branches of the Presbyterian body). But the general history of Presbyterianism has been failure, at least as much as that of other Protestant bodies. On the continent of Europe, it is the most infidel of all existing churches so called. Every one knows that it had become almost universally Socinian in England so as to be excluded by law from Lady Howley's charity. The split of Kirk and Free Church is known to all. There are at least three large Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, and the Free Kirk threatened with a disruption within itself by an attempt to unite it with one of them. All this is sad to every godly spirit, and only a part of that sorrowful disintegration which in these last days is going on in Protestantism, to the destruction even of its public testimony.

But Presbyterianism is a snare to some in the present day in this way. It is respectable as an original reformed and national body, has an historic prestige as our Moderator tells us, has had its martyrs; and it is not characterized by the gross superstitions and remains of Romanism which are now both corrupting and

disrupting the English body. Hence it becomes for some a refuge from that sickly corporation, when there is not faith to follow Christ wholly. It becomes thus a part, though a somewhat wearisome part, of one's service in the present day to examine its pretensions, for which the New South Wales Moderator furnishes the occasion.

We can understand a person attached to a body by education (a thousand ties of imagination recalling those who have suffered in founding it, shed the lustre of their faith and sorrows over what we call our church, born within its precincts, christened there, married perhaps there, parents and ancestors buried there, to whom we are attached: ties as strong as those of country or of school and college, with a halo around it of what is distant and divine). We may be very ordinary professors, but our Abrahams, and Moseses, and Davids, saints owned of God, belonged to the body to which we belong. Their good report encircles the brow of the community we personify in our imagination. Still, when we seek for the Church of God, when with the earnestness which the Spirit of God gives, with the conscience awakened and the heart under the influence of the claims of the sacrifice of the Son of God, we seek from the word of God the Church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, when we seek it in its manifestation here below where duty is, when what we owe to the cross has possession of the soul, it becomes impossible to speak or think of an ancestral church.

We want God's Church, if He has one, that in which man has to behave himself fitly, and which is the pillar and ground of the truth, the Church of the living God. It is in vain to say that this is the Church as it will be finally in glory, or the invisible Church. It was a Church where

Timothy was to know how to behave himself, and when directions for elders and deacons and admission of widows had to be given. This was not the glorified Church in heaven. If it be alleged that all this is ruined and gone, let it be acknowledged with humiliation of heart, that what God had planted so lovely has been ruined and has withered under the hand of man. Let us take the place of confession, which becomes such an acknowledgment, and not substitute some other body for it. An imitation church will not do. What is imitation of power? Clothing an unconverted man and an improvement society with the prestige of martyrs who suffered some centuries ago is a very different thing from honouring unfeignedly in grace, as a Christian, those who have suffered because they belong to Christ. The whole state of feeling is different: one is grace owning rich divine grace in others; the other is an unconverted man accrediting himself with what he has no real part in, to the deceiving of his own soul.

But to pursue the main point. It is quite certain that an ancestral church has no place in scripture whatever. There is the Church the body of Christ manifested on earth (as we see in I Corinthians 12) with its various members and gifts; and there is the house of God in which the Holy Ghost dwells, and which, at any rate in its normal state, is the pillar and ground of the truth. There were local churches in the different cities, locally holding (without however any separation from the whole body of believers) the position of the Church of God there. But an ancestral church is a thing wholly unknown to scripture and destructive of every idea there given of the Church of God. It may be the Church of Scotland or of New South Wales; but it is not the Church

of the living God, but something set up instead of it, and which displaces it—displaces it in the heart and affections of the saint—and is thus the contrary to sanctifying (for we are sanctified by the truth), and is an object to which the affections or really rather the passions of the unconverted can be attached, to the misleading of their souls. With such a thought the word of God has lost its authority, and the Holy Ghost its power in the heart.

There cannot be a more delusive word than the word "Church," nor a greater instance of it than the statements of the Moderator. He tells us that the word has only one meaning everywhere. Be it so. But he does not tell us what it means. It means "an assembly." When the town clerk of Ephesus dismissed the assembly in Acts 19:41, it is just the same word. Does this mean a church? The word means neither more nor less than an assembly. It is a mere delusion to say "church "means always the same thing. It does not in English, for a building is thus called so as to deceive many, and in the original it has nothing in itself to do with what we call church. Thus its use in Acts 7, applied to Israel, has nothing whatever to do with its habitual use in the New Testament; or rather it is exactly the opposite (save as the mere fact of its being an assembly, which was true of that dismissed by the town clerk at Ephesus). The assembly in the wilderness was the nation of Israel—no Gentile had a title to approach as such. It was exclusively such. The middle wall of partition was standing: they were bound to keep it up. The essence of the Church of God is that that wall has been broken down, and there is neither Jew nor Gentile. To say that it always means the same thing, and to quote Acts 7 in

saying so, is not only to rest on the surface but to delude oneself if not others.

Take the word: it includes an assembly such as at Ephesus. Take the thing; and the assembly in the wilderness, and God's assembly formed consequent on Christ's death, are founded on principles diametrically opposed and destructive one of another. And the definition ("A church comprehended a society of the people of God ") is as vague and incorrect as may be. A church is an assembly: what is the meaning of "comprehending a society"? An assembly means an assembly; if not actually assembled, it may be used in a general way for those who habitually assemble, but then it is the society. When we speak of the Church in its Christian sense (and that only is what we are occupied with), it is God's assembly founded on the death of Christ, assembled by the power of the Holy Ghost, and dwelt in by Him. Christ gave Himself not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. This is the general idea, for it is only stated here in general.

Now the grand result will be that they will be made perfect in one in glory. That bright and blessed hope is beyond the sphere of our responsibilities, if it helps, as it blessedly does, in them. Christ will present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle. This I trust Dr. Steel looks to, as I, as all saints, in whatever degree of earnestness and intelligence. It is the most blessed view of the Church; but though there might be difference on some points, as to whom "it comprehended," I pass that question by here.

Besides this, which Christ—Christ alone—is building of living stones, and which is yet incomplete, we have the assembly on earth, and that viewed in a double character, as the body and as the house. Ephesians 1 and 1 Corinthians 12 view it as the body; Ephesians 2, 1 Corinthians 3, and 1 Timothy 3 view it as the house. Then again, in each locality the Christians of the place were called the assembly at that place, as they were in fact. The assembly in any given house ("the church in thine house") calls really for no special notice. Anyone can understand that Christians in those days meeting in some large upper-room were the assembly in that house, if they habitually met there. There is no ecclesiastical idea, so to speak, in it. They broke bread at Jerusalem, hat oikon, at home in their houses; but there was an assembly, "the whole assembly," all the saints in Jerusalem, as Acts 5:11; ch. 8:1; in Antioch, chap. 13:1; chap. 14:27; again, Jerusalem, chap. 15:4, 22; and so of a multitude of other places in the Acts. And the Epistles and Revelation 2 and 3 shew the same thing. When a country is spoken of, we find the assemblies of Galatia. It was a very simple fact: there were a number of assemblies in the country. An assembly is not simply all the Christians in the world, but all Christians viewed as assembled into one—and indeed into one body, so that if one member suffer, all suffer with it. There is unity in the pervading power of the Holy Ghost.

For a denominational body there is no room in the scriptural account of the Church or assembly, unless it be "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," I of Luther, I of John Knox or Calvin. Churches are historic or ancestral (that is, not of God or scriptural). There is a great body which teaches beyond this—that of Rome,

the abiding witness of the corruption and ruin of the Church or house of God placed in responsibility on earth, keeping its name and form, but in the hands of Satan and the seat of his power. The Church of England so called is not so distinctively historic. It seemed about to be so in the reign of Edward VI, but in Elizabeth's she, partly from political motives, partly from education and character, sufficiently patched it back again into Romanism to break it up now into violent parties, one clinging to the whore of Babylon, the other to what truth has survived in it, and to a large mass, by its practical incapacity to govern itself or anyone else, opening the door to latitudinarian infidelity, torturing people's hearts by vacillation between ecclesiastical millinery and adoration of the Eucharist on one side, and Colenso on the other. Thank God, there is the immutable faithfulness of Christ to trust to. He will surely have the Church to present to Himself, and we can count upon His unfailing grace now by the way. An ancestral church, with mutual improvement societies maintaining its doctrine and polity by an esprit de corps, is not the Church of God formed and maintained by the Holy Ghost and founded on the work of Christ: for him who looks for the Church of God and bows to the word it is self-condemned.

But the Moderator enters into detail. The office-bearers, he tells us, of the church were elected by the people. There is some difficulty in meeting many statements connected with scriptural questions, because traditional habits have set aside every trace of scriptural ideas or ways. For instance: are preachers (ministers, so-called now) or teachers office-bearers? They are generally thought so, but these were assuredly not chosen by the

people. The Holy Ghost distributed to every man severally as He would. They were not chosen by the people. Prophets were not chosen by the people. There were certain prophets in the church at Antioch. Again we read, “As every man has received the gift, let him so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” When the Lord ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men—pastors and teachers, and evangelists. Then these were not chosen by the people. If they had five talents or two talents, their business was to trade with them: they were evil and slothful servants if they did not. This was regulated in the assembly by rules which provided for order. In the unity of the body, laving gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, we are to minister according to it and wait on it (Rom. 12). I Apollos taught at Ephesus, he taught also at Corinth; he was that member in the body. If an evangelist went forth, even a woman was to test him by doctrine. Diotrephes indeed did not like this vagabond ministry; but Gaius did, and did it faithfully in John’s judgment. They that were scattered abroad in the persecution after Stephen’s death went everywhere preaching the word, and we read (Acts n) the hand of the Lord was with them. So deacons who served well purchased a good degree and great boldness in Jesus Christ, as we see in the case of Stephen and of Philip.

In the matter of the ministry of the word the desire of the people is negatived, by the whole testimony of the New Testament, both in the assembly and to the world. Women were to keep silence; not more than two or three were to speak, and not together but by course; but it was by the distribution of the Holy Ghost they had them all, and not by the desire of the people. If it be said that

these were extraordinary gifts—which is not true of Ephesians 4, leaving aside apostles and prophets who were the foundation—but if they were, do not let us talk of scripture and primitive apostolic practice; because then the whole fabric of scriptural and primitive practice is gone. And a clergy chosen by the people has been substituted for it without any gifts of the Holy Ghost at all. If not, then, as far as the ministry of the word goes, choice by the people is not the scriptural mode, but gift and choice by Christ and the Holy Ghost.

This is a very serious question, because the whole action of the Holy Ghost in ministry is dependent on it. God may act in spite of man's false principles; but it is a serious thing to have such as are a denial of God's way of acting. At any rate the ministry of the word is not by the choice and election of the people, if the expression "office-bearers "is to include them. If it does not, then the Moderator is leaving out all that is most important in real service and in our similarity to apostolic practice.

But the omissions go farther. He does not venture to speak of elders. This is curious in speaking of office-bearers, but then he flies at higher game. The apostles were chosen by the people! This is a curious statement. There were twelve apostles. Eleven, we all know, were chosen by the Lord: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." With these, at any rate, the people had nothing to do; so that, for a warrant for primitive practice, the Moderator is on rather a narrow basis here. Further, after the Holy Ghost came, such a course never was pursued at all. This, I dare say, may be of little weight with Moderators; but those who know that the Paraclete was to guide and lead the Church when come, so that we are to act under what He has given,

will feel this of some importance; the rather as we have an apostle called afterwards who tells us he was neither of men nor by man. Hence the election of an apostle is confined to an act, which took place between the Lord's presence and the Holy Ghost's presence, when neither was there, and never happened before or after: never when the Lord was there, never when the Holy Ghost was there; on the contrary, it is negatived in both cases by the history. None was chosen to replace James; and Paul, we all know, was directly called of God and utterly rejected such a principle. And I must add, it is not true even as to Matthias. They drew lots, after praying the Lord to shew whether of the twain He had chosen, and the lot fell on Matthias. To make this a warrant for universal choice by the Church after the Holy Ghost has been given, after another way of having apostles has been manifested, and no idea of replacing an apostle hinted at, when one was subsequently put to death, is a proof that people have very little (I would humbly say, nothing) to say for the people's choosing office-bearers. They are not going to choose apostles now, I suppose. Why not, if this be the warrant for following primitive practice?

But there is another striking evidence from scripture on this point. Paul knows no apostles till after Christ was exalted and by His only gift. I do not mean that he denied Christ's choice of the twelve of course, but he knows no such apostles in the Church. Christ "ascended up on high and gave some apostles." There is the divine account of the origin of apostles in the Church of Christ. Christ gave some apostles. Who was to choose them? So "God has set in the church, first, apostles," etc. This was the Spirit distributing to every man severally as He

wills. I confine myself to actual proofs. But any one accustomed to the difference of Jewish and Christian order, and the change made by the coming of the Holy Ghost on the exaltation of Christ, would at once do justice to an argument drawn from the drawing lots for an apostle. Indeed it does seem strange to read or hear of such arguments in the Christian Church. But I suppose we must be surprised at nothing.

The Moderator jumps from this very high ground clean over elders, of whom I will speak just now, and lights on the case of deacons, whose election by the people I do not contest, though in terms it is not stated; but the seven were practically such, and the principle of their choice only confirms the evidence of the falseness of the general statement. The apostles would not leave the word of the Lord to serve tables. The people literally ministered of their means to the common wants. The apostles would not have their ministry hindered or interrupted by questions of money and servile, however gracious, care; and they make the multitude choose those who are to minister what the multitude had given. But when the gift was a spiritual gift from Christ, Christ had chosen the person to minister, and they had nothing to choose. The choice was made, the responsibility there; perfect freedom for the workman to get another to go with him, to go alone if called, or to refuse to go on another's work: we find all these cases in scripture. Silas abode at Antioch, Paul gets others to go with him. Apollos, graciously, I believe, would not go to Corinth when Paul graciously wished him. The people chose officebearers for money matters and tables, but for nothing else. The case arose with Paul also. Money was to go from the assemblies for the poor at Jerusalem. Paul

requires them to choose persons to accompany him, providing things honest in the sight of men; 2 Cor. 8.

Dr. Steel tells us bishops and elders are the same. Quite true: scripture shews it as plainly as possibly can be. And they were the important office-bearers of the Church. But is it not singular that no attempt is made to shew that they were chosen by the people? We have seen that the ministers of the word were not: scripture contradicts it in every page. It flowed from gifts, extraordinary or ordinary so-called, which were the effect of Christ's choice, and imposed an obligation, the responsibility being regulated by scripture. The elders or bishops took care (as their name implies, were overseers) of the flock of God; some being ministers of the word, others not; but choice by the people of these true office-bearers the Moderator does not attempt to prove, not even definitely to assert. It was wise: scripture states the contrary. The apostles chose elders for them in necessity (Acts 14:23).67 We learn by this passage that elders were local office-bearers. Gifts were in the body at large, as I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Romans 12, and other passages shew. So also he left Titus in Crete to establish elders in every city—needless surely if the people were to choose them. There is no trace of the election of elders by the people; there is proof of the contrary.

The next point is—Ordination to the office of the ministry was an act of the presbytery. Let us examine this.

To quote Acts 6 is really too bad. "This was preferred," it is said, "by the apostles themselves when they were all together at Jerusalem." I honestly do not understand

what this means. Of presbytery there is not one word; of the ministry, if it means ministry of the word, not a hint: the apostles would not give up the ministry of the word, and so set others to serve tables, and they, the apostles, not the presbytery or elders (they are distinguished, Acts 15), laid their hands upon them. One must be dreadfully hard up to quote this as an ordination to the ministry by the presbytery, seeing that neither is mentioned.

The next case is Paul at Antioch (Acts 13). Here prophets are together, and the Holy Ghost says, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them” —no popular choice of office-bearers, at any rate; and these prophets (not the presbytery, of which there is not a word) laid their hands on them, not to ordain them, but to commend them to the grace of God for the work which they thereupon fulfilled (Acts 14:26). Paul had had hands laid on him before, and received the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17). But this was no presbytery either. At Antioch, which happened afterwards, Paul and Barnabas are sent forth (not ordained) by the Holy Ghost, recommended by the praying prophets to the grace of God. If this be ordination, it is ordination of apostles by laymen.

The only case approaching to such an ordination, though far enough from it, is 1 Timothy 4:14. But the element first noticed is wholly overlooked by these ecclesiastical systems. The gift was in Timothy by prophecy; he was to stir it up. The elderhood accompanied this with their moral recognition; but the ministry, we are certain, was in no way conferred on him by it. It was by prophecy with (or “accompanied by”) the laying on of their hands. But, further, we know that he had received the gift by

the laying on of the apostle's hands (2 Tim. 1:6). If there was any ordination, it was episcopal. The presbytery were only meta (an accompanying circumstance); the gift of ministry was conferred by the apostle. The pretension to imitate this now, as Episcopalians do, by and for unconverted men, is too serious a thing to enter on now by the by.

As far as any evidence of laying hands on office-bearers goes, it is of the same character. It is to Timothy that it is said, "Lay hands suddenly on no man"; while in Paul's address to the elders at Miletus, there is no hint of ordaining elders for the continuation of the polity of the Church.

As to ordination to ministry, it is a mere fable. There is no such thought in scripture. They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. He who had received a talent was bound to trade with it. As every man had received the gift, they were to minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The Holy Ghost distributed to every man severally as He would; and only two or three were to speak, so that they might all prophesy one by one, and all might learn and all be comforted. They were not indeed to be many masters (teachers); but such a direction could have no place with a fixed ministry of one chosen by the people. Women were to keep silence—were not suffered to teach: a prohibition useless, again, if there were simply fixed teachers.

I have referred to the two short epistles of John which confirm in the strongest way the same truth.

Ordination to ministry, meaning thereby the ministry of the word, is an utterly unscriptural thing. Hands were

laid on deacons, or, those equivalent to them, the servers of tables. The laying on of hands was the universal sign of commending to God or conferring blessing: the sick were cured by it; the Holy Ghost was given by it \ men were commended to the grace of God by it. And, though it is never so said, I do not therefore doubt that hands were laid on elders, and that 1 Timothy 5:22 includes them, though not referring to such exclusively. The conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost is (save a special case of the direct interference of the Lord) confined to the apostles; the choosing and establishing elders is the part of the apostles or their delegate,68 as Titus, and of no one else in scripture.

I add, the churches are wanting now, over which they could be named, nor could any pretension to such a place officially be justified, unless it could be said “over which the Holy Ghost hath appointed you overseers.” Membership of a church, it cannot be too pressingly insisted on, is a thing unknown to scripture. All who have the Spirit are members of Christ.

Setting apart men to sacred office (that is, an official clergy, depositaries by ordination of the title to minister the word) is unknown to scripture and contradicted by it.

The next case is an appeal from the decision of a congregation to an assembly of apostles and elders as the office-bearers of the church. This is as unfounded as all the rest. In personal matters such an appeal, instead of being “allowed to members of the church,” is positively denied to members of the scriptural congregation. If the congregation or assembly were not

heard, he was to be as a heathen man and a publican; that is, appeal is precluded.

But Acts 15 is referred to. Here was a question, not of members of a congregation, but one affecting the whole standing and unity of the Church of God: was it to be circumcised or not, brought down to Judaism or be the Church of God in which is neither Jew nor Greek? In fact the question was whether there was to be a Church of God at all. Paul and Barnabas discussed with these false teachers: the church came to no decision at all. God permitted the Apostle Paul not to succeed then in putting it down, I do not doubt, in order that the Jewish part of the church might decide the question, that unity might be fully preserved, and, what I may call, the Jewish apostolate settle the question. At any rate, there was no decision and no appeal. Paul was unable to put down the false teachers. The local assembly decided nothing. The apostles and elders came together to consider the matter. It was no gathering of delegates or official assembly. The apostles and elders came together to consider it, and with them, it appears, all the brethren; at any rate, they take part in the letter and sending of Judas and Silas. But it was the local church of Jerusalem and nothing else. Could a local church or even what is called a church court say, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, and bind the whole Church of God with apostolic authority, by the decrees (the dogmata) which they issue? Does the Moderator think that the assembly which he presided over could bind the whole Church of God by its decrees with apostolic authority, and say, on a question affecting the whole Church of God, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us? If they say, No, we only pretend to govern our own church, then

their rhurch is not the Church of God, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterians bears not the smallest analogy to the meeting of the apostles to deliberate on what footing the common Christianity of the saints was to be founded. Indeed the Moderator gets on dangerous ground here, and ground which would effectually guard every sober mind against Presbyterian ideas of their courts and judicatories.

“Apostolic dicta [we are told], pronounced by inspired lips, did not settle the controversies of the early Church.” But apostolic dicta by inspired lips are the word of God. “If any one be spiritual,” says the apostle, “let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” It is rather strong language to say that apostolic dicta from inspired lips could not finally settle a controversy, but that a church-representative judicatory, a General Assembly of Scotland or New South Wales, could. If this be not so, the whole statement is idle talk.

But whom did the apostle represent? For we read, in the Moderator’s discourse, the government of the church was representative. Is that the true character of apostolic authority in virtue of which they made decrees binding on the Church? They represented the Lord who had given them authority. They exercised it from the beginning. They started with it as given by the Lord, and what they bound was bound in heaven. Was that because they represented the Church, or derived from the Lord? They had it when there was no such assembly to represent. To say it was an assembly of bishops or elders is quite false, unless apostolic authority goes for nothing. Supreme power is in Christ and in Christ only. He is Son over the house; He conferred it on the

apostles. He has promised indeed to be with His people in every way in which they serve Him; but John would make listening to apostles a test of truth. “He that is of God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” Yea, where the two or three are gathered together, there He is, and from the authority there exercised in its place there is no appeal (Matt. 18). The language of the Moderator is very dangerous and unscriptural.

Further, it is a mere Scottish prejudice to call Christ “King of the Church.” The leaders of that system may have meant very well; but it is wholly unscriptural. Scripture never speaks of Him as King of the Church. The Church has a much higher place. It is His body and His bride. Nay, when He takes His great power and reigns, we shall reign with Him. He is on His Father’s throne now; when He sits on His own, those who overcome will sit there with Him. It is a wholly false and unscriptural dogma, derogatory to the glory and truth of the Church and to the value of Christ’s death and love, to make Christ King of the Church.

A gradation of judicatories is a miserable fable contradicted formally by Matthew 18 and attempted to be confirmed by the utmost (and that a very dangerous) perversion of Acts 15.

As to all elders not having gift to minister in word and doctrine, it is true. Still as a rule they were if possible to be apt to teach.

Thus far I have discussed the Moderator’s statements, the common ground of Presbyterianism; but there are important points left out. The Presbyterian body, as did

all the Reformers, profess sacramental regeneration. I have often heard this pooh-poohed, for self-esteem is not lacking to Presbyterianism; but there is not a doubt of it. The difference between their doctrine and the Anglican and Lutheran on the subject is, that both the latter hold that the efficacy of baptism takes effect in all the baptized, but that then the participator may be lost after all—a strange result when both profess to believe in electing grace. But that is not our subject now. The Presbyterian holds that the effectual saving grace of baptism applies only to the elect. The consequences of this Romanist heretical error on certain essential truths are various. The effect with Presbyterians is, that they hold that the effect of baptismal grace may be produced at forty years' distance of time from the celebration of the rite.

There is no telling what theological teaching may bring the mind into—making God out of a piece of flour and eternal life out of a bowl of water! Charge me not with irreverence. The irreverence is in those who invent such superstitions. The expression of "making God "is the commonest and usual expression for transubstantiation; and conferring eternal life by a little water is discussed in Luther's Catechism and taught in the English one, of course in the Roman, and, as I shall now shew, in the Presbyterian. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." Thus the benefits of the new covenant are applied by the sacrament. In the Confession of Faith it is limited to the elect, and that in a very definite way. "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 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 will, in His appointed time." Nothing can be plainer than that. By the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is conferred by the Holy Ghost when God sees fit "in His appointed time." Nothing can be more definite, precise, and positive.

I pass over, in the Moderator's discourse, the self-applause as to catholicity; but I turn for a moment to the declaration of its being effectual to secure unity of doctrine. The Moderator confines it, it is true, to Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians; for religion goes by nations now, not by grace. It is wise to do so; because German, Swiss, and French Presbyterianism has fallen into gross infidelity, as everyone knows,, whatever partial reaction may have set in in a very few places. But even among Anglo-Saxons it really is a fiction. In England the mass of them have been Socinians, as I have already noticed, and a large body of them, as every one knows in Ireland, Arians. Not only so: the Australian Moderator boasts of 6,000 clergymen in the States who (of course making allowance for individual exceptions) have unity of doctrine and form one body. Did the Moderator ever hear of Old school and New school Presbyterians, two entirely distinct bodies, one holding to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession as to high Calvinist doctrine, the other Arminian? Civilities have passed between them lately in hopes of a reunion, but there at

present it remains. Other divisions, in the old world, not in doctrine, are notorious. I cannot say whether Old school or New school be the most numerous body at this moment. One thing is certain that Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians have not unity of doctrine and are separate bodies because of diversity in it.

Does the Moderator soberly believe that intelligent unity of doctrine obtains in all Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian churches on this statement? “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” I delight in the sovereignty of God; but surely I could find a good many Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians, and ministers too, who do not believe in reprobation. I doubt that all hold the imputation of Adam’s guilt. I find very many doctrines in the Confession that no Anglo-Saxon could intelligently hold; but it would involve a controversy on doctrine beyond the limits of this paper and be a kind of attack on the Confession, which is not my object.

But I will notice one point which I do not see how any intelligent Christian could accept: “The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.” Again, “God gave to Adam a law, a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it. This law after his fall continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and as such was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments and written on two

tables." All this is a fable and a mischievous fable. And I notice it because it is the foundation of the whole religious system to which it belongs.

The Trinity, the divinity and humanity of Christ, the atonement, fundamental facts or doctrines of the gospel, are believed in by Romanists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, by all who have any right to the name of Christian. It is when you come to apply these truths to man's relation with God, to sin, the convincing man of it, the means of removing it, the application of the remedy, and the relation of man to God, whether under law or gospel, that divergence in doctrine commences. The Romanist makes sacraments the means of life, and, together with good works, of forgiveness and justification. The latter point Protestantism, unless often the Wesleyans and formalists, has escaped from. Anglicans teach sacramental forgiveness and regeneration, and in the Puseyite phase are as near popery as dishonest people dare. Presbyterians hold, as we have seen, salvation and regeneration by sacraments. It is the opposition to the truth in these things which is now breaking up the public testimony of Protestants: some turning back to the anti-christian principles of Romanism; some running loose into infidelity. Disgusted with the corruptions of popery, finding no rest in the narrow and powerless systems of Protestantism, and having no faith in the word of God, such are cast upon the hopeless and desolating folly of their own minds. This quarrel I have not with the Presbyterians, and I thank God for it. I thank God for every public stay He may allow to subsist against the current of popery and infidelity. But they have formed such a system of theoretic doctrine without the word—a system which keeps souls in the greatest

bondage and so falsifies our true relationship with God—that it is impossible for one who really bows to the word, and stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, to accept its teachings. It may answer in some respects to new countries for another reason. There is some order, yet it is democratic, although in the United States Methodists and Baptists are far ahead of them in numbers. In old countries it is in as great disruption as Anglicanism, or fallen into universal infidelity; but with all this I have nothing to do. My business is with souls, and with the word of God. And I take this point, of the giving of the law to Adam, as at the root of their system. It is a very mischievous fable.

Where is a trace of promise of life to Adam and his posterity if they exactly kept the law? It is a pure invention, falsifying Adam's real position and relationship with God in order to propitiate the law of the ten commandments. There is not a tittle of scripture for it. Adam, having life, was tested by a positive well-known commandment of not eating the forbidden fruit; and the perfectness of this consisted in the point that there was no intrinsic moral question in it. It was a test of simple obedience to a sinless being with a threat of death (for life he had). A promise of life to Adam on keeping a moral law, which supposed the knowledge of good and evil, is a mischievous fable, and denies the whole position of Adam who was innocent. There would have been no harm in eating that fruit more than another, unless it had been forbidden. And, as I have said, this test of obedience was the only true one for an innocent being, not, as is alleged, a righteous and holy one (both which terms suppose the knowledge of good and evil, delighting in one and abhorring the other).

Adam acquired the knowledge of good and evil by his disobedience: “The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” But this by the by. What I insist on is, there was no promise of life, which supposed he had it not; but a threat of death, which supposed him to be alive, but alive innocent with no knowledge of good and evil.

And when you come to details, just see, I must say, the nonsense of this system which Presbyterians accept by tradition. This law, we are told, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai “in ten commandments and written on two tables.” Think of bidding Adam to honour his father and his mother, and that his days might be long in the land Jehovah his God gave him! Think of his being forbidden to steal—nay, what is more material, not to lust or covet! Cannot these doctors see that the law supposes sin to be there in the prohibition of it, and that (unless in the case of honouring parents, which could not possibly apply to Adam) all the commandments without exception are prohibitions of sin, or refer, as the fourth, to the labour which came in as the present punishment of sin? All this is not a mere mistake of interpretation, or an imperfect way of putting things (of which I should have much to say on the Confession of Faith, and to which we are all liable); but it is grave and fundamental error on man’s original relationship with God, and on the true state of our actual relationships too. The basis of the entire system of moral relationship with God in Presbyterianism is false; and it has tainted the whole Evangelical system everywhere. I believe it had its origin in the Reformation, or rather in reformed popery; but it has on this point been formalized in

Presbyterianism as it has been nowhere else; and I defy anyone to give the smallest atom of scripture, or (if he knows what sin and innocence mean) of common sense either. It is a theological system without a scriptural basis, and absurd upon the face of it (assuming Adam's innocence; that is, believing the scriptural statement).

This is strong language to me as to the famous Confession of Faith; but the times are serious. We want the truth. We want the solid basis of scripture, of the word of God, for what we hold. Nothing else will stand in these days. Men may deny that word; but then we know what we have to do with. Men may set up conventional systems; but then popery is the strongest and will prevail, or infidel disgust throw up all, and (as I believe) devour at the end popery itself. But my business now is with the truth. Thank God, many Presbyterians love the Lord, and their traditional errors are partially dissolved in the power of grace, though, I believe, their system affects and injures their Christianity. Still every saint will cordially recognize every one in whom grace is. At any rate, that is what pleases God and is the true bond of comfort to the saint; but our question now is with a system of doctrine injurious to the saints we do love. In many parts I do not believe the Confession of Faith is really held by those who maintain it, as in the doctrine of absolute reprobation. Indeed it notoriously is not. They may talk about mysterious and deep truths when we bow. I have no objection to bowing to God on such points—it becomes us; but they do not believe what is stated in the Confession of Faith—I mean a vast number do not. And I affirm that what they do believe, the promise of life to Adam by keeping the ten commandments, is an absurd and unscriptural folly, and

one which subverts his and our relations to God, fatally modifying the truth of the gospel when it is preached.

I have done. My object has not been to attack the Confession of Faith, nor the Moderator, but to discuss some great principles which interest every Christian individually and the whole Church of God as such. My appeal is to the word of God, aided (as we all must be to use it to profit) by the grace and Spirit of God. And I cannot but think that the traditional teaching of the Presbyterians as to doctrine and polity will be found utterly wanting when compared with the word. If any Presbyterian should read this paper, I ask a patient comparison with the word of God. They are used to come to the scriptures full of the Confession of Faith and the longer and shorter Catechisms. It is generally the first glory of their system that they are religiously brought up and carefully instructed in doctrine. But there is the danger accompanying this valuable care that they bring a complete system, already formed in the mind, to the study of the word of God. This is a great evil. “Ille bene legit,” says Hilary as to scripture, “qui non affert sed refert sensum.”

I might have made a host of objections, but it was not my object. But no one can complain if great and vital principles, such as the question on what ground Adam stood before God, and the like, are examined in the light of scripture.

64 An Address delivered at the opening of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, October 23rd, 1867, by the Rev. Dr. Steel, Moderator of the General Assembly. Sydney, 1867.

65 Cunningham’s Historical Theology, vol. i, p. 68.

66 Davidson’s Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament, p. 123; Stoughton’s Ages of Christendom, p. 31.

67 In foreign translations, as Martin in French, and Diodati, in Italian (the last generally the best and most exact of old translations that I know), it is added “par la voix des assemblies,” and “per voti communi.” But there is no ground whatever for this. Saul and Barnabas chose for them (autois) elders, and Acts 10:41 takes away all possible excuse for such a translation.

68 These also had nothing to do with a local bishopric.

Letter To A Christian Friend, In Reply To A Presbyterian Minister,

On The Subject Of The Law, The Sabbath, Ministry, And The Sacraments

Preface

It may be well, by way of preface, and for the information of those into whose hands the following letter and reply may come, to state the circumstances under which they were written. A Presbyterian minister having been applied to for the loan of his chapel, for the purpose of preaching the gospel, thought it his duty not only to refuse but also to write the accompanying letter, in which, as the reader will perceive, he touches upon four very important points—points which claim the unprejudiced investigation of every lover of truth.

The importance of the subjects thus brought forward, and not a desire for controversy, has induced the person to whom the letter was addressed to send forth to the Church both it and the reply, which latter has been written by one who is incessantly engaged in the work of the ministry.

It is earnestly hoped that the Christian reader will so far apprehend his elevation above all the mists of rancorous theological discussion, as to be enabled, with a cool and dispassionate judgment, to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” Truth, and not the miserable interests of a party, should ever be the object of the judicious and reflecting Christian, whose privilege it is to be completely free from men, and the system of men,

and to stand forth only as the advocate of truth in all the largeness and liberty of that word. It is, however, impossible that we can arrive at truth when we are seeking for something short of it; for of truth, as well as of wisdom, it may be said, “Those that seek me early shall find me.”

Should the following pages fall into the hands of one whose heart and conscience have not yet found rest in Jesus and His atoning blood, we would earnestly and affectionately point his eye, not to the subject of these pages, but to “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” and we would exhort him to flee, by that unerring path, from the unmitigated and terrible “wrath to come.”

Letter

Letter My dear Sir,

I consulted my brethren on the propriety of granting your request; they were strongly and unanimously opposed. I may say I cordially agreed with them.

The church is not ours, but the Lord’s, and we would be glad to give it to any who were doing His work; but we believe you, and those of your mind, are endeavouring (not knowingly) to overturn divine institutions; we, therefore, cannot say God speed. The sabbath is a divine institution—a relic of paradise—a type of heaven—a day that God commands us to keep holy—no business, pleasure, or recreation—a day that God’s people have delighted in. Prophets and apostles have but one voice with regard to it— “I love the Lord’s day” —a day that God has preserved as a standing miracle for religion, and honoured it above all days—Pentecost, John in the isle of Patmos, etc. We believe that no sin does God

oftener visit with His manifest displeasure so much as the violation of the sabbath. Therefore, with those who would take away this day, or bring it down to a level with other days, we can hold no fellowship—we must look upon them as enemies of God and of righteousness.

Again, as to the law, we hold it to be the will of God that it cannot change, nor can our obligation to keep it ever cease. There is infinitely greater obligation upon us to obey the law than was upon Adam; and while the unregenerate hate the law, we believe God's people love it. "Oh! how I love thy law." The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good: we can give no sympathy to those who magnify one attribute of God, at the expense of another. We love the justice and righteousness, as well as the mercy, of God; and we believe that His law will be the rule of life in heaven as well as earth.

Again, as to the ministry, we hold it a divine appointment for the edifying of the body of Christ; and, therefore, any who intrude themselves into this office, or undertake the duties without being called to it, and set apart, as was Aaron, and in gospel times as Timothy (1 Tim. 4:4), and, therefore, also enter by another way, and take the office, and perform the duties—the same is a thief and a robber. Your views also of the sacraments are, as we conceive, entirely erroneous—taking away from them a great part of their meaning, and degrading them to a mere rite of commemoration; while we hold that in these ordinances the soul makes covenant with God.

You may think my conduct strange—refusing now what I once made offer of. At that time I thought your views were not so erroneous, and that you might be brought to

see the truth. I am now forced to abandon you, believing you to be an enemy of Christ (not by design, but by not knowing the truth). Praying that God may lead you to receive and acknowledge the truth, I remain, in affection, yours, ******

Reply

My dear Brother,

I have read Mr. A.'s letter. I like the plain decision of it, and I admit the importance of the questions involved in the points he speaks of; and though I should not speak as harshly of him, as he does of you, I do not dissemble to myself that the nature of Christianity is involved in it. I take it for granted that Mr. A. is a real servant of Christ, not knowing him, and that he rests the hope of his soul on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, and other fundamental truths common to all who are really Christians. I add that, because I say the points involve the nature of Christianity, I do not mean those great points without the faith of which a man could not be a Christian, but the ground he stands on as a Christian, in virtue of the truth of them. Did I not suppose Mr. A. to be built on the great foundation of everlasting truth, I could not reason on the points he proposes. Still I do admit that the nature of Christianity practically is involved in the questions more or less. As to having their place to preach in, this would not be a reason to me for replying, for I would not have it if offered, were I in your neighbourhood; and it almost tends to turn me aside from replying to you or Mr. A.'s letter, its being connected with a question of preaching in his chapel. I do not believe that they are enemies of Christ, as Mr. A. calls you; but I do believe that he who

wrote you this note is, or they are, ignorant of the real nature of Christianity, and of the truth on the points in question, as taught in the New Testament; and that the difference affects man's state, the nature of the gospel, the effect of Christ's death and resurrection, not as to fundamental orthodoxy, but as to its application to man.

I am sure Mr. A. is quite unaware of it, but his view upsets man's total ruin, and the ground of a sinner's standing. Nor do I think he knows "what he says or whereof he affirms," while "desiring to be a teacher of the law." For it is most certain that man under law, converted or unconverted, regenerate or not, is lost, unless Christ be a mere maker-up of deficiency —a doctrine, I am persuaded, Mr. A. would repudiate.

For the law must press a man for what he is himself, if he be under it. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" —not as many as have violated, but as many as are on that principle. (I am sure in Mr. A. it is merely ignorance.) They that be of faith are blessed— this is not blessing in keeping the law, and curse in violating it. Were it so, all would be infallibly under the curse, for man is a sinner; the regenerate man, the flesh being in him, fails; if he is under the law, he is under the curse. No doubt, the law is abstractedly good; but man is a sinner in nature before he gets it, and is necessarily and wholly lost under it.

In vain he says he is regenerate; the law knows no such distinction; it asks, Are you such as I require? No, I am not, says the regenerate man (who indeed alone truly says so). Then, says the law, I curse you. But you say, I am not under you for justification, but as a rule. But, I curse you, says the law, because you have not kept the

rule; and it will not and cannot do anything else. It is in vain to say we do not put man under it for justification. It puts him under itself for condemnation, if he has anything to say to it.

I quite admit that the law is the rule (not of life, indeed, so as to obtain it, but) of existence and joy in heaven; and that it would be on earth (taken in its highest character in the commandments the Lord extracts from the Old Testament, as that on which law and prophets hang), if man were not a sinner; but then his redemption would not be necessary. But he is a sinner; and hence, under law, he is under curse. It cannot be a rule of life to a sinner, because it is a rule of death; not because it is not holy, just, and good, but because it is, and man is a sinner. Viewed in his new nature, I do not doubt man fulfils the law as a new creature; for love is the fulfilling of the law; but this does not put him under it. The reasoning of the apostle is that you need not put him under it; for he alone who was not under it in spirit kept it; that, as an administered code, it was the strength of sin—entered when man was already a sinner, that the offence might abound; that sin, taking occasion by it, wrought all manner of concupiscence, and rendered sin excessively sinful; in fine, that we could not have two husbands at a time, nor seek blessing on two principles; that we are not under law, but under grace; and if led by the Spirit, we are not under law, Christ having delivered us from it, being dead to the law by the body of Christ.

In a word, the scripture testifies, that put a man under the law, and he is (sinner or saint) a cursed, dead, condemned creature; that it is a ministration of death, and a ministration of condemnation. Mr. A. has not kept it; if he is under it, he is lost; it knows no mercy, and

God’s holiness can allow no mitigation of its terms. I cannot have the two husbands: dead to the one, we are married to another—even to Christ risen. In His death, which infinitely magnified it, as in life He honoured it, I am dead to it—risen, He is not under it, though as a new life He fulfils its principles in me, by having taken me from under it by redemption. He who says, I am under law, in principle denies the redemption of Christ. Fulfilling it, without being under it, yea, by not being under it. Scripture speaks of the Christian being under it never. In a word, the Christian, viewed as a new creature, accomplishes the law, for he loves and does no ill to his neighbour; but he is not placed under it (for if he were, he would be condemned by it); he sees that Christ alive on earth was, and in death bore its curse, and in the power of redemption delivered us from it; while He communicates a nature to us as risen, which delights in it and does it, but does not put the believer under it.

As regards the sabbath, Mr. A. is on the same ground. He says it is a relic of paradise. This equally denies (unintentionally I fully believe) both judgment and redemption. There is no relic of paradise and no rest in creation as it is. The seventh day was the rest of God in creation. And subsequently, when Israel was put under the law, to live by it and be blest in creation (though faith had then better things in view), it was given as a sign of the covenant with them. But we believe and have learned that creation is ruined, and judgment and redemption have excluded us from and taken us victoriously out of it into a new creation. Hence Christ passed the sabbath in the grave—it was buried, and our hopes of blessing here with Him in His grave. He

claimed Lordship over it in title of His person. Sin had spoiled creation: we are a new creation; the old is judged; and Christ is risen into and to be the Head of a new one, in a new condition of man. Into this in spirit we are brought, as hereafter in our true rest in glory. Hence the resurrection of Christ is the day which marks out this to us, not the close of creation-labour, as the seventh was, but the beginning of resurrection and new creation-blessing. The seventh day was the sabbath, as God's rest after the creation. This is not our rest. He has said "arise and depart: it is polluted." The first day distinctively, and not the seventh, is the day marked out to us. The labour to prove it a seventh, or as some have done, the seventh, is unintelligent labour to destroy the distinctive Christian position which has its birth-place of blessings in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the first (not on the seventh) day of the week. The seventh was rest according to the law, and looked to man to work aright; but find it he could not. Redemption has brought him into it; but that is in the power of resurrection, the beginning of a new creation. Hence, I believe, the answer of the Lord when challenged with breaking the sabbath, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." We cannot rest either in sin or in misery. The first day of the week He entered into the fruits of His work. The sabbath then was the rest of creation, and the sign of the covenant with Israel. Our testimony is, that both have wholly failed, and there is no rest in them; and the grave of Christ has closed that whole scene and condition of existence, and begun a new one in which we have a part.

But the first day of the week is marked out to the Christian, not indeed as law, but as blessing. Christ rose,

Christ met His disciples on it, and again the same week following. On the first day of the week the disciples met to break bread: on the first day they were to lay by their profits for the poor saints; and in the Revelation it is definitely called the Lord's day. As such I own it; but I do not, with Presbyterian traditions, abandon the foundations of my hope, in seeking rest in the creation in which Christ has been rejected, nor in the covenant of the law of which He bore the curse. The Lord's day is the first day, not the seventh, and rests on redemption basis, which declares entire failure of the other rest.

The views expressed in Mr. A.'s note are on these points ignorance of the very ground on which Christianity rests. I may add, that I doubt not in accomplishment the seventh day and the first prefigure the earthly and the heavenly rest respectively in the millennial period.

Finally, as regards ministry, fewer words will suffice. I believe ministry to be an institution of God, and distinctively so, grace looking for spiritual testimony, whether evangelical to the world, or in edification to the church; as a people in covenant under the law, and unable directly to approach God needed a priesthood—two points which Mr. A. confounds, as he did the two systems on the other two heads. But it is the ministry and manifestation of the Spirit; but if he holds that it depends upon man's appointment and man's call, he upsets the whole testimony of the New Testament, the point of which is, that a man traffics with his talents given, because he trusts his Master. But if Mr. A. makes the Presbyterian system the call of God, he will find only sectarian support. If he admits other calls too, then neither is scriptural; and the only point insisted on is, that man should meddle in it; and in reality it becomes

geography, and, for the most part, academical provision for unconverted men taking care of unconverted flocks. If he calls this the scriptural call of God, it is bold dealing with holy things. If he insists on I Timothy 4:14, to what pastoral care was Timothy ordained? If any thing, he was a diocesan bishop. But he was not this, but as the spiritual right hand of the apostle, as Titus was in Crete. I admit the call of God—the necessity of the call of God—to the various services of the ministry, whatever it may be. That man should sanction it, or make academies or geography out of it, or pastors over a mass of unconverted people in a geographical district, or unconverted pastors over Christ's sheep, no one will be able to shew me from scripture; and to scripture I must be excused for adhering.

The Presbyterian ecclesiastical system is not attempted to be justified from scripture in their public authorized documents. The attempt would be absurd. Every one the least conversant with scripture must know that the ministry of the word was exercised by every class of persons, without any warrant but the call of God and the love of Christ constraining them; and that apostles had not a thought of calling it in question, nor dreamed of ecclesiastical sanction being requisite for its exercise—and this at all times from the commencement of Christian ministry to the end. John does not say, as to evil teachers, Let them shew their ordination, nor Paul as to those who preached of contention, nor call in question those who waxed bold through his bonds, nor those who were scattered abroad after Stephen's persecution, with whom the hand of the Lord was. Within the church it is notorious, that, as every one received the gift, he was to minister it as a good

steward. One had a psalm, another an interpretation, another a doctrine; and the only check was, Let all be done decently and in order—all to edification, the manifestation of the Spirit being given for profit; and hence more than two or three were not to speak at a meeting. In these things the discipline of the church of God would come in according to scripture, as is evident in case of teaching error. The clerical system is the denial of God's title in the ministry. In the reformed church abroad this is now generally admitted by those sound in the faith, and even strongly written against by well-known evangelical ministers of the Establishment.

The point of the sacraments, so called, only remains. Mr. A.'s statements are on the same wretched legal ground —man makes a covenant with God in them. I reply, If he does, he is lost, for he will certainly fail, and there can be no consequence of failure (for it is sin) but condemnation; for man's entering into a covenant is not grace—the grace of God. I account baptism and the Lord's supper to be precious institutions of the Lord Jesus: one as admitting publicly in the church on the principle of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the other, spiritual fellowship of His death in the unity of the body, as sitting by grace in heavenly places.

But talking of making a covenant with God is merely total ignorance of the whole place we are in. I was not aware these poor brethren were so very far removed in their minds from the true Christian place in which the grace, the blessed grace, of God has set us. Does Mr. A. really think he has to begin now and make a covenant with God? What does he think of redemption? or where does he find a word in scripture of a covenant in connection with the supper of the Lord? But in his letter

the whole christian position is lost; and we are put simply where a Jew under the law was—and worse, because he was placed there that we might learn that we could not possibly stand there.

Affectionately yours, dear brother,

J.N.D.

Dr. Capadose And The Dutch Reformed Church

(To the Editor of the Bible Treasury)

Allow me to send you some extracts from a pamphlet recently published in Holland by Dr. Capadose, a man well known in Holland and elsewhere, as a Christian (converted from Judaism, I suppose, nine and thirty years ago), and valued and respected in the religious world since. It is not for clearness of views, as to the Church, nor an exact interpretation of scripture, that I send it: I should think, from some expressions, he is not what I should account clear on these heads. I send it as a sign of what is going on in the world; and to all a solemn warning as to where we are. It is earnest, serious, with feeling ardently genuine, and contains principles of the deepest importance; and if some prophetical points, or apprehensions of the unity of the body, be not clearly seized, and that the circumstances of the reformed church, so-called, in Holland, have led Dr. Capadose's mind to the conclusion he has arrived at more by conscience as to the evil than by attraction of the good, it is only so much the more a witness, that in all circumstances where the Spirit of God is acting, the sense of the times we are in presses on the spirit. The conclusion Dr. Capadose has arrived at has been the conviction of the writer of this these nine and thirty years, and is participated in by a vast number of your readers. I give these extracts as additional testimony from an upright and right-feeling soul of the state things are come to. For indeed what was a matter of principle forty years ago is now verifying before our eyes. The

doctrines of the Church, of the rapture of the saints, are a relief and source of consolation and joy in the midst of the evil. May Dr. C. find this too!

The principles of his pamphlet, however sorrowful the occasion, are as true as they are urgent. The public ministry of the reformed body in Holland is almost universally infidel, and, since the publication of Mr. Renan's Life of Jesus, this infidelity has become bold and pretentious. This is what seems to have urged Dr. C. to the step he has taken. The inscription of the pamphlet is Isaiah 52: n, 12, which I give in the English translation: "Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bare the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward." I now give the preface: it shews the spirit of the work.

"I hope the few pages which follow here will be read and weighed with the same seriousness as that with which the writer has penned them. They have not, however small in compass, to thank a fugitive passing emotion for their origin. No! already for more than a year, my heart has been urged by the feeling of an urgent need to communicate openly and make known the results at which I have arrived with the deepest conviction, what a ripe and continually repeated searching out has taught me of the painful state of the church of our fatherland, and what the holy calling of Christian professors within this requires. I must give testimony. And not only do I feel myself compelled to this for myself, but I must recommend to and press on others with all insistence, the holy way of earnest search. I am conscious, moreover, of having in these pages respected the

conscience of brethren who think otherwise, though not without fraternal exhortation. Let each search his heart and follow what is enjoined him by the Spirit of God, but distinguish there also well what God's Spirit wills. The state of mere appearances (that is, of lies) must cease where people desire to follow the truth in everything. It is happy for myself that I know and love upright brethren in all churches who are attached to the same principles of life and faith; and, trusting to remain to the end, in the strength of Jesus the Lord and Saviour, His witness, and to be able to persevere as a living member of Christ's Church, I here declare openly and officially, that I cannot belong to any church communion so called."

Dr. C. states that he cannot really call it separation, for the simple reason that he no longer recognizes any Netherland reformed church as such remaining among them. He goes over the ground of former evil and trying states of the church: but that never was there an open combating on a wide-spread scale, by teachers of the church, of the Christian faith within the Church itself, not only before the reading public, but from the pulpit itself, and baptism and the Lord's supper administered and profaned (and that unhindered) by persons who are not Christians. "This is," he adds in a note, "unhinderedly allowed, while people strongly deny to Christians, but who are not ordained, competency to do it. I myself," he says, "approve for order's sake, that the administration of the sacraments in the normal state of the Church, by unordained men, should not be permitted, but judge that the ordained modern teacher, who wants what is the fundamental principle of a Christian, is far away less competent for it than the

believing brother, who wants the fundamental ecclesiastical principle of ordination for it." I thought it well thus far to shew what Dr. Capadose's principles are, not to misrepresent his mind.

I now add what is more important. He says, "If people will give the Dutch reformed body the name of church, they must call her the church of confusion, not a Christian church, and thus no reformed church"; and that he must leave what thus steals the name. If others hope for restoration, for his part in no case can he cherish any hope of her restoration. Many efforts earlier in the work, and more definitely some four and twenty years on a broad scale, and shewing sympathy with the reformed congregations in his country, might, perhaps, have led to restoration; but, if not absolutely opposed, certainly were not supported or furthered even by well-minded ministers. "They have let the opportunity be lost, and now, through this much-to-be-lamented want of zeal, the canker of infidelity has penetrated continually deeper and deeper, and we are come to the beginning of that apostasy of which Paul speaks (2 Thess. 2), that definite apostasy from Christ, which must precede the revelation of Antichrist. And this apostasy, already long prepared beforehand, is nothing but the consistent development of the unresisted, if not fostered, progress of infidel science in the Church… Yet the epoch of apostasy is there, and will continually spread more and more, as well in every worldly government which by its institutions more and more excludes God, as in all churches wherein the true Christ, the God-man, will be more and more denied by the deifying of man. Do we not forget the reproving saying of our Lord: 'Ye can understand the face of the sky, but can ye not discern

the signs of the times'? "He notices the breaking out of it in Roman Catholic and Protestant countries at the same time, and presses the fact of the growing canker of infidelity, and the near approach of the dissolution of the different churches.

"The Church of Christ, the Church of the crucified One, that and that alone has the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; but also the holy calling to bear the cross after the crucified One." "The voice of the Lord calling in the signs of the times makes us hear a higher claim. The question is not of a choice between church and church, but between Christ and Antichrist." … "The Lord Jesus calls all who believe in Him in truth to unite themselves together round Him, as He in its own time will bring together all His elect out of all tongues, peoples, nations, and races. So He calls now His believing ones out of reformed, out of dissenting, out of Lutheran, out of Roman, and other churches, to attach themselves to Him; and to go away from places where Belials are to be found, by the side of Christ. The great and mighty combat begins, if we can call a fire-proof combat. Let the Lord's word be a light in everything, a light to our path, and that word calls to us. Do not bear the same yoke with the unbeliever," etc.

What I have transcribed will give, I think, a just idea of this earnest appeal. Though there may be a mistaken application of some passages as to the apostasy and trial, I heartily feel that the apostasy in principle is begun, so that on this point the appeal is just, and I am not afraid of a mistake in interpretation which does not affect the substance of it.

Dr. Capadose adds extended reasoning on the particular proofs of what he insists on in the Netherland reformed church so-called, urges at length that believers should not be arrested by temporal difficulties in presence of the faithfulness of the Lord, and adds a kind of second part where he insists that, if the clergy have not the courage to leave the system, they should at least absolutely separate (in every religious service of every kind, schools, and all Christian service) from those who deny Christ. The details of these parts I do not give. It is the solemn warning (one of the multiplied signs of the times, the proof of the principles which, by the operation of the Spirit of God, are at work in men's minds), which, I thought, might be alike in the best sense interesting and profitable to your readers.

Liverpool, June 22nd, 1866.

A Short Answer To The Last Article By Count De Gasparin,

Published in the “Archives du Christianisme”

I shall not follow you in the way upon which you have entered, sir, by taking up expressions to which this controversy may have given rise: I might quote some of yours which are stronger perhaps than those I made use of. I disdain troubling myself about them; and should not have perceived those to which I allude, if you had not taken up similar ones of mine. It is a question of serious things, and not of expressions which may escape us in communicating our convictions in a rapid controversy. I do not believe that you bear me any ill-will; if you do, I pardon you and pity you: if the controversy has irritated you, I regret it. I willingly plead guilty as to all expressions which pain you, if you yield to the force of my arguments, or, better still, to the teaching of scripture which I have brought forward. I desire, sir, as you do, that our discussion should not degenerate into a dispute: but you will allow me to present to you some of your own remarks, in order to excuse myself for having used the word weariness with reference to our controversy.

You acknowledge that it would be wearisome enough to discuss anything with one who does not know (certain) things. Here, sir, are those that you point out. “In another place, Mr. Darby is kind enough to teach me that inspiration is not dependent on apostleship—that all the writers of the New Testament were not apostles; that the apostles did not found every church; that the laying on of the apostles’ hands conferred extraordinary

gifts of the Holy Spirit; that Christians are not under law."

There is little wisdom in again directing the attention of your readers to these points.

Did you know these things, sir, when in speaking "of what is connected with their office alone" (that of the apostles), "with the sole fact of the apostleship," etc., you wrote these words, "they write theopneustically the canonical books"? (Archives, Feb. 24, 1855.)

Is not inspiration dependent on the apostleship according to Count de Gasparin in 1855?

Again, did you not write "the only founding of churches, of which the New Testament contains the account, is that accomplished by the apostles"? (Archives, Dec. 23, 1854.)

I have tried to shew you that this was not the case. Did you know it in 1854?

Later on you said,

"If a mysterious transmission were effected by the laying on of the apostles' hands; if it were more than a blessing, more than a. prayer, more than a laying on of hands now done with faith in the bosom of a faithful church": and you were speaking of the original charisma.

Again, you say "Gifts, that is to say, influences." And then you write that "to fill an office, because one is fitted for it, is to grant that the nature of things will have its course." (Archives, Feb. 24, 1855.)

Does Count de Gasparin believe, in 1856, that the imposition of hands done in the bosom of a faithful

church, that a blessing, a prayer, are really the same thing as the laying on of the hands of the apostles? Or does he believe, in 1856, that there was no mysterious transmission by the imposition of the apostles' hands with respect to the original charisma?

Had you to learn that the laying on of the hands of the apostles conferred extraordinary gifts? Yes, or No?

If you reply Yes, I had to learn it, you have justified me when I said, that it was wearisome to argue with a person who did not know these things.

If you reply No, I have, sir, in this case, only to repeat (for respect for the word of God is more important than human considerations), that the superficiality and lightness (I say it with sorrow), with which you treat these serious subjects, are evident, and that they are accompanied in you with a root of unbelief; for, knowing that the laying on of the hands of the apostles conferred extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, you put it on the same level with the imposition of hands now in the bosom of a faithful church—on the same level with a blessing or a prayer.

And I ask you, Is it not more than wearisome to argue with one who writes as you wrote in 1854 and 1855, in the passages which I have just quoted; and who then writes as you have done in 1856, in the passage which I have also quoted, and this in articles by which you intend to enlighten Christians on these points, and to confound those who are opposed to your course?

This is not all that may have wearied me; but it is not well for me to speak of this any more. Let us come to what is at the bottom of the question. You say that "Paul founded neither the Church of Rome, nor that of

Colosse" (say rather that of Hierapolis and of Laodicea): "granted; but it is not anywhere written, that the other apostles were equally strangers to the birth of these churches." Which of the apostles? Do you even think that other apostles had been in these towns? Does any one think so who has studied the New Testament? Who believes that the apostles who remained at Jerusalem had been to Rome before the sending of Paul's epistle to the Christians in that city, or that they had been into Asia Minor to found the churches to which Paul wrote, when it was they who all agreed that Paul should go to the Gentiles? I ask every sensible man, if the history of the Acts, the Epistles to the Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Romans are not sufficient to shew that the work of the apostles did not precede the sending of the letters which Paul addressed to these churches. But the cases on which you insist are still plainer with regard to this principal point. You say: "Moreover, in the two only cases in which the first work of evangelization is expressly attributed to private Christians at Antioch and Samaria, Acts 8 and 11 mention the immediate mission of delegates from the apostles and the church at Jerusalem. By what right, then, could one in these days found a new church, since there are no longer apostles to preside in the work, nor delegates from the apostle to confirm it by the imposition of their hands on the newly converted and by conferring on them the Holy Spirit?"

This time I will not say that you weary me, sir. You furnish such suitable cases to demonstrate that my views are true that I have only to be satisfied with you.

Do you know what this case demonstrates? That "faithful disciples" went forth to do the work of evangelization without asking what the apostles would

do afterwards: then those who were the fruit of their labours took their position as Christians and as an assembly. This is exactly what we do.

The apostles laid their hands on them, and acted in order to confirm them in the faith; and in other cases appointed elders, either personally or by a delegate. The labouring brethren do not pretend to do the apostolical part of the work, because they are not apostles; and it is precisely this part which you have the pretension to do (that is to say, the apostolical part). We make the distinction, which you point out, between the work of simple Christians (I will add, possessing the gifts which God has deigned to allot to them), and the work of the apostles and their delegates. This part the labouring brethren do not pretend to accomplish. You also make the distinction between these two things, but pretend, in that which relates to elders, to do the apostolical part of the work, alleging that without so doing an assembly cannot be founded.

It seems to me that the serious and scriptural thing is to carry out the distinction which you make: to do that which private Christians did according to their gifts, and to leave to the apostles and their delegates what was done by the apostles and their delegates.

But you insist on another fact in your letter. You say, as to collections, only one is related in the New Testament, and in that single account the participation of an apostle is positively stated! Must I repeat to you, sir, that the apostle refused to take part in this collection, unless there were other persons with him? But this is not all. I must here thank you for the support which you lend to my views. This case also, as well as the other which you

quoted, overturns your arguments. If you give yourself the trouble to read Romans 15:26, you will find, “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are.” So that, on this point, the principle recognized in the word of God is that of the full liberty of the saints, and under certain aspects their moral obligation. “It pleased them.” Hence, when it pleases us, we do it, acknowledging often that it is an obligation. If you wish to see the spirit in which the thing was done, you can read 2 Corinthians 8 where the apostle says, “I speak not by commandment”; and elsewhere (1 Cor. 16) you will find other collections also. You will see that the apostle speaks of the collection at Corinth, as of a thing which was being made, and of his participation in it as a discretionary thing— “if it be meet.” He had given orders to the Galatians as to how the collection was to be made. Hence, while quite admitting that there is often a moral obligation (and in this case one does not wait for an apostle), we find perfect liberty, we find spontaneous action as an essential thing, and that the participation of the apostle is a question of seasonableness. The examples which you quote, sir, confirm the principles which I maintain, as well as the distinction, which is intelligible to every sensible person, between acts which are, on the one hand, the fruit of grace, or of a particular power granted by God in the form of a gift, and, on the other, acts of authority which depend on a mission from on high.

I am very glad that you openly repudiate the principle “that it is lawful to do otherwise than what is expressed in the word of God”; but in the face of this assertion

allow me again to quote M. de Gasparin's writing (Dec. 23, 1854) on the subject of the establishment of elders, etc. "Because things appear to have happened thus in the two or three instances which the New Testament mentions, it does not the least in the world follow that they could not also have been done otherwise." Now the facts are always there—the thing was not done in the Gentile churches otherwise than by the apostles and their delegates. I have already said that there does not appear to have been any nomination of elders amongst the Jews, so that, if you make elders, you cannot escape from the perplexity of "doing it otherwise" than according to the way which scripture presents to us. But this is not all. Whilst openly repudiating this principle in 1856 at the end of one paragraph, you again lay it down at the end of the following sentence. In order not to make elders, etc., you say it would be necessary to find in scripture a passage confining this act exclusively to the apostles and their delegates, a passage declaring that elders must be appointed by them "and not otherwise."

It is you who put "and not otherwise "between inverted commas. To shew that if the passage does not say "and not otherwise," Count de Gasparin has a right to do it in a way different from that authorized by the word, since it is necessary to find these words to prevent your doing it as you list. Finally, you cannot deny that things were done thus in the two or three cases narrated in the New Testament: the elders were established exclusively by the apostles or by a delegate of the apostle. It is an incontestable fact; but there is not a passage to be found which says "and not otherwise." Consequently you are not obliged to follow the example of the apostles; you do

it otherwise! And this whilst “openly repudiating the convenient theories in virtue of which it would be lawful to do it otherwise.”

Since it is not lawful to do it otherwise, why is it necessary to find a passage which says “and not otherwise”? The contradiction in 1856 of what has been said in 1855 may be allowed to pass; but to insist in one paragraph on what has been openly repudiated as a convenient theory in the preceding paragraph, is rather strong. But what is to be done when one struggles against the inflexible testimony of the word, even whilst one acknowledges its authority?

But you also bring in a parable to support your arguments. You say, “A sovereign legislator had promulgated a decree relative to the offices of judges; the decree ended thus: I have promulgated the present ordinance to make it known how persons ought to behave in the administration of the state, the pillar and ground of justice.”

It has been justly observed, “Nullum simile quatuor pedibus currit: no parable goes on all fours.” But yours limps even more pitiably, sir.

There is an executive power as well as a legislature. How convenient vagueness is! Our question is to know to whom the decree is addressed, and to whom the apostle makes known as a rule of conduct the way in which it was to be executed? The apostle is very precise; but this view at least disappears entirely from your similitude. “To make it known,” you say: where is the similitude? The apostle says, “that thou mightest know.” He gives to Timothy alone, when he sends his letter to him, the knowledge of what ought to be done. Who then

owed obedience to the apostle if it was a command? Did the legislator publish his decree? Thanks be to God, we have it; but the apostle addressed his letter to Timothy alone, who enjoyed his confidence, in order that he might know how to behave.

Your similitude entirely falsifies facts as regards the epistle. Why have confidential delegates, if all could do that of which the apostle speaks? There is authority—executive power as well as a legislature: if every one undertakes to fulfil the part appertaining to the executive power, because the legislator has made laws, he is acting rebelliously, and encroaches on the rights of others. There is an authority and a mission, as well as decrees and laws. When you say the apostles obeyed their own laws, you alter facts and betray the weak point of your argument. They exercised an authority on the part of Christ; you have not this authority, the churches did not possess it, nor do the assemblies either; and if the apostle sends a confidential delegate to accomplish this very delicate task, and if he writes to him in particular, in order that he may know how he ought to behave, it is nonsense to say that this is an authorization, and even a command for all to do the same. By saying so, one denies authority.

In your parable you speak of the appointment of judges; if judges represent the emperor's authority by executing justice, and if their nomination be placed in the hands of a confidential person (and that is the case here) to arrogate to oneself the right of appointing a judge is to usurp the rights of a sovereign. The mission of Timothy and Titus was an act of authority on the apostle's part; can you not understand this, sir? And the exercise of the authority which had been confided to them, as well as

instructions for the application of this authority, do not belong to every one. Do you deny the mission of these delegates of the apostle to have been an act of authority; and that what Titus and Timothy did, they did in virtue of that authority? Have you that authority? No, you have not. Let me once more place the expressions of the apostle before you— “These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself,” etc. These words of the apostle are only addressed to his confidential delegate; they served to direct his conduct in a task which the apostle had himself entrusted him with. He was not bound to shew the letter to any one. Even if he did so, no one was bound to act according to its contents excepting himself. Thanks be to God, there would be light for us all in the letter; by it also the behaviour of Timothy might be judged; but not one word of the letter is addressed to the assembly. Why “If I tarry”? What would his delay mean, if it were a question of an absolute command for all Christians and for all times? Would it be a command for the Christians of that time, to whom the apostle’s letter was not at all addressed, and to whom Timothy was not obliged to communicate it, to whom also he probably never shewed it, since this letter was confidential? Is it thought that Titus shewed to the Cretans the letter which confidentially declares that the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies; and that consequently he was to “rebuke them sharply”? When the apostle says to Titus, “exhort and rebuke with all authority,” is this a command for everybody? It is destructive of authority to say it is.

Is it not evident that all these communications are confidential ones, made by the head of the executive power to his delegates? I acknowledge that, as inspired epistles, they are always valid; but this supposes that I make use of them according to the Spirit, and not that I appropriate to myself, rightly or wrongly, the things which Christ has not entrusted to me. Then you say, “Hence there is not only a command, an absolute command for all Christians, and for all times (how one ought to behave oneself in the house of God); but this command is declared essential as regards the Church.” Where, sir? This is pure imagination; there is not a single word nor a single thought which affects this point.

Finally, the main and principal point of your assertion is that there is a command, and a command for all Christians and for all times. I reply, that there is not a command for all Christians, since there was none for the Christians at Ephesus; the letter was not addressed to the latter, and there is not the least reason for supposing that it was communicated to them.

At all events this communication would have been purely voluntary, so that the words addressed to Timothy could not be a command for them—the Christians at Ephesus. The reason of this is plain: the epistle was addressed to a single individual.

But further still, there was no command given to any one to establish elders, not even to this individual. Timothy did not receive any command to establish elders at Ephesus; the apostle teaches his beloved disciple what were, in the case of any one desiring to be a bishop, the qualifications which ought to characterize him; but he gives no command to Timothy to establish any. He was

left at Ephesus for another purpose. It is very probable that elders had already been established there, since the apostle speaks of them and gives no command to establish any. Besides, the essential thing is that the apostle's letter is addressed to Timothy, and to Timothy alone, in order that he, he only, might know how he ought to behave. Consequently, the words of Paul were not and could not be a command for the Christians at Ephesus. Add to this, that the apostle wrote epistles to churches, and under circumstances in which the action of elders would be of the highest importance, and never in any case does he suggest to Christians or to any one amongst them, the idea of choosing or establishing elders; whilst we have one epistle addressed to a confidential person who, as well as Timothy, is a delegate of the apostle; and in this epistle the apostle entrusts to him the task of establishing some, and gives him rules to this end.

To sum up the subject. We have found in the account of the apostles, and in the writings which regulate this point, the commission to establish elders exclusively entrusted (if the apostles did not establish them themselves) to confidential delegates of the apostle, and where there were churches, this mission was entrusted to those persons to the exclusion of those churches; for the letters were not addressed to the latter; and when the apostles were on the spot, it is said, "they chose them." In other words, the choice is attributed exclusively to the apostles and their delegates. Only it is not added "and not otherwise." Ought we to do it "otherwise" by neglecting the authority of the word, whilst we openly repudiate "the convenient theory "that it is lawful to do otherwise? Is it right to acknowledge

what is said in the word, while pretending to repudiate these convenient theories which allow one to do otherwise; and to do it otherwise all the time, because the words “and not otherwise” are not to be found there? Let us add that in the letters addressed to the churches, one does not find a single word on this point; but that there are, in more than one of them, moral directions, and they are therefore valid for all times, formally addressed to all Christians and applicable to submission to rulers, even when there might be no elders.

The thesis of Mons. de Gasparin and his associates is, on the one hand, the denial of authority in the Church of God, if one regards this authority as derived from Christ, and existing in the persons of those whom He has sent for that purpose, namely, His apostles; and on the other, the destruction of submission founded on the moral precepts of the word addressed to all the faithful, even when there might be no authority formally appointed, and submission in which the word and grace of God exercise all their power, and have all their rights.

Mons. de Gasparin and his partisans wish to attribute to every babe in Christ, and to women, the discernment and authority which the apostle took so much trouble to use for the profit of the Church in the disciples whom he had chosen for this.

I do not think that there is any other point in Mons. de Gasparin’s article which is worth taking up, and I desire to be brief. I will only again remark that in what Mons. de Gasparin calls his motives, he avoids touching on the question of authority. He speaks of ordinary actions, such as eating and drinking, etc., and of religious acts,

as preaching—actions which are common to all Christians. He speaks of founding new churches; he speaks of collections, etc. Finally, we have treated of these points. But it is a question of executive authority. On this point Mons. de Gasparin maintains complete silence, and instead of speaking of executive authority, he gives us the parable of a legislator.

[End Of Ecclesiastical—Vol. 2]