

Sam. Miller.

AN

ECCLESIASTICAL CATECHISM

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;

FOR THE USE OF

FAMILIES, BIBLE-CLASSES, AND PRIVATE MEMBERS.

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not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity.
Ecclesiastical Republicanism, Etc.

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SHOW THEM THE FORM OF THE HOUSE AND THE FASHION
THEREOF, AND THE GOINGS OUT THEREOF, AND THE COMINGS
IN THEREOF, AND ALL THE FORMS THEREOF, AND ALL THE
ORDINANCES THEREOF, AND ALL THE LAWS THEREOF: AND
WRITE IT IN THEIR SIGHT, THAT THEY MAY KEEP THE WHOLE
FORM THEREOF, AND ALL THE ORDINANCES THEREOF, AND
DO THEM. EZEKIEL 43:11.

P R E F A C E .

THE necessity for some such work as the present has been long felt by many. Great detriment has accrued to the presbyterian church, from the want of that indoctrination in the principles of her worship and polity, which it is surely her duty to provide for all, who commit themselves and their offspring to her teaching and guidance. Her members and children have been attached to her, not so much by those ties of principle and conviction, which prove firm and enduring, as by merely local and personal considerations, which form, in times of difficulty, but a feeble bond of attachment. Other churches are diligent in their efforts to imbue the young mind with the knowledge of all their doctrinal peculiarities; and if this is done in a spirit of charity and christian brotherhood, will it not promote, rather than prevent, that perfect *christian* union for which we hope?

That this work, which was drawn up at the suggestion of some leading members of our church, is altogether what is needed, the author can hardly dare to hope. He would still offer it as an *attempt*, and not as a full *accomplishment*, of all that he believes to be demanded by the necessities of the church. He has used every effort to procure hints from competent individuals, and would return his thanks to those brethren and gentlemen, who have favored him with their views. Of these he has availed himself, in rendering the work more correct; while, by the subdivision of the chapters, the various topics will, he trusts, be better understood, and more easily comprehended by the learner.

To the Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., the author would especially render thanks, for his kindness in first imposing upon him the preparation of this volume ; for his careful revision of it ; and for his valuable suggestions.

He has endeavored to render it as full and comprehensive as possible ; and, for this purpose, he has availed himself freely of the labors of others. He would particularly refer to the Ecclesiastical Catechisms of Dr. McLeod, of the Rev. Samuel Palmer, of one published in Ireland, and of *A Sequel to the Shorter Catechism*, as sources from which he has derived assistance.

It was thought better to err on the side of prolixity, than of brevity ; as it was one object of the author to fit the work for private reading, and to make it as satisfactory as possible, on all the leading subjects embraced in its design. The teacher can use his discretion in prescribing to his pupils, whether in the family, the Bible-class, or the Sabbath school, such portions of it as he may deem most necessary to be committed to memory. Other portions he may think it sufficient to read with them, accompanied with his own further explanations ; and whenever he may think any answer of too great length to be retained in the memory, he may, after such reading and examination, require it to be given in substance, in the language of the pupil.

Although the author has heard of but one opinion as to the usefulness of the work, yet, when he found that the second edition was entirely exhausted, he carefully revised the whole, altered and remodelled several portions, and added some sections, (as on the apostolic succession, and the relation of the presbyterian church to the world,) which will, it is hoped, increase the usefulness of the work.

In the fervent hope that it may lead some of the rising generation to ask for the old paths, that they may walk therein, it is committed to the blessing of the Head of the church, by his most unworthy servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Charleston, S. C., 1843.

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ECCLESIASTICAL CATECHISM.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

The different meanings of the word church, as used in scripture.

1. *What is the meaning of the term church, as used in scripture?*

The word church, as used in scripture, has various significations, being used both in a common and a sacred sense.

2. *What is the meaning of the word church, as used in scripture in a common sense?*

The word, which is translated church, is used in scripture in a common sense, to signify any public assembly of persons to consult together.

Acts 19:32, 39, 41. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the *assembly* was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were called together. And when he had thus spoken he dismissed the *assembly*.

3. *What is the sacred sense, in which the word church is most generally used in scripture?*

This word is, in its sacred sense, applied to the church of Christ, which is a society of men called of God, by the gospel, unto the faith and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of God in him.*

See Col. 1:18. Eph. 1:10, 22, 23. 1 Cor. 12:28. 1 Cor. 15:9.

* *Ecclesia* was used by the writers of the Septuagint version,

4. *What is the first meaning of the word church in this sacred sense?*

It means any particular congregation or society of professing christians.

Col. 4:15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. Rom. 16:5. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

5. *What is the second meaning of the word church in this sacred sense?*

It is applied to several congregations, or churches, considered as one body, under the same general superintendence.

1 Cor. 1:2. Unto the *church* of God which is at Corinth; 1 Cor. 14:34. Let your women keep silence in the *churches*; Acts 8:1. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 21:20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

6. *What is the third meaning of the word church in its sacred sense?*

It means any assembly of the rulers of the church, when convened as an ecclesiastical judicatory.*

Matt. 18:15-17. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto

which was familiar to the New Testament writers, for the word *congregation*, as it stands in our version of the Old Testament. It is on this account that in the New Testament instead of the word *congregation*, we have *church*, which is the same as *kirk* or assembly.

* That the word church means an assembly of rulers meeting together in an ecclesiastical judicatory, see largely proved in Dr. Ayton's Orig. Constit. of the Church, ch. ii. § 3, pp. 63, 64. Brown's Dict. of the Bible, Art. Church. Livingstone's Theol. p. 261.

the church ; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Heb. 13 : 17. Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account ; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. See also Acts 14 : 27. Acts 15 : 2, 30, 22. Acts 11 : 26. Also 1 Cor. ch. 5.*

SECTION II.

The distinction between the church, as visible and invisible.

7. *What is the fourth meaning of the word church in its sacred sense ?*

It means the whole body of God's redeemed people, that have been, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head, and which is generally called the invisible church.

Eph. 5 : 25-27. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Col. 1 : 18. And he is the head of the body, the church ; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the preëminence. See also Eph. 1 : 10, 22, 23, and Heb. 12 : 23.

8. *Why is the church called invisible ?*

Because its union with Christ is a spiritual union ; because the faith and love of those who are its true members are invisible to men, and infallibly discerned only by God, who looketh upon the heart ; and because,

* That this meaning is to be attached to the term church in these places, and that it is in itself an important meaning, was maintained by the early writers in defence of presbyterianism. I may refer particularly to Rutherford's *Due Right of Presbyteries*, &c. 4to. London, 1644, at pp. 309, 314, 322, 489-491. See also pp. 316, 348. See also his *Plea for Paul's Presbyterie*, 4to. London, 1642, p. 85, &c. Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, 4to. London, 1646, pp. 294-297, and 350-467. See further, *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, by the London Ministers, 4to. London, 1654, p. 208, &c. See also many authorities produced in Paget's *Def. of Presb. Ch. Govt.* London, 1641, pp. 50, 51.

in this sense, the church has no visible or formal existence on earth, but is an object of faith, being composed of all Christ's faithful members, wherever they are found.

9. *What is the fifth meaning of the word church in its sacred sense?*

It means the whole body of those, throughout the world, of every denomination, with their children, who profess the true religion, and which is commonly called the visible church.

Acts 2:39, 47. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. 1 Cor. 12:12, 13, 28. 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, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1 Cor. 15:9. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God, &c. Acts 8. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. 1 Cor. 10:32. Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

10. *Why is the church, in this sense, called the visible church?*

Because all are members of it who make a profession of the christian religion, including those who, while they are members of the church on earth, may not be members of the church invisible, nor possessed of either faith or love.

11. *May there, then, be distinct branches or sections of the visible church?*

Yes; there may be distinct branches or sections of the visible church existing in different kingdoms, as the church of Scotland, the church of Geneva, the church of England, &c. These all, so far as they hold the same faith, are component parts of the one univer-

sal visible church; in the same manner as the waters of the different seas, however variously distributed and called, are nevertheless connected among themselves, and form component parts of one and the same great ocean.

12. *Does this distinction of the church into visible and invisible make two churches instead of one?*

It does not; since by these terms we only distinguish the church in its external form, from the same church in its internal or spiritual character. As visible, it includes hypocrites; as invisible, only believers. As visible, it requires from its members only an external and credible profession of the faith; as invisible, it supposes in every member a sincere and hearty reception of the truth, in the love of it.*

13. *To which of these churches are left the promises of perpetuity and indefectibility?*

Not to the visible church, which may fail and err in any of its parts, but to the invisible, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and with which Christ will be, even to the end of the world. So that there shall always be those, somewhere, who shall believe and profess the true religion.

* See this meaning of the word fully developed in Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book 3, sec. 1, in Works, vol. i. p. 195, Hanbury's edition, London, 1830, 3 vols. 8vo. See also p. 255. See also bishop Hopkins's Works, vol. ii. p. 418. This subject may also be seen fully discussed in Rogers's Discourse and Review of the Visible and Invisible Church of Christ. London, 1721. Dr. George Miller, in his recent letter to Dr. Pusey, London, 1840, at p. 22, speaks of 'the fundamental error of rejecting the distinction between the visible and the invisible church of Christ.' See also pp. 23, 25, where he calls this distinction 'the essential principle of the Reformation, and very plainly discoverable in the articles (that is, the xxxix. Art.) of our church.' See also Essays on the Church, Introductory, p. 5, &c. Nolan's Catholic Char. of Christ. p. 73. The Church in the World, pp. 54, 79. Neander's Plant. of the Christ'n Ch. vol. ii. pp. 177, 178, 248. Dr. Owen's Works, vol. xix. pp. 152, 167, 209, 215, and authorities on pp. 156, 169. See also the martyr Philpot's testimony in Lond. Chr. Obs. 1841, p. 339, and Churchman's Monthly Rev. Dec. 1841, p. 661, where are quoted archbishops Secker and Hooker.

SECTION III.

The present use of the word church in these several senses.

14. *Is the word church still commonly used in these various senses?*

Yes, in all of them except the common sense, in which it is not used, because it is now exclusively applied to religious bodies, and in its sacred sense.

15. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the first meaning?*

We speak of the several churches in any town or city, and also, when there are more than one of the same denomination, as, for instance, the presbyterian, we speak of the first, second, or third presbyterian church.

16. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the second meaning?*

We speak of the presbyterian church in the United States of America, and so of other churches.

17. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the third meaning?*

When the session of a church is assembled together, we say there is a meeting of the church; and when any member has been disciplined or received by that body, we say he has been disciplined or received by that church of which it is the session.

 SECTION IV.

Of the church catholic.

18. *What other term is applied to the church of Christ, considered as a whole, besides the terms visible and invisible?*

The term catholic.

19. *What is the meaning of the word catholic?*

The word catholic means universal.

20. *Why is the church of Christ called catholic, or universal?*

Because it is not confined to one nation, as it was under the Jewish economy, but consists of all those in every part of the world who believe in Christ; because its privileges are conferred equally upon all classes of men; and because it will yet embrace within it all nations and kindreds of the earth.

1 Cor. 12:12, 13. 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 whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Psa. 2:8. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. See also Rom. 15:9-12.

21. *What other sense was attached by the early fathers to the word catholic?*

It was used by them as synonymous with the term orthodox, so that, in this view of it, the true church is to be known by that true doctrine, which is every where to be preached, and to be held fast.

22. *Has this catholic visible church been perpetuated and preserved?*

Yes; there has always been a visible church catholic, which, though divided by place, forms, and names, may yet be considered as one body, holding the head, and professing in substance the true religion.

23. *In what sense, then, may the visible church be properly said to be catholic, or universal?*

The visible church may be properly said to be catholic or universal, not as consisting of one society, under one government, but, as its various societies and churches are, or ought to be, modelled on the same principles; enjoying common privileges, and having one divine head, even Christ, who rules and guides it by his word and spirit.

SECTION V.

Of the unity of the church.

24. *What do you mean by the unity of the church?*

By the unity of the church, I understand that as there is but one God and Saviour, so all who believe and obey the gospel are equally adopted into the family of heaven; equally enjoy all the promised blessings of salvation; are equally entitled to the free use of all the means of grace; are baptized into one faith; and are called, justified, and sanctified through the same plan of redeeming love and mercy.

25. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church, that it should be under one earthly head?*

No; there is no other head of the church than the Lord Jesus Christ, whose house and family it is.

Eph. 1. 23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

26. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church universal, that it should be under the same forms and regulations?*

No; it is only necessary that whatever forms and regulations are adopted by any church, they should be authorized by the word of God, and not contrary to it.

Rom. 14: 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 1 Cor. 14: 14, 40. Let all things be done decently and in order. See also Gal. 5: 1.

27. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church, that it should, in all things, be governed by one and the same ecclesiastical authority?*

Certainly not! for we read in scripture of the church at Antioch, the church at Jerusalem, the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, the churches of Syria, the churches of Asia;—and in primitive times, there was the Eastern church, the Western, the African, the British, and so on, and these were all separate and distinct.

28. *In what, then, does the unity of the church essentially consist?*

The unity of the church essentially consists in unity of faith, by which all its members hold the same divine truths; and in unity of spirit, or that oneness which subsists between Christ, its Head, and all its members, whereby the same Spirit dwells in all, and works in all the same christian graces.

Eph. 4:3, 13. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. 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. See also 2 Cor. 11:4. Jude 3. Gal. 1:8, 9. 1 Pet. 5:9. Col. 1:2, 7, 23.

SECTION VI.

Of pure, imperfect, corrupt, and false churches.

29. *Are we, then, to understand that all particular churches are equally churches of Christ?*

All particular churches which agree in holding the truth as it is in Jesus; which profess sound doctrine; which maintain the preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments; and which thus hold the truth in love, are justly distinguished by the name and authority of true visible churches. Nevertheless, all true churches are not perfect, neither are all churches true churches, but some are corrupt and some false.

30. *Is it not, then, necessary to distinguish between the nature and essence of a church, and the integrity and perfection of a church? and what is that distinction?*

The nature and essence of a church, consists in the preaching of the pure word of God, and the due administration of sacraments, so that where these are, there is a visible church. The integrity or perfection of a church, consists, further, in that apostolic form, order, and ministry, which can be traced to the institution of Christ and his apostles.

31. *What, then, do you mean by a pure church?*

By a pure church, or portion of the visible church, I mean a society whose confession of faith agrees with the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles; and which

is governed solely by the laws laid down in the word of God, or drawn from it by plain and necessary inference.

32. *What, then, are the signs of a pure church?*

The signs of a pure church are soundness of doctrine, a lawful and regular ministry, the prevalence of love among its members and towards all saints, and the due administration of gospel ordinances, including discipline.

Eph. 2:20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Acts 2:42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 14:38. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Matt. 28:19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. See also Acts 20:7.

33. *Is not antiquity, as it regards its visible form, one mark of a pure church?*

It is not; since, judged by this standard, the Jewish would be the only true church; while other forms of religion, also, lay claims to greater antiquity than the christian. Besides, the signs of all true christian churches being those laid down in the Bible, must, therefore, be as ancient as christianity itself.

34. *Is not universality, in the extent of its authority and government, the mark of a pure church?*

Universality, in the sense of universal extent, is not a mark of a pure church; for no church is, or ever has been, in this sense, universal; and the assumption of any such authority, by any one church, over all others, is antichristian usurpation.

35. *Is the possession of a clear and uninterrupted personal succession in its ministers, from the time of the apostles, the necessary mark of a pure church?*

Such a personal succession cannot be the mark of a pure church, because it cannot be shown by any church on earth; because, if it had been essential, such a succession would have been preserved free from doubt or

interruption ; because it is nowhere laid down in the scriptures ; and because the scriptures show, that even when an unquestioned succession did exist, God withdrew his presence, and forsook the apostate church.*

Jer. 7 : 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these. Mal. 2 : 1, 9. And now, O, ye priests, this commandment is for you. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Rom. 9 : 6-8. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel : neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children : but in Isaac shall thy seed be called : that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

36. *What do you mean by an imperfect church?*

By an imperfect church I understand a church, which continues steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, teaching the pure word of God, and omitting no essential truth of the gospel ; but which, at the same time, has not the sacraments duly administered, nor its order, polity, and ministry perfectly conformed to the scriptural model.

37. *What do you mean by a corrupt church?*

By a corrupt church I understand one which, while it preserves the essential truths of the gospel, at the same time adds other things to these truths, which are not found in God's word, or are repugnant to the same ; and which thus, by human traditions or any other spurious authority, makes vain the preaching of the truth, and corrupts the administration of divine ordinances.

38. *What do you mean by a false church?*

That church which has laid any other foundation than Christ and his righteousness ; which has denied any of the essential doctrines of the word of God ; or interpreted the word of God according to its own vain imagination ; such a church, whatever else it may possess of order or discipline, and however it may claim the tem-

* See chapter vii. sect. v. for a full consideration of this subject.

ple, the priesthood, antiquity, or succession—is a false church.

Rev. 2:9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

39. *What, then, would you say of each of these churches?*

All churches which are imperfect, ought to be improved; such as are corrupt, reformed; while such as are false, ought to be subverted, and their foundations laid again.

40. *May there, then, be true christians within the bosom of false and apostate churches?*

We are certainly taught that within such churches there may be some who are true christians, and therefore members of the invisible church; and who, with more or less publicity, bear testimony against their errors. But as they are in great danger, we are to invite all who are members of such churches, to come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

1 Kings 19:18. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. Isa. 1:9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Rom. 11:28. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake, &c. Isa. 10:20, 22. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. See also Ezek. 9:4. 2 Pet. 2:8. Psal. 119:53, 136. Rev. 12:6, 14. Acts 9:31. Rev. 18:4

SECTION VII.

Of the perpetuity and necessity of the church.

41. *Are we, then, to believe in the perpetuity of the church of Christ?*

Our Saviour has declared that the church is built upon a rock ; that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; and that He will be with it always, even to the end of the world.

Matt. 16:18. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 28:20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. See also Isa. 59:21. Acts 2:47. Titus 2:14. 1 Pet. 2:9, 10. Isa. 61:8, 9. Dan. 2:14, 44. John 14:14, 16, 17. 1 Thess. 4:18. Matt. 13:41-49. Eph. 4:11-13.

42. *Does a full belief in the certain perpetuity of the church of Christ, imply a belief in the perpetuity of any particular visible church ?*

There is nothing in the word of God to warrant a belief in the perpetuity, or continued purity, of any particular visible church. On the contrary, we are there admonished that even apostolic churches had fallen away, and would finally become extinct ; and that a very general corruption of the gospel, which had then commenced, would be consummated, to the destruction of many souls.

Rev. 2:5, 16, 24. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen ; and repent, and do thy first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Repent ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden. See also Rev. 3:3, 4, 15, 16. Rev. 18:2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. 1 Tim. 4:1, 6. 2 Tim. 3:13. 2 Pet. 3:1, 3. Rev. 17:10. Acts 20:30. 1 John 2:19. 2 John 7. Jude 18. Rom. 11:18, 22. Boast not against the branches ; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God ; on them which fell, severity : but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 1 John 2:1, 4.

43. *Is a connection with any visible church, sufficient to secure the salvation of the soul ?*

On the contrary, our connection with a false church

may lead to the damnation of the soul, by involving it in the guilt of its heresies and abominations. Neither is salvation to be secured in any other way than by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only propitiation for sins.

2 Thess. 2: 11, 12. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. See also Matt. 24: 5, 11, 24. 1 Tim. 4: 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. Acts 7: 42. 1 Cor. 11: 19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 2 Tim. 3: 1, 15. Rom. 2: 25, 29. Gal. 5: 6. John 3.

44. *What, then, are we to understand by the doctrine, that out of the church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation?*

By this doctrine we are to understand, that faith, and consequently salvation, are ordinarily bestowed by God through the instrumentality of his ministers, and that it is only in this way that men are ordinarily introduced into the invisible church, out of which there is no salvation. But it does not teach, that salvation cannot be obtained out of any particular visible church, by whatever name it may be called; neither is such a claim, on the part of any church, to be otherwise regarded than as alike impious and vain.

Col. 1: 18. Eph. 5: 23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. See also Rom. 10: 14, 15. 1 Cor. 5: 12, 13. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Acts 2: 47. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Rev. 3: 7. And to the

angel of the church in Philadelphia, write ; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth. Rev. 1 : 18. Rom. 5 : 1, 2, S. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Numb. 23 : 8. How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed ? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied ?

45. *May we expect to find any church, on earth, perfectly free from error ?*

The purest existing churches are subject both to mixture and error ; and therefore we must not expect in them absolute perfection.

1 Cor. 13 : 12. For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known. Matt. 13 : 24, 47. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field. Again : The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. See also Rev. 2 and 3.

46. *Is it, then, a matter of indifference to what church we belong ?*

No ; it is our solemn duty to understand the character and signs of a true church of Christ ; and to adhere to that church which is found most consonant to the scriptures, in its doctrines, its ordinances, and its constitution.

Matt. 5 : 19. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven ; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 1 John 4 : 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Thess. 5 : 21. Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.

SECTION VIII.

Of the duty of different churches; and of the church militant and triumphant.

47. *In view of this liability to err, what is the duty of each church?*

It is the duty of every denomination, or church, to reform abuses where they may exist; to endeavor after full conformity to the plan of church order appointed by Christ; to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and to exercise strict discipline over all offenders, according to the spiritual laws of Christ's kingdom.

Rev. 2:14, 15. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

48. *What is the further duty of the members of each particular church, towards those of every other denomination?*

It is their duty to pray for them; to exercise charity towards them; to live peaceably with them; to remember, that to their own master they must give account; while rejoicing in the truth, to hold it in love; and, as far as no sanction is given to error in doctrine or practice, to coöperate with them in every good word and work.

Psa. 122:6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Rom. 14:4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. Rom. 12:18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 1 Cor. 9:22. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Gal. 6:10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, &c. See also 1 Cor. 13, and Jude 3.

49. *What further division of the church does this consideration of its present division lead you to mention?*

The church is further divided into the church militant and the church triumphant.

50. *What is meant by the church militant?*

By the church militant, is meant the whole body of true believers in this present evil world; who are called, and required of God, to contend with many internal and external sufferings, adversities, persecutions, heresies, and temptations.

2 Tim. 4:7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

51. *What is meant by the church triumphant?*

By the church triumphant, is meant the whole number of the elect, the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven; who are freed from all temptations and trials; admitted to the most perfect rest and blessedness; and gathered together into one glorious church, under Christ their head.

Eph. 1:10, 22, 23. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church; which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Heb. 12:22-24. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See also Rev. 21 and 22.

52. *Should not the hope of this blessed state, shed abroad in all true christian minds the spirit of kindness and brotherly love?*

Yes. However differing as to their modes of thinking, and their particular opinions and forms; and however divided into particular communions; all real christians, who hold the head, ought to regard themselves as constituting but one church, and so to live together in unity of spirit, and in the bonds of peace; looking for the

blessed hope and the glorious appearing of their common God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

John 13:34. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Titus 3:3-5. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER II.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

Of church government in general.

53. *What is meant by government ?*

Government, in its general meaning, signifies direction, regulation, or control. In reference to any particular state or nation, government signifies, that system of fundamental rules and principles to which it is subject.

54. *Has the christian church, in its visible form, any system of government peculiar to itself ?*

Yes, the christian church, being a spiritual kingdom, whose only King, Head, and Governor is the Lord Jesus Christ, has a system of laws enjoined by Him, and by which alone it is, and of right ought to be, governed ; and has therefore an inherent power of self-regulation and direction.

Isa. 9:6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Col. 1:18. And he is the head of the body, the church ; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preëminence. Eph. 1:22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Matt. 23:8-10. But be not ye called Rabbi ; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth ; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters ; for one is your Master, even Christ. See also John 18:36. Luke 12:14. John 6:15, and 8:15. Rom. 14:17. Col. 1:13.

55. *In what respects is the church exclusively the kingdom of Christ?*

The church is exclusively the kingdom of Christ, because it is based upon his institution; subject to his authority; regulated by his laws; animated by his spirit; devoted to his honor; blessed by his presence; and protected by his power, as head over all things to his church.

56. *Where, then, is that system of laws to be found by which the church is to be governed?*

In the word of God; the only infallible rule of christian faith and practice.

Isa. 8:20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Rev. 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are in this book. Heb. 8:5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

57. *Why is such a form of government necessary to the church?*

Because the christian church is a society, and no society can exist without laws and order; and because the church, having no civil power, or authority, requires a spiritual authority sufficient to preserve order, censure the disobedient, expel the rebellious, and encourage and sustain the pious.

Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Isa. 33:20, 23. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; for the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us.

58. *From whence is this authority of the church derived?*

The power of the church is derived from God the

Father ; bestowed through the mediator, Christ Jesus ; conferred by Christ ; and to be exercised by those officers to whom Christ has committed the spiritual government of his church.

59. *What is meant by the divine right of church government ?*

By the divine right of church government, we are taught, that it is not the result of human prudence, but sanctioned by divine approbation, established by divine acts, and enforced by divine precepts.

60. *In what sense do Romanists and high-church prelatists hold this opinion ?*

The Romanists and high-church prelatists hold, that a particular form of church government is not only appointed by God, but is so essential to the existence of the church, that there can be no true church without it.

61. *Do any presbyterians maintain this kind of divine right, with respect to their form of church government ?*

No, there are no presbyterians guilty of this extravagance.

62. *In what sense do presbyterians hold the divine right of their system of government ?*

They maintain, that a particular form of church government, in its essential principles, was appointed by the authority of Christ ; and that it is the duty of all churches to adopt this form ; but they do not believe that the whole platform of government is laid down in detail in the word of God, nor that differences in such ecclesiastical arrangements merely, will destroy, or essentially vitiate, the character of a church.

63. *Have different forms of church government been adopted by different churches of professing christians ?*

Yes, there have been several different forms of church government adopted by different denominations of professing christians.

SECTION II.

Of the presbyterian form of church government

64. *What form of church government do you believe to be most agreeable to the word of God, and therefore to be most properly entitled to the claim of divine right?*

That plan of church government which is denominated presbyterianism.

65. *What is the origin of the word presbyterianism?*

The word is taken from scripture, in which the ministers of the church are called presbyters or elders.

Acts 14:23. And when they had ordained them elders (that is, presbyters) in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 1 Tim. 4:14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

66. *Were there in the times of the apostles, churches which were called by different names, and which yet claimed to be the true churches of Christ, such as the episcopalian church, the Roman catholic church, &c.?*

No, we read of no such names in scripture.

67. *By what name, then, were believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time, called?*

Believers were at first called disciples, and afterwards christians, and their churches after the place in which they were located.

68. *When were these various names, by which the church is now distinguished, introduced?*

They were introduced at various times, as different opinions arose on the subjects to which these names refer.

69. *Why was the term presbyterian applied to those by whom it is now received?*

When those scriptural principles on which the equality of ministers, and the government of the church by presbyters depend, were subverted or denied, this name was adopted to hold forth the attachment of those who embraced it, to that form of church government, and to

those doctrines which are sanctioned by scripture, in opposition to those forms and doctrines which are founded on human authority, and which had usurped their place.

70. *Do presbyterians acknowledge any man to be their head or founder, by whose name they are called ?*

No ; they call no man master on earth ; neither do they acknowledge any other foundation, for their system of faith and government, than the word of God.

71. *What are the essential principles of the presbyterian form of church government ?*

The supreme headship of Jesus Christ ; the official equality of its ministers ; the office of ruling elders, as representatives of the people ; the election of the officers of particular churches by church members ; and the authority of its several courts.

72. *What is further essential to the constitution of the presbyterian church ?*

It is essential to the constitution of the presbyterian church, that all her pastors be equal in authority ; that the government and discipline in each particular church be conducted by a bench of presbyters or elders, and not by all the communicants ; and that all the several churches be bound together under the authority of presbyteries, and other courts of review and control, as circumstances may render expedient and necessary.

73. *Is it, then, necessary, in order to constitute any particular church presbyterian, that it should be in formal connection with a presbytery ?*

It has certainly been the unvarying doctrine of the presbyterian church, founded on the word of God, that all particular churches should be united together, under one presbyterial government ; and that any church, therefore, which remains in a state of isolated independency, or goes back to that condition, cannot be considered as a truly presbyterian church.

74. *What do you mean by the supreme headship of the Lord Jesus Christ ?*

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78. *Had these any successors in their character and duties, as extraordinary officers?*

None that we read of in the word of God; neither are we there told, that any should succeed them as apostles, evangelists, or prophets.

Acts 14:23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

79. *What was necessary to constitute an apostle?*

It was necessary that the apostles should have personally seen the Lord Jesus Christ; have obtained their commission immediately from Christ; be endowed with the gift of working miracles; be able to communicate miraculous powers to others; and possess authority over all the churches in every part of the world.

1 Pet. 5:1. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. 1 Cor. 9:1. Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? Acts 19:6. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. 1 Cor. 7:17. But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so ordain I in all churches.

80. *Who were evangelists?*

Evangelists were extraordinary officers, suited to the infant state of the church, who were commissioned to travel under the direction and control of the apostles, that they might ordain ministers, and settle congregations, according to the system laid down by Christ and his apostles.*

Acts 21:8. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the

* 'The work of an evangelist,' says Eusebius, 'was this; to lay the foundations of the faith in barbarous nations; to constitute their pastors; and, having committed to them the cultivating those new plantations, they passed on to other countries and nations.' 'Such were evangelists,' says Stillingfleet; 'who were sent, sometimes into this country, to put the churches in order there, sometimes into another; but, wherever they were, they acted as evangelists, and not as fixed ministers.'

house of Philip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven,) and abode with him.

81. *Who were prophets?*

They were persons, who, under the direction and extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, explained the scripture, enforced its doctrines, publicly addressed the church, and foretold events.*

1 Cor. 14: 1, 3, 4. Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men for edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church.

82. *Were these extraordinary officers of the church exclusively occupied in the discharge of their extraordinary functions?*

No; they probably took an active part in the government of the church; while they certainly engaged in the ordinary duties of the ministry.

See Acts 10: 44, 47; 15: 6, 22; 21: 17, 18; and 6.

83. *In what sense, then, are the present ministers of the gospel successors to these extraordinary officers of the apostolic churches?*

In their extraordinary character and functions, those officers can have no successors; but in their ordinary character, all ministers of the gospel, regularly called, who maintain the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, are their true and valid successors.

1 Cor. 12: 28, 29. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. 1 Cor. 13: 8.

* See Henderson on Inspiration, p 209, &c., and Lord Barington's Wks. vol. i. p. 33.

In their ordinary character, the prophets were presbyters, as appears from Acts 13: 1-3, and as is fully admitted by archbishop Potter in his work on the Church. (See pp. 101-103, &c.) So, also, in their ordinary character as ministers of Christ, the apostles expressly denominate themselves presbyters. (See 2 John 1. 3 John 1. 1 Pet. 5: 1. Acts 7: 10. Philem. 8: 9. Acts 7: 58, &c.) And by every means they identify themselves with such; while Timothy, an evangelist, was, as we are expressly taught, ordained by the hands of a presbytery. See Tim. 4: 14, and Potter, do. 107.

Charity never faileth : but whether there be prophecies they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. See Rev. 2:2. Titus 1:5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. Acts 2:42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. See also Eph. 4:11, 12. Rom. 12:7, 8. 1 Tim. 3:5.

SECTION II.

Of the ordinary and perpetual officers of the church, — and first of the presbyter or bishop.

84. *Who are the ordinary officers of the christian church ?*

Presbyters or elders, ruling elders, and deacons.

Phil. 1:1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Acts 20:17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

85. *Is there any distinction amongst those who are called elders ?*

Yes ; elders are divided into the teaching elders or pastors, and the ruling elders or helps.

1 Cor. 12:28. And God hath set some in the church ; first, apostles ; secondarily, prophets ; thirdly, teachers ; after that, miracles ; then gifts of healings, *helps, governments*, diversities of tongues.

86. *What warrant is there for regarding the teaching presbyter, pastor, or bishop, as an ordinary and permanent officer in the church ?*

Such officers were settled by apostolic authority, in every church, as its stated ministry ; they are of God's appointment ; they are the fruit of Christ's exaltation ; and they are called by the Holy Ghost, that they may feed the church of God on earth.

Acts 14:23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Titus 1:5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. See also Eph. 4:11. Acts 20:28.

87. *What are the duties of the pastor ?*

It is the duty of the pastor to preach the gospel, and to explain and enforce the scriptures ; to conduct the different parts of public worship ; to dispense the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper ; to administer church discipline ; to oversee the religious state of persons and families ; and thus to rule, in the church, according to the laws of Christ.

2 Tim. 4:3. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Acts 13:15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on 1 Cor. 10:16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? 1 Tim 5:20. Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Acts 20:28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 1 Tim. 5:17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

88. *What different names has the person, who fills this office, obtained in scripture ?*

The person who fills this office, has, in scripture, obtained different names, expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed 'bishop.' As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is called 'pastor.' As he serves Christ in his church, he is styled 'minister.' As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed 'presbyter, or elder.' As he is the messenger of God, he is denominated 'the angel of the church.' As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, through Christ, he is named 'ambassador.' And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed 'steward of the mysteries of God.'

Acts 20:28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with

his own blood. Jer. 3:15. And I will give you pastors, &c. 1 Pet. 5:1-4. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof Rev. 2:1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write. 2 Cor. 5:20. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ. Luke 12:42. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.

89. *Are these names expressive of different gradations of ecclesiastical authority?*

No; they are indiscriminately applied, in scripture, to the same officers; so that among the ministers of the gospel there is no other superiority to be allowed, than such as arises from the influence of age, piety, learning, or zeal.

Matt. 20:26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. 1 Tim. 5:17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

SECTION III.

Of the identity of bishops and presbyters.

90. *What title of the christian pastor has been supposed to refer to a superior office in the church?*

The title of bishop.

91. *What is the literal meaning of the word bishop?*

The word (*ἐπισκοπος*, *episcopos*,) translated bishop, signifies an overseer.

Acts 20:28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

92. *Are all presbyters called bishops in scripture?*

Yes; they are called presbyters and bishops indiscriminately.

Acts 20:17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders (that is, presbyters) of the church. Take heed,

therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (in the original, *bishops*;) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Phil. 1:1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Titus 1:5-7. See also 1 Pet. 5:1, 2. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-19. See also Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23. 1 Cor. 12:28-30. Eph. 4:11.

93. *Is not the pastoral office the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness?*

Yes; teaching is more honorable, and more important, than mere ruling, which is the office ascribed to prelatic bishops; and therefore a ruler, or prelate, cannot be superior to a teacher or pastor.

1 Tim. 5:17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. 1 Cor. 12:28. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets: thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

94. *Is there more than one final commission, from which christian ministers derive their office and authority?*

No; all pastors derive their office and authority from Christ by the same commission, in the same words, and for the same offices, and, therefore, the same official authority must belong to all.

Mark 16:15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

95. *May it not be said, that while all bishops are presbyters, all teaching presbyters are not bishops?*

As all bishops are presbyters, so is the title of bishop, which signifies an *overseer* of the flock, applicable to all presbyters who have the oversight of some particular charge, and who are therefore true scripture bishops.*

* The term, however, is also applicable to one who has filled this station, when transferred, by the authority of the church, and under its sanction, to some other field of usefulness; and, in a general sense, to all ordained ministers of the gospel.

96. *How may this identity of bishop and presbyter be further proved?*

Nowhere in scripture are duties imposed on bishops, distinct from those assigned to presbyters; nor are the qualifications laid down for the one, different from those laid down for the other. On the contrary, both are to possess the same qualifications, and to discharge the same duties, and are therefore the same.

Titus 1:5, 7.

97. *Were Timothy and Titus prelatical bishops?*

They were not prelatical bishops; nor do they appear to have had any fixed pastoral charges. They were evangelists.*

2 Tim. 4:5-10. But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. See also 2 Cor. 8:23. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you. 2 Cor. 12:18. See question 54.

SECTION IV.

Of the term angel, as used in reference to the church.

98. *What other term, in scripture, has been supposed to refer to an office in the apostolic church, superior to the ordinary bishops or presbyters?*

The term, angel of the church.

99. *Where is this term used?*

It is used in reference to the seven churches of Asia, in the book of Revelation.

See Rev. 2.

* 'Now, of this matter, (whether Timothy and Titus were indeed made bishops, the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete,) I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name.' Whitby, (an Episcopalian,) in comment pref. to Titus, 'It is notorious, that Timothy is nowhere called a bishop by Paul, in either of the Epistles written to him.'

100. *What is the meaning of the term angel?*

The word angel signifies a messenger, and may be applied to any servant of God that bears a message from him, which the presbyter or bishop, by the express nature of his office, does.

101. *Are these angels said to be superior to the ordinary bishops or presbyters of the churches of Asia?*

No; they are not any where so described.

102. *Are the bishops or presbyters of the churches of Asia named separately, so as to allow us to suppose that the angel of the church was a different officer?*

They are not.

103. *Why, then, was the term angels used, instead of the word bishop?*

Probably, because the whole book in which it occurs is very figurative in its style; and has, therefore, been always regarded as more difficult to be understood than any other in the whole Bible; and because a special prophetic message was communicated, through these angels, to their respective churches.*

104. *Have we reason to suppose that the term angel would be familiar to the apostle John, who used it, and to the Jewish, and other early christians, to whom it was addressed?*

We have such reason, in the fact, that the term angel was the name of an officer in the Jewish synagogues, which were established in every part of the world where there were Jews.

105. *Would this use of the word angel, by the inspired writer, suggest to his readers, when first employed, the idea of an officer, distinct from, and superior to, the ordinary bishop or presbyter of a christian church?*

* It may be added, that, 1. The term angel is itself obscure. 2. It is used in an obscure book. 3. It is nowhere else applied in scripture to the bishop's office, if it is here. 4. It is a term which never has been brought into use in application to this office.

'The angel and the presbyter of the synagogue were congregational.' Bp. White's Lect. on the Catechism. Philad. 1813. p. 462.

No, it would not: because, in every Jewish synagogue, there was (just as there is now in every presbyterian church) a bishop, with a bench of elders and deacons; and this bishop was indifferently called minister, pastor, presbyter, bishop, or angel of the church; just as the bishop of a presbyterian church might be now called bishop, presbyter, pastor, minister, or angel of the church.*

106. *What other meaning may be attached to the word angel, as used in the word of God?*

It may signify the moderator, who, at that time, presided among the bishops of these several churches, and who was their official organ of communication; or it may signify these bishops, in their collective capacity.

Rev. 2:8, 10, 13.

* Dr. Lightfoot, who was himself an episcopalian, in giving an account of the officers of the synagogue, says; 'Besides these, there was 'the public minister of the synagogue,' who prayed publicly, and took care about the reading of the law, and sometimes preached, if there were not some other to discharge this office. This person was called, 'the angel of the church,' and 'the chazan or bishop of the congregation.' The public minister of the synagogue, himself, read not the law publicly; but, every sabbath, he called out seven of the synagogue, (on other days, fewer,) whom he judged fit to read. He stood by him that read, with great care observing that he read nothing either falsely, or improperly; and calling him back, and correcting him, if he had failed in any thing. And hence he was called *ἐπισκοπος*, or 'overseer.' Certainly, the signification of the word 'bishop,' and 'angel of the church,' had been determined with less noise, if recourse had been made to the proper fountains; and men had not vainly disputed about the signification of words, taken, I know not whence. The service and worship of the temple being abolished, as being ceremonial, God transplanted the worship and public adoration of God, used in the synagogues, which was moral, into the Christian church; to wit, the public ministry, public prayers, reading God's word, and preaching, &c. Hence, the names of the ministers of the gospel were the very same, 'the angel of the church,' and 'the bishop,' which belonged to the ministers in the synagogues.' See Works, vol. xi. p. 88.

SECTION V.

Of the permanence, calling, and ordination, of bishops.

107. *Is the office of pastor, or bishop, designed to be permanent in the church?*

The pastor, or bishop, being commissioned to preach the gospel, and administer its ordinances, for the conversion of sinners, the edification of believers, and the conviction of gainsayers, is, necessarily, a permanent office in the church.

Acts 26:18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Matt. 28:20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

108. *What are the qualifications of a bishop?*

To be qualified for the office of bishop, a man must give satisfactory evidence that he is sound in the faith, and that he has good talents for public speaking, sincere piety, and a blameless character.

1 Tim. 5:22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. 2 Tim. 2:2. And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Titus 2:7, 8. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

109. *May any individual, who supposes that he possesses these qualifications, take upon himself the office of a bishop?*

No; he who properly takes upon himself the office of a bishop, must be called of God.

Heb. 5:4. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Jer. 23:32. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err, by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore

they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord. 1 Tim. 5:22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. Rom. 10:15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

110. *What do you mean by being called of God, to the work of the ministry?*

This call is twofold; divine and ecclesiastical.

111. *When may an individual be said to have a divine call to the office of bishop?*

When he has given evidence, that he possesses the qualifications necessary to fit him for it; and when he feels impelled by an earnest desire to enter it, that he may thereby be enabled to serve God in the gospel of his Son.

1 Tim. 3:1. This is a true saying; if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Titus 1:7-9. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

112. *When may an individual be said to be called to the office of bishop, ecclesiastically?*

When the presbytery, composed of the bishops and elders of the churches, within whose bounds he resides, receive, approve, and admit him to that office, in the hope and belief that he has been divinely called.

1 Tim. 4:14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 2 Tim. 2:2. And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

113. *Is there any thing, besides this call, necessary to constitute an individual a christian bishop?*

Yes; he must be ordained.

Titus 1:5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 1 Tim. 2:7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity.

14. *What is the meaning of the word ordain?*

To ordain means to appoint; or, to set apart to an office; or, to invest with a ministerial function or authority.

115. *How is the bishop, or presbyter, ordained?*

He is ordained, by the imposition of the hands of the ministers, constituting the presbytery, and by prayer.

1 Tim. 5:22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. Acts 13:3. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 1 Tim. 4:14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

116. *Is ordination necessary, in itself considered, or only as a security for the order and purity of the church?*

Ordination is not to be regarded as conveying any hidden or mysterious grace or power to the person ordained. It is no more than an external and solemn form, whereby the person ordained is recognised as one who is believed to have been called, and thus authorized, by God; and who is, in this way, installed into the sacred office of the ministry. Neither is this rite to be considered so essential, as that, without it, a valid ministry, and a true church, could not, in any possible circumstances, exist.

117. *What name is applied to those, who are preparing for the ministry, in the belief that they have received a divine call?*

They are called candidates for the ministry.

118. *What name is applied to those, who have been allowed by presbytery to preach, and thus prove their fitness for this work?*

They are called licentiates; because they have received a license, or authority, to exercise their gifts.

119. *By what other name are such persons sometimes called?*

Probationers; because, until ordained, they are on trial, and may have their license withdrawn or confirmed.

120. *When an individual is ordained to the office of a bishop, is he set apart to some particular charge?*

Sometimes he is ordained, by the presbytery, as an evangelist, or a missionary, to labor where there are no existing churches; but, ordinarily, he is ordained over some particular charge.

Titus 1:5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 1 Pet. 5:1, 2. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Acts 20:17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

SECTION VI.

Of ruling elders

121. *What is the next officer in the church, after the bishop, or presbyter?*

The ruling elder.

122. *Why is this officer called the ruling elder?*

Because he is appointed to assist the bishop, who is the teaching elder, in the government of the church; and from whom he is, in this way, distinguished, by being called the ruling elder.

123. *Whence was this name derived?*

From the order of the Jewish synagogue, in which, besides a bishop, who was also called presbyter or elder, there was a bench of elders, who were associated with the bishop in authority.

124. *What powers did these elders possess in the Jewish synagogue?*

The general powers of government and discipline.

125. *Are ruling elders recognised in scripture ?*

They are ; for we read there of helps and governments, and of the brethren who were associated with the apostles and presbyters in the early councils of the church.

1 Cor. 12:28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers ; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. See also Rom. 12:8. Acts 2:15, 26 ; 6:1-6 ; and 15.

126. *From what other consideration may we deduce the necessity and scriptural propriety of ruling elders ?*

The power of the church was vested by Christ in the whole body of its members ; but as these cannot all meet together to transact business, or all act as officers, there must be ruling elders or delegates appointed by them for these purposes.

127. *What passage of scripture is most generally regarded as expressly alluding to ruling elders ?*

That passage in which the apostle Paul says, ' let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.'

128. *What is the general duty of ruling elders ?*

To act with the bishop or pastor, as ' helps and governments ' in the exercise of ecclesiastical authority ; and to watch over the flock, assist in the admission or exclusion of members, warn and censure the unruly, visit and comfort the afflicted, instruct the young, and exhort and pray as opportunity may be given.

129. *Do ruling elders possess authority, equally with the bishops, as rulers of the church ?*

Yes, as rulers, though not as teachers

130. *In what respect are they, with other members of the church, to be in subjection to the bishop ?*

As the bishop is ordained not only to rule, but also to teach, elders are equally bound, with the other members of the church, to obey him in the Lord, and to receive his instructions, as far as they are agreeable to the word of God.

1 Tim. 5:17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doc-

trine. 1 Pet. 5:1. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

131. *Is it necessary that such officers should be associated with the pastor, for the wise management of the affairs of the congregation?*

As the bishop or pastor of a congregation must employ a good part of his time in studying the scriptures; in preparing for preaching; in qualifying himself, by various reading, for the defence of the gospel; in attending upon the judicatories of the church; in watching over the general concerns of the church, and in promoting its welfare; the coöperation of such officers is altogether indispensable to the prosperity of any congregation.

Acts 6:2-4. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. See also James 5:14. Acts 15:4-6.

132. *What are the qualifications necessary for the office of ruling elder?*

The qualifications for the office of ruling elder are, sincere piety, sound principles, a capacity for judging, prudence, zeal, and unblemished reputation.

2 Tim. 2:21. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 1 Chron. 12:32. And of the children of Issacher, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment. 1 Tim. 3:4-7. One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

133. *Whom do ruling elders represent in the church ?*

As the pastor represents the ministry, so ruling elders represent the members of the church.

134. *By whom are ruling elders chosen to their office ?*

As they represent the members of the church, so are they elected to their office by them.

135. *How are ruling elders invested with their office ?*

Having been called by the church, and elected by it, they are solemnly set apart to their office with prayer, or with prayer and the imposition of hands.

136. *What number of elders should there be in every church ?*

Such a number as will enable them fully to discharge all the duties incumbent upon them, towards all its members.

SECTION VII.

Of deacons.

137. *What is the third spiritual officer in the church ?*

The deacon.

138. *Is it a part of the duty of the deacon to teach, or to rule in the church ?*

No ; it is not said to be the duty of deacons either to teach or to rule, in any part of scripture.

139. *How is the office of deacon distinguished from that of ruling elder ?*

The ruling elder, as a representative of the people, sits as a spiritual officer in all the judicatories of the church ; but deacons are officers only of that particular church by whose members they are elected, and are not competent, therefore, to sit as members in any one of the judicatories of the church.

140. *What is declared in scripture to be the express duty for which deacons were appointed ?*

Deacons were appointed for the purpose of managing the temporal affairs of the church, and especially to

spiritual interests of the church ; and without partiality or respect of persons.

Phil. 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory ; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Acts 1:24. And they prayed, and said, thou Lord, which knoweth the hearts of men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen. 1 Cor. 10:31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. James 3:17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

CHAPTER IV.

COURTS OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

Of ecclesiastical courts in general.

149. *What is meant by an ecclesiastical court?*

An ecclesiastical court is an assembly of those, who have the original and inherent power or authority of executing laws and distributing justice, according to the constitution; 'and, in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.' *

150. *Is it lawful, for the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, that the rulers of the christian church should meet in regularly organized courts?*

It is both lawful and necessary.

Acts 15:6. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter. Matt. 18:15-20. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. 1 Cor. 14:33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

* See Confession of Faith, ch. xxxi, sec. 2; and Form of Government, ch. ix, x, xi, and xii.

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* See Confession of Faith, ch. xxxi, sec. 2; and Form of Government, ch. ix, x, xi, and xii.

151. *How many kinds of church courts are there?*

Four; the session, presbytery, synod, and general assembly.

152. *Of whom are these several courts composed?*

Of bishops and ruling elders, as representatives of the ministers and the people.

SECTION II.

Of the church session.

153. *What is the church session?*

The church session is composed of the pastor, when there is one, and the ruling elders, of any particular congregation, met together as a church court.

154. *What scriptural authority is there for the church sessions, or, as they may be termed, congregational presbyteries?*

Scripture teaches us, that there was a plurality of elders in the churches formed by the apostles; to whom was committed the government of the church, and who, in order to act together, must of necessity have met in council.

Acts 14:23. And when they had ordained them elders (that is, presbyters) in every church, and had prayed, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Titus 1-5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. See also Matt. 18:15-20.

155. *What further evidence does scripture afford, for such church courts?*

The titles, given by the Holy Ghost to ecclesiastical offices and officers, are such as import a power of judging causes; and express the same authority which the elders in Israel were accustomed to exercise in ecclesiastical matters.

156. *What are some of these titles?*

The officers of the church are called guides, or

leaders,¹ bishops, or overseers,² elders,³ rulers,⁴ heads,⁵ and governors.⁶

¹ Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, comp. with Josh. 13:21, Deut. 1:13, Micah 3:9. Acts 7:10; 23:24, 26, 33. 1 Pet. 2:14. ² Acts 20:28, &c., comp. with Numb. 31:14, Judg. 9:28, 2 Kings 11:15. in the Greek. ³ Acts 14:23, &c., comp. with Judg. 8:14, Ruth 4:2, 3, 2 Sam. 5:3, 1 Chron. 11:3. ⁴ Acts 23:5, with Exod. 22:28, Matt. 9:18, Luke 8:41, John 3:1, Rom. 12:8, 1 Thess. 5:12, 1 Tim. 5:17.

157. *How should the business of the session be conducted?*

The meeting of the session should be constituted by prayer, each member being called upon by the moderator, (who is, by right of office, the pastor or minister present,) to give his opinion, and every question being decided by a majority of votes.

158. *Who are subject to the authority of the session?*

All the members of that particular church, in which the session exists.

159. *Over what matters has the church session authority?*

The church session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation; for which purpose they have power to inquire into the knowledge and christian conduct of the members of the church; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments, those who are found to deserve censure; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.

Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. See also 1 Thess. 5:12, 13. 1 Tim. 5:17. Ezek. 34:4. 2 Thess. 6:6, 14, 15. 1 Cor. 12:27. Acts 15:2, 6.

160. *How may any matters be brought before the session, for its judgment upon them?*

Either by an elder, or by any member of the church presenting a memorial, or preferring a complaint, or tabling charges.

161. *Is there any appeal from the judgment of the session, by a party, supposing himself aggrieved?*

Yes; there is an appeal from the session to the presbytery.

162. *What is the duty of the members of the church, towards their session?*

To respect and uphold their authority, as given to them by Christ; to render a cheerful obedience to their decisions, as in the Lord; cordially to coöperate with them, in those plans of usefulness they recommend; to strengthen their hands by prayer; to honor their character, though, like themselves, imperfect men; and to receive, and seek their advice, in all spiritual difficulties and distresses.

1 Thess. 5:12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor 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. Heb. 13:17.

SECTION III.

Of the presbytery.

163. *What is the next court of the church?*

The presbytery.

164. *What is the meaning of the term presbytery?*

It simply means an assembly of elders.

165. *How is the presbytery, considered as a court of the church, constituted?*

A presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.

166. *What is the extent of its jurisdiction?*

The authority of the presbytery extends to its own members, and to the several sessions and congregations belonging to it.

167. *What is the design and use of a presbytery?*

It is a court of appeal from church sessions; it affords

an opportunity for mutual consultation and advice ; it is a bond of visible union ; an authority, to which common submission is due, and by which is ordered whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care.

168. *What is the scripture warrant for presbyteries, as courts of the church ?*

The first argument is found in the ordinance of God, instituted by Moses, by which particular congregations were taught to bring their hard and difficult controversies to a superior ecclesiastical judicatory.¹ This order was reëstablished by Jehoshaphat, who established an ecclesiastical senate at Jerusalem, to receive complaints and adjudge causes brought before them.² This form of government is also commended unto us by David, as the praise of Jerusalem.³ So that the ecclesiastical assemblies and synagogues in Israel were not independent, but were under the government of superior courts.

¹ Deut. 17:8-12. ² 2 Chron. 19:8-11. ³ Ps. 122:4, 5. *

169. *But how does this afford any authority for such courts now ?*

Because they formed no part of the ceremonial law, but were based upon the principles of common and perpetual equity ; and therefore are such courts equally accordant to the divine will, and advantageous to the church, now.

170. *What other argument can you give, for the establishment of such courts in the christian church ?*

They are enjoined by that rule of discipline, laid down, by our Lord, for its government : ‘ tell it unto the church.’¹ For, since Christ here gave no new rule, the christian church not being organized, but appeals to one already familiar, he must have referred to the practice of the synagogue discipline, already described ; and must, therefore, be considered as teaching, that particular churches are not independent, but are to be in subjection to superior judicatories.

¹ Matt. 18:15-20.

* See also Paget, on the Power of Classes and Synods, London, 1641, p. 35, &c.

171. *How does this appear?*

Our Saviour here points out to us, in cases of offence among brethren, three degrees of admonition; a censure to be passed upon contempt of this admonition; and, finally, excommunication, in case of obstinate impenitence. But we know that this is exactly accordant to the Jewish plan, and that this very authority was, among them, committed to their councils.*

Lev. 19:18. Prov. 11:13. Deut. 17:9-11; 19:15. 2 Chron. 19:10. Exod. 12:19. Numb. 15:30, 31, and Gal. 5:12. Ezra 10:8, and Gal. 1:9. Matt. 9:11. Luke 15:2. Acts 11:2; 21:28, 29. See also Calvin and Beza, on Matt. 18:17.

172. *May we not also establish the authority of such courts, by a reference to the practice of the apostles, and the order of the first churches?*

Yes; the scriptures prove that several distinct congregations were regarded as one church, and were under one common government.

1 Tim. 4:14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Acts 15:2, 4, 6. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small discussion and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders; and they declared all things that God had done with them. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter.

173. *What illustration of this can you give?*

The several cases of the churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Samaria.

* That which the church of the Jews called the synagogue, Christ, in like manner, here calls the church; for, as the synagogue was a certain epitome of the church, so is the presbytery. Junius Ecclesiast. B. ii, c. 3.

SECTION IV.

Of a presbytery at Jerusalem.

174. *How may it be inferred that there were more congregations than one at Jerusalem?*

First, from the great number of converts that were added to that church.

Acts 2:41, 42, 46. Then they that had gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 4:4. Howbeit many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. Acts 5:14. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Acts 6:1. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Acts 21:20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law. Acts 9:31. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Acts 12:24. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Compare Acts 1:15.

Secondly, from the many apostles and other preachers who labored in that church.

See the preceding references.

Thirdly, from the diversity of language found among these believers, and the necessity hence arising for distinct assemblies.

See Acts 2d and 6th chapters.

Fourthly, from the fact, that the Lord's supper was administered in different houses at the same time.

Acts 2:46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart.

175. *How may it be shown, that these several congregations were under one presbyterial government?*

First, because all these congregations are denominated one church.

Acts 8:1. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against THE CHURCH which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 2:47. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 5:11. And great fear came upon all the church. See also Acts 12, and 15:4.

Secondly, because the elders of the church are expressly mentioned.

Acts 11:30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 15:4, 6, 22. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and of the apostles and elders. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Acts 21:17, 18. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.

Thirdly, because the apostles performed the duty of presbyters, in the church of Jerusalem.

Acts 10:44, 47. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Acts 21:17, 18. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present. See also Acts 6, and 15:6, 22.

Fourthly, because these presbyters and elders met together, as one body, for acts of government.

See as before. Acts 15:6, 22; 21:17, 18.

Fifthly, because, while they worshipped God and observed his ordinances in different assemblies, they were, nevertheless, united under one common government.

Acts 2:46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. Acts 2:44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common.

176. *But granting there were many different congregations at Jerusalem, united under one presbytery, are we to consider this example binding upon other churches?*

It was expressly foretold that out of Zion should come

forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem ; and since the apostles continued together for some years at Jerusalem, we must necessarily conclude, that the government of this church was left for our imitation, and that in the constitution of all other churches, their members were united together like it, under the direction of presbyteries.

Isaiah 2. Phil. 3. *

SECTION V.

Of a presbytery at Ephesus, and in other places.

177. *May the same conclusion be inferred respecting the church at Ephesus ?*

Yes ; first, from the length of time the apostles labored there.

Acts 20 : 31. Therefore, watch ; and remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Secondly, from the success which attended their preaching.

Acts 19 : 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. Acts 17 : 18. Then certain philosophers of the epicureans and of the stoics encountered him ; and some said, What will this babbler say ? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods ; because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection, &c.

Thirdly, from the number of believers found there.

Acts 19 : 17-20. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus ; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men.

Fourthly, from the reasons Paul assigned for his continuance there.

1 Cor. 16 : 8, 9. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost,

* See Bastwick's Utter Routing, p. 463, &c.

for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Fifthly, from the multitude of bishops or pastors there.

Acts 20:17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Sixthly, from the mention of one of these congregations, in such a way as to imply the existence of others.

1 Cor. 16:19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. Rev. 2:17. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Seventhly, from the evident union of these churches under one presbyterial government. *

Rev. 2:1, 2, 6, 17. Unto the angel of THE CHURCH of Ephesus write. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto THE CHURCHES.

178. *May the same inferences be made as to the churches at Corinth, and at Antioch, at Cæsarea, and at Samaria?*

Yes; as appears from there being more churches than one in these cities; while they are, nevertheless, called one church; and also from there being many pastors there at the same time.

See, as to Corinth, Acts 13:1, and 18:7-10; 1 Cor. 1:2; 14:29; 13:34; 14:3, 4; 5:4, 5; 2 Cor. 2:6. As to Antioch, Acts 11:19, 20, 25, 29, 30; 13:1, 5; 15:35. As to Samaria, Acts 8:5, 6, 12, 14. As to Cæsarea, Acts 11:30.

* An eighth argument, is this. The church of Ephesus consisted of both Jews and Gentiles, as appears from Acts 18. Paul was desired to stay with the Jews, to whom, as appears from chapter. 19:8, he preached for three months; and yet the Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed specially to those who were heathen, when there must have been one or more congregations of converted Jews.

SECTION VI.

Of the presbytery,—concluded.

179. *You have now established the authority of presbyteries from the discipline of the synagogue, from our Saviour's positive rule, and from the order of the apostolic churches; is there any other source of evidence?*

Yes; in the practice of the apostles, as we shall see when we consider the case of the synodical assembly at Jerusalem.

Acts 15.

180. *Is it necessary, that all churches should be thus united together in one presbyterial government? **

All the churches of Christ are certainly under obligation to conform to that primitive and scriptural order, which is divinely authorized.

Phil. 4:9. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

181. *Why are they under this obligation?*

Because the church, being a divine institution, and not a mere voluntary or human society, particular churches are not at liberty to set at nought any of the rules of Christ's kingdom, and are therefore bound, if they have opportunity, to combine themselves into presbyteries, for their spiritual government.

182. *Do they, by neglecting this order, commit evil?*

Yes; all that neglect it offend against the communion of saints, and walk not as members of the body of Christ.

Rom 12:5. 1 Cor. 12:25. Eph. 4:16.

183. *Do congregations, and their members, owe submission to the decrees of their presbyteries?*

Such decrees are recognised by Jesus Christ, so far as they are accordant to his statutes, as contained in the

* See this fully advanced by Alexander Henderson, as quoted in Dr. McCrie's *Miscell. Writ.* p. 86.

word of God ; and to resist them, therefore, is, in such a case, to despise the authority of Christ.

Matt. 16:19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Isa. 8:20. To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts 4:19.

184. *Of what sin are churches guilty, who thus reject the scriptural determinations of their ecclesiastical courts ?*

Those churches which reject the sentence and determination of their church courts, when consonant to scripture, commit a double sin ; first, by transgressing against the written word of God ; and, secondly, by despising the ordinance of God, and throwing contempt upon the authority of his officers. For churches are just as much bound to their superior courts, as are individual members to their particular churches ; that is, so far as they act according to the truth and will of God.

185. *Is there any appeal from the decision of the presbytery ?*

Yes ; an appeal can be taken from the decision of the presbytery to the synod.

SECTION VII.

Of the synod.

186. *What is the third court of the church ?*

The synod.

187. *What is the meaning of the term synod ?*

The word synod means an assembly of persons, of one faith, and for the same purpose.

188. *Why, then, is this church court called a synod ?*

As the presbytery is a convention of the bishops and elders, within a certain district, so a synod is a convention of the bishops and elders, within a district so large,

as to include within it at least three presbyteries ; or it may be defined a larger presbytery.

189. *What is the scriptural warrant for holding synodical assemblies ?*

A synod composed of the rulers from several churches met, disputed, and determined a subject then controverted in the churches, in the city of Jerusalem ; as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

See Acts 15. Eph. 4:11-16.

190. *Is there any other ground on which the authority for holding such assemblies rests ?*

Yes ; they are in accordance with the procedure of the Jewish synagogues, which were all subordinate to the sanhedrim, or ecclesiastical court, held in Jerusalem, to which Christ refers with approbation, and which were the model after which the christian church was fashioned.

See Matt. chap. 18, compared with Deut 17:8-12. See also Matt. 13:54. Mark 6:2. Luke 4:6, and 7:5. James 2:2. Rev. 2:9.

191. *Does the power of the synod interfere with that of the presbytery ?*

No ; it is designed to strengthen that power, and to extend it.

192. *What power does the synod possess ?*

The synod has power to receive and issue all appeals, and to decide on all references brought up from presbyteries ; to review their proceedings : and generally to take such order with respect to presbyteries, sessions, and people, under their care, as may be in conformity with the word of God, and for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

193. *Is there any appeal from the judgment of the synod ?*

Yes ; there is an appeal to the general assembly, the greatest and highest court of the church.

SECTION VIII.

Of the general assembly.

194. *How, then, do you describe the general assembly?*

It is the highest judicatory of the church, representing, in one body or court, through their bishops and elders, which are delegated by the presbyteries, all the particular congregations under its jurisdiction; it being, in fact, a larger synod.

195. *Is there any warrant for such an assembly of the rulers of the church, in the scriptures?*

There is a warrant for it in the council held at Jerusalem, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts.

1 Cor. 14:40. Let all things be done decently, and in order. Ezek. 43:12. This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. See also 2 Chron. 19:8.

196. *Will you state the grounds of this opinion?*

First, a question which arose at Antioch, affecting the faith and practice of all the churches of Christ, was referred, for settlement, to this assembly.

Acts 15:2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.

Secondly, this assembly consisted of the rulers of the church, while it was open to the people.

Acts 15:6, 12. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Thirdly, this assembly decided the question submitted to it, not by inspiration, but after discussion; and, as would appear, under the ordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 15:7, 22, 28. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know

how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.

Fourthly, we find, that, in this assembly, one member proposed a resolution, which was unanimously adopted as the opinion of the whole body.

Acts 15:19, 22. Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.

Fifthly, the decision, which was thus made, was authoritative, extended to all the churches, and was sent down to them, and read in them.

Acts 15:28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. Acts 16:4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees, for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

And, sixthly, the members of this synod were delegated, not by any single individual or prelate, but by the presbytery of Antioch, in conjunction with the other churches.

Acts 15:2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.

197. *But may it not be objected to all this, that the brethren, that is, all the people, were present at this council, as well as the presbyters?*

From what we have already seen, it is most certain that but a small part of the believers then in Jerusalem could have met together in any one place, and, therefore, that these brethren must have been delegated by the several churches, into which these false teachers had entered, to sit in this council, for the right ordering

and well managing of the matters submitted to its decision.*

SECTION IX.

Of the other bodies appointed by the church.

198. *Who has the power of calling these several councils, or church courts, together?*

The right of calling and dissolving all ecclesiastical courts is, by the Head of the church, exclusively vested in church officers.

Matt. 16 : 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

199. *While these are the regular and constitutional courts of the church, is it lawful and proper for the church to appoint other bodies, for the purpose of carrying out its plans, and executing its will?*

These several courts of the church certainly have power to appoint any body, to carry into execution any plans or operations which it is competent for these courts severally to undertake; provided, they do not themselves transcend the powers given to them by the constitution, or give to these bodies powers greater than they themselves possess.

200. *What bodies of this kind are employed by the several courts of the church?*

There are committees, to prepare or finish any assigned business; agents, to discharge any specified duty, on behalf of the body appointing them; and boards, or committees, to whom is intrusted the management of the various benevolent operations in which the church is engaged.

* See Bastwick's Utter Routing, London, 1641, pp. 430-434.

CHAPTER V.

POWER OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

Of the nature of church power, and the independence of the church of the civil government.

201. *Do the officers of the church possess any authority over its members?*

Every office implies some authority; and a church officer, without power to sustain his office, would be an anomaly.

202. *Why is such power necessary to the officers of the church?*

Because the members of the church, as such, are separated from the rest of mankind, and profess to believe in Christ; and it is made the duty of church officers to preserve this character of the church.

203. *Is this power clearly ascribed to the officers of the church, in scripture?*

Yes; obedience is required, from all the members of the church, to those who rule over them in the Lord.

Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

204. *Is the power, which church officers possess, such as to affect the civil interests of men?*

No; it is altogether ecclesiastical, and such as to

affect men only in their relation to the church, and to God.

John 18:36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

205. *How else may you describe this power of the church?*

It is spiritual, and addressed to the consciences of those who are subject to it, in contrast to the Jewish polity, which was external, carnal, and typical.

Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. 2 Cor. 10:4, 5. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

206. *In what respects is this power, or government of the church, spiritual?*

Its objects are spiritual; namely, the souls and consciences of men. Its end is spiritual; namely, the glory of God, in the instruction, guidance, and salvation, of men. Its law is spiritual; namely, the word of Christ, in its institutions, commands, prohibitions, and promises. Its acts and exercises are spiritual; namely, the admission, exclusion, or discipline, of its members. And its sanctions are spiritual; namely, the withdrawal of spiritual privileges, and the threatening of future and everlasting retribution, at the hand of the Judge.

See Luke 17:21. Heb. 9:10, 14; and 8:10. Jer. 31:33. Heb. 7:16, 18.

207. *To what does the power of the officers of the church extend?*

It belongs to them, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints, in cases of mal-administration, and

authoritatively to determine the same ; and, generally, to devise such plans as will best advance the interests of the kingdom of Christ.

208. *What are the means, which are employed by church officers, for the maintenance of this spiritual power ?*

The means employed, by church officers, to secure this obedience, are commands, entreaties, promises, threatenings, and censures ; which are all intended to affect the heart only, and not the property, liberty, or personal security, of the members of the church.

209. *Does the very word power, as applied to any office in the church, imply, that he who exercises it is himself under the authority of a superior ?*

Yes ; power implies the execution of superior orders, by one who is subordinate to that superior.

Matt. 23 : 8-10. But be not ye called Rabbi : for one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters ; for one is your Master, even Christ.

210. *In what sense do church officers possess authority ?*

By right of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they represent, and who is sole master in the church.

Matt. 17 : 5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them ; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

211. *Have church officers any power or authority, even in ecclesiastical matters, independently, or in themselves considered ?*

None whatever ; they act altogether ministerially.

Phil. 1 : 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. 2 Cor. 4 : 5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake. See also Acts 16 : 4 ; 15 : 15-31. Matt. 18 : 17, 18, 19, 29.

212. *What is the source and limit of all ecclesiastical authority ?*

The word of God, to which it is subjected, and by which it is restrained.

Isa. 8 : 20. To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Matt. 28: 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 4: 4.

213. *What is the end, for which all such authority is committed to the church?*

The apostle Paul declares it to have been given for edification, and not for destruction.

2 Cor. 8: 10. And herein I give my advice; for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. 2 Cor. 13: 10. Therefore, I write these things, being absent, lest, being present, I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me, to edification, and not to destruction.

214. *What is the name given to that opinion, which maintains that the church possesses no power, and that the office of its rulers consists solely in instructing and persuading the people?*

It is called Erastianism, from Erastus, its author, a physician, who lived in the sixteenth century.

215. *Do presbyterians ascribe any power to the church, which interferes with the authority of the state?*

No; presbyterians maintain, that the church is independent of the state, and distinct from it.

216. *Is the christian church, then, entirely independent of the civil government?*

Yes; so far as it regards the laws, officers, and duties, of the church, it has an indefeasible right to an unrestrained and independent jurisdiction in all things sacred; so that, as the church cannot interfere with the civil power, in the management of civil concerns, neither can the civil power interfere with the church, in the supervision and control of all things sacred.

217. *What, then, is the duty of the state to the church?*

Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments, or in the least interfere in matters of faith; yet, as nursing-fathers, it is their duty to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of christians, above the rest, in such a manner, that

all ecclesiastical persons, whatever, shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty, of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates, to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner, as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury, to any other person whatsoever; and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

John 18:36. Mal. 2:7. Acts 5:29. Is. 49:23. Ps. 105:15. Acts 18:14-16.

218. *What is the duty of the church, to the state?*

It is the duty of the church to pray for all in authority; to respect their persons; to pay them all just tribute, and other dues; to obey their lawful commands; and to be subject to their authority, for conscience's sake. It is also the duty of the church to preach the gospel to all men, including those who are in authority; to bear witness for Christ; to assert the authority of his laws, and to require obedience to them.

Rom. 13:1-7. Acts 25:10, 11. Tit. 3:1. 1 Pet. 2:13-17.

219. *Is this power of the church of great importance to be known and preserved?*

Yes; this independent and spiritual jurisdiction of the church cannot be abandoned, without sacrificing the honor of Christ, the glory of his kingdom, the very constitution and being of the church, and all liberty, civil and religious.*

* Civil and religious liberty depend upon the fact, that the province of the civil power is entirely separate and distinct from that of the ecclesiastical, and cannot, therefore, rightly, and ought not, in any case, be made to interfere with each other.

220. *How may this spiritual authority and independence of the church be violated or lost?*

The spiritual authority and independence of the church may be lost, by yielding to any usurpation of ecclesiastical power by the civil authorities, or to any ecclesiastical dominion, which dispenses with Christ's laws, or assumes His authority. Such usurpation, we are, therefore, to resist, if needs be, even unto blood, as derogatory to the supremacy and glory of Christ.

Heb. 2:8, 10. Gal. 4:7. 2 Cor. 4:4. 1 John 2:16, 17, 22. Rev. 17:8, 11. 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. Matt. 12:30. Col. 2:10, 19. Matt. 4:24.

221. *Do presbyterians desire, then, any alliance between their church and the state?*

On the contrary, they believe, that any such alliance ever has been, and ever will be, equally injurious to the state, and to the church; and that it is to be deprecated by every christian, as the baneful source of corruption and intolerance.

SECTION II.

Of true liberty of conscience.

222. *Can church officers enact any thing, contrary, or in addition, to the word of God, and make it binding on the conscience?*

No; God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.

Rom. 14:4. Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.

223. *Is it proper for any ecclesiastical officers to require implicit faith in that, for which no scriptural warrant can be given; or an absolute obedience to mere ecclesiastical decrees, without such plain warrant?*

No; this is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

Isa. 8:20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts. 17:11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word, with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. John 4:22. Ye worship, ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. Hosea 5:11. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. Rev. 13:12, 16, 17. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

224. *Ought any man, out of conscience, to believe any such doctrines, or to obey any such commandments?*

No: to do so would betray their liberty of conscience.

Col. 2:20, 22, 23 Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom, in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. Gal. 1:10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Gal. 2:4. And that because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily, to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. Gal. 5:1. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

225. *Does liberty of conscience mean a liberty to transgress or neglect any of God's commandments?*

No; that would be licentiousness, and not liberty.

226. *Does liberty of conscience mean freedom from all obedience to the authority of church officers, as far as they administer faithfully the laws of Christ?*

No; they who oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be ecclesiastical or civil, resist the ordinance of God.

1 Peter 2:13, 14, 16. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the

punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. See also Heb. 13:17. Rom. 13:1, 8.

227. *What, then, do you mean by liberty of conscience?*

True liberty of conscience is freedom from the enforcement of any doctrine or commandment of men, that is in any thing contrary to the general rules of God's word, or beside it, either in matters of faith or worship.

Acts 4:19. But Peter and John answered, and said unto them, Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Acts 5:29. Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said, We ought to obey God, rather than men. 1 Cor. 7:23. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Matt. 23:8, 10. But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. 2 Cor. 1:24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand. Matt. 15:9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

228. *Can any article of faith be believed, on any other authority than that of the written word of God?*

It cannot; for it is not given to any man, even were he an apostle, to exercise dominion over our faith; while a curse is pronounced upon any man, who will either add to, or take from, this book.

2 Cor. 1:24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand. Rev. 22:19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

SECTION III.

Of the divisions of church power,—and first of its dogmatic power.

229. *What are the different parts of the power of the church?*

The power of the church is commonly divided, according to the nature of the objects about which it is employed, into three parts.

230. *What is the first part of the power of the church?*
That which is called dogmatic, or which respects articles of faith.

231. *Has the church power to make such articles?*
All protestants agree in believing, that the scriptures contain all the truths which it is necessary for man to know; and that they constitute the only infallible rule of faith.

232. *What other rule does the church of Rome adopt?*
The church of Rome adopts another rule of faith, called tradition; by which she means a summary of doctrine which is in the possession of the church, besides that contained in scripture, and which is of equal authority with the scriptures themselves.

233. *Is there any foundation for this doctrine of tradition in the word of God?*

The scriptures, on the contrary, denounce the severest anathema upon any who will add to, or take from, the written word of God.

Rev. 22: 18, 19. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Gal. 1: 9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. See also Deut. 4: 2, 12, 32. Prov. 30: 6. Isa. 8: 20. Matt. 15: 3-6. Col. 2: 8.

234. *What has been the result of the adoption of tradition, as a standard of doctrine, in the church of Rome?*

It has introduced into the creed of that church human dogmas, and grossly erroneus tenets; for which she demands implicit reception, under pain of being accursed.

235. *What, then, is the power of the church, as it regards the scriptures?*

The church is the depository of the scriptures; and bound to preserve them, pure and unadulterated.

1 Tim. 3: 15. 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.

236. *What further power has the church, in reference to the scriptures?*

It is the duty of the church to explain the scriptures, and to call upon all men to study, believe, and obey them for themselves.

Mal. 2:7. For the priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Isa. 8:20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. John 5:39. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. See 2 Tim. 3:15. Col 3:16. Rom. 15:4. Acts 17:11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

SECTION IV.

Of confessions of faith.

237. *Has the church the right to draw up summaries of christian doctrines; as, for instance, confessions of faith and catechisms?*

In order to exhibit to the world her views of the scriptures; to oppose prevailing heresies and errors; to instruct her children and people; to ascertain the sentiments of candidates for admission into the ministry; and to secure harmony and uniformity in her public ministrations; it is the privilege and duty of every church, to draw up such summaries of christian doctrine.

238. *What authority do these summaries possess, in themselves considered?*

They have, in themselves considered, no more authority than any other human compositions.

239. *From what, then, is their authority derived?*

The authority of such summaries is derived solely from their conformity to the scriptures.

240. *Are such summaries to be regarded as infallibly correct?*

No; the only *infallible* rule for the interpretation of scripture, is scripture itself.

Rom. 12:6. Let us prophecy (or teach) according to the proportion (or analogy) of faith. John 5:46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

241. *Does our confession of faith claim any other power over those who receive it?*

No; for it is stated in that confession, that 'all synods or councils, since the apostles' times, may err, and many have erred; therefore, they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help to both.'

See chapter xxxi.

242. *Can you state any other declaration, which that confession makes of the same purport?*

Yes; it declares, that 'it belongeth to synods and councils *ministerially*, (that is, as ministers of God's word,) to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience'; and that their 'decrees and determinations, *if consonant to the word of God*, are to be received with reverence and submission.'

See chapter xxxi. 2. See also chapters i. ix. and x. and chapter xx. at large.

243. *How, then, do you reconcile the authority claimed for these standards, with that supreme authority which is ascribed to the word of God?*

No individual is compelled to receive these standards, contrary to his own voluntary choice; and in submitting himself to the authority of the church, every individual declares that he receives its standards, *because*, after full examination, he believes them to contain the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures.

See Form of Government, chapter xv. 12.

244. *You have said, that no individual is required to adopt these standards; will you now inform me whether any individual who may have adopted them, is at liberty, should he see fit, to withdraw his declaration of full belief in them?*

Should any individual be led to regard any part of

these standards as contrary to the word of God, it is his privilege and duty to release himself from that obligation ; or otherwise, as a man of honor, to maintain and defend them so long as he continues to act as a minister or elder of the church.

245. *Is there any thing in this to interfere with true liberty of conscience ?*

Nothing ; for while such a course is adapted to secure peace and harmony, and united action, it also preserves and maintains true liberty of conscience.

246. *Who are required explicitly to adopt and promise obedience to the standards of the church ?*

Bishops, licentiates, elders, and deacons.

See Form of Government, chap. xv. 12, chap. xiv. 7, and chap. xiii. 4.

SECTION V.

Of the second part of the power of the church, to enact rules for its government or order.

247. *What is the second part of the power of the church ?*
The power to enact rules for its government or order.

248. *Does this mean, that the church has power to establish any form of government which shall appear most eligible ?*

No ; as far as there is a particular form laid down in scripture, that form cannot be altered without usurping the authority of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 8 : 5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle ; for see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

249. *Does this mean, that the church has power to make new laws to regulate the moral conduct of its members ?*

The church, as we have already shown, has no legislative, but only a ministerial authority ; and her office consists SOLELY in publishing and enforcing those laws which the Head of the church has already enacted.

250. *Has the church power to decree rites and ceremonies, as is taught in the articles of the Church of Rome, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church?*

There is no scriptural warrant whatever for this opinion; and we, therefore, believe, that the church assumes a power which does not belong to her, when she makes any addition to the institutions of Christ, and requires their observance, on pain of censure or excommunication.*

251. *What other matters come under this power of the church, to enact rules for government and order?*

It belongs to the church to appoint the times of public worship, and on what other occasions its members shall join in the solemn exercises of religion.

252. *Are there any other matters included under this power of enacting rules?*

It is also the province of the church to point out the order of public worship, to fix the bounds of congregations and presbyteries, and to make all other arrangements, which are necessary to secure harmony and order.

SECTION VI.

Of the third division of the power of the church, or the power of discipline.

253. *What is the third and last part of ecclesiastical power?*

The power of discipline or jurisdiction.

2 Cor. 10:8. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for destruction, I should not be ashamed.

254. *Is this power necessary to every society?*

Yes; in every society of men, some power is necessary to preserve the common peace, and to maintain concord.

* For a notice of some of the objectionable results of the exercise of this power, see chap. vii. sect. 2.

255. *Has any person a right to admission into the christian church, without regard to its rules or regulations?*

No; only those who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ, can be admitted as members of the church of Christ.

Acts 8:37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 1 Cor. 1:2. Unto 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. Matt. 28:20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

256. *Why may not others, also, be admitted into the church?*

Because its privileges, by their very nature, are intended only for those who, in the judgment of charity, are disciples of Christ.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Acts 19:9. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

257. *By what means is this character of the church, as a society of professing christians, to be preserved?*

By the faithful exercise of a scriptural discipline, in enforcing the observance of her laws, and by censure and excommunication.

1 Cor. 5:7. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our pass-over is sacrificed for us. (See context.)

258. *Why is this exercise of discipline necessary to the purity and peace of the church?*

Because offences must frequently arise, from unregenerate professors, and from the remaining corruptions of those who are truly pious.

Matt. 18:7. Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh! Rev. 2:14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Ba-

laam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

259. *Who are to exercise this discipline?*

The officers of the church.

Matt. 28:19. Acts 14:23. Matt. 16:19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 18:15-18. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

260. *How far does this power of church officers extend?*

It is their province to judge who may be admitted to the church; to inspect their conduct when received; and to censure and expel such as prove to be unworthy.

2 Tim. 4:2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Titus 2:15. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. 1 Cor. 5:12. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

SECTION VII.

Of admission to, and exclusion from, the church.

261. *Are only those who are really saints, to be admitted into the church?*

That any man is *really* a saint, can be known only to God; and, therefore, the officers of the church, not having knowledge to discern the heart, cannot determine the secret state of the soul.

262. *By what rule, then, are they to be guided in the reception of members into the church?*

They are to be guided solely by the outward profession which is made, of inward faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 8:12. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 19:18. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

263. *When is a person to be regarded as making a credible profession of christianity?*

When such an individual manifests an acquaintance with the leading doctrines of the gospel; declares himself a believer in them; professes that his heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God; and maintains a conduct becoming the gospel.

Rom. 10:10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Acts 16:33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. Luke 3:8. Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

264. *Do the members of the church, after their admission to it, continue subject to the authority of its rulers?*

Yes. Such authority on the one part, and obedience on the other, are most plainly sanctioned by the law of Christ.

1 Cor. 5:12, 13. Heb. 13:17.

265. *For what offences are members of the church liable to its censure?*

For errors in doctrine;¹ for immorality in practice;² for despising the authority, order, or ordinances of the church;³ and for neglecting the public, domestic, and secret duties of religion.⁴

¹ Rom. 16:17. Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. Titus 3:10. A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject

² 2 Chron. 23:19. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in. Eph. 5:11. And have no fellowship with the

unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 1 Cor. 5:11. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat. Rev. 2:20. 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.

³ 1 Cor. 11:2. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 2 Thess. 3:6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

⁴ Heb. 10:25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. Jer. 10:25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name; for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate. Matt. 6:6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

266. *Are all offences to be followed by the same degree of censure?*

No; according to the nature of their several offences, some should be rebuked, others suspended from the privileges of the church, and others excommunicated, or entirely cut off from all connection with the church.

Titus 1:13. This witness is true; wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. 2 Thess. 3:14, 15. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 1 Cor. 5:13. But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Gal. 5:12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. 1 Tim. 5:20.

267. *Do the scriptures attach a very solemn importance to the censures of the church?*

They do; for they declare that the sentence of the church, when pronounced according to the scriptures, is confirmed and ratified in heaven.

Matt. 18:18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose

on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 1 Cor. 5:5. To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Tim. 1:20. Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

268. *What should be the conduct of those who have been, in either of these ways, subjected to the discipline of the church?*

They should humble themselves under it; and seek grace to repent and do their first works.

1 Peter 5:6. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Rev. 2:5. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

269. *When may a person who has been suspended be restored to the communion of the church?*

Whenever sufficient evidence has been afforded of his repentance and reformation.

Gal. 6:1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. John 20:23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

270. *Are any censures of the church to be made public?*

Yes; when the offences are of such magnitude and publicity as to bring scandal upon the church.

2 Cor. 2:6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 1 Tim 5:20. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

271. *Is the church injured by the neglect of discipline?*

Yes; for thereby godly persons will be deterred from entering it; the anger of God provoked; and Christ's name dishonored.

1 Cor. 5:11. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat. 1 Cor. 10:20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils,

and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Rev. 18:4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Jer. 7:11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. 2 Samuel 12:14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. Rom. 2:24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Eph. 4:30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

272. *May a church, by the utter neglect of discipline, cease to be a true and living church of Christ?*

Yes; this has happened.

Rev. 2:9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Rev. 3:9, 16. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

273. *On the other hand, are there many and great benefits arising from the exercise of strict and faithful discipline?*

Yes.

274. *What benefits may arise to the offender from the exercise of discipline?*

By this he sees sin to be evil and shameful; and if he receive the censure in a proper spirit, it has a powerful tendency to humble, reclaim, and edify him.

2 Thess 3:14. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be

* 'As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline forms the ligament which connects the members together, and keeps each in its proper place. Discipline, therefore, serves as a bridle to curb and restrain the refractory, who resist the doctrine of Christ; or as a spur to stimulate the inactive; and sometimes as a father's rod, with which those who have grievously fallen may be chastised in mercy and with the gentleness of the Spirit of Christ.' Calvin's Institutes, chap. xii. book iv. vol ii. page 365.

ashamed. 2 Cor. 7:9, 10. Now I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.

275. *What benefits arise to the church from the faithful exercise of discipline?*

Hereby sinners are discouraged from hypocritically joining the church, and the leaven which might infect the whole lump is purged out;¹ the number of her true converts is increased;² her holiness is manifested;³ the honor of her Head is vindicated;⁴ and God's gracious presence and blessing secured.⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 5:7. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.

² Acts 16:4, 5. As they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem; and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Acts 5:11, 13, 14. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And of the rest, durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord; multitudes, both of men and women.

³ John 2:16. Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

⁴ Ezek. 36:23. The heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

⁵ 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

276. *But may not the offender, by the exercise of discipline, be led to forsake the preaching of the gospel, and thus become more hardened?*

As discipline is an ordinance of God, we must expect the *neglect* rather than the *exercise* of it to harden the sinner; but if, in his pride and obstinacy, he disregard the advantages which flow from it, when received in a right spirit, the rulers of the church are not to be deterred from *their* duty, any more than the minister of the gospel from preaching, because many are hardened by it, and have their guilt and dangers increased.

2 Cor. 2:15. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life. Jude 19. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

277. *Are the rulers of the church deeply responsible for the right exercise of discipline?*

They who hold office by appointment from Christ, whose faithfulness will be followed by so many and great blessings, whose negligence must be the source of such deep and lasting injuries to the church, dishonor to Christ, and evil to sinners, should feel themselves under a most solemn responsibility in this matter, and must expect to be called to a most strict account, at the day of judgment, for the part which they act in relation to it.

1 Pet. 5:4. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.

278. *How may each member of the church fully understand all its rules, and order of discipline?*

By studying the Form of Government and Book of Discipline attached to the Confession of our Faith, and which every member of our church should possess.

CHAPTER VI.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

Of the nature and necessity of church fellowship.

279. *Is a knowledge of the true nature, constitution, and design of the church, important to all its members?*

It is important; for otherwise they will be in ignorance of those duties, which they are under obligation to discharge, as members of the church.

Ezek. 44:5, 8. And the Lord said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary. And ye have not kept the charge of my holy things; but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Matt. 5:19. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

280. *Who are members of the visible church of Christ?*

Those who have been admitted into it on profession of their faith and obedience, together with their children.

Acts 2:38, 39, 47. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

* 281. *Is it the duty of all, or only of some, to become members of the church of Christ?*

It is the unquestionable duty of all who hear the gos-

pel, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and then to become members of his visible church.

Acts 2:38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 10:9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 1 John 1:3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may also have fellowship with us; and, truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

282. *What are the ends of church fellowship?*

The ends of church fellowship are, that christians may hold forth the doctrines of the Bible; maintain the ordinances of the gospel, uncorrupted; promote their mutual holiness and edification; and thus become fitted for glory.

Col. 2:2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Rev. 2:25. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. Phil. 2:15. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Col. 1:12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

283. *What are the privileges of members of the church?*

The participation of the Lord's supper; the baptism of their children; pastoral oversight; the sympathy and prayers of the church; the special promises of God; and the right of deciding upon all matters referred to them, relative to the spiritual interests of the church.

Isa. 4:5, 6. And the Lord will create, upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow, in the day-time, from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. 1 Tim. 4:10. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. Acts 2:42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Ps. 147:19, 20. He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto

Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord. Rom. 9:4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

SECTION II.

Of the duties of church members.

284. *What duties do members of the church owe to their pastor?*

They should submit to his just and scriptural authority; love and esteem him; attend constantly upon his ministrations; coöperate with him in every good work; liberally support him; and earnestly pray for him.

1 Thess. 5:13. And to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Heb. 13:7. 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. See also 1 Cor. 16:15, 16. 1 Thess. 5:11, 12. 2 Cor. 1:11.

285. *What duties do the members of the church owe to one another?*

They should love one another; visit each other in affliction; pray for one another; when necessary, exercise forbearance and charity; watch over one another; and endeavor to live in peace and harmony.

Gal. 6:2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. James 5:16. Confess your faults, one to another, and pray, one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Eph 4:2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Rom. 12:13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 1 John 3:17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Lev. 19:17. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. See also 1 Pet. 5:5. Phil. 2:3.

286. *What duties do members of the church owe to the church itself?*

They are bound to support it; to take a deep and active interest in all its concerns; to seek its prosperity

by all lawful means ; and cordially to submit to its discipline.

1 Cor. 16:2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

287. *What is the duty of members of the church to themselves, as individuals ?*

To grow in knowledge, in grace, and in communion with God ; and to lead holy and exemplary lives.

John 5:39. Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me. Ps. 1:2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

288. *What is the duty of members of the church, as heads of families ?*

To maintain family prayer ; to set a holy example ; and to govern and direct their children, and servants, in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Gen. 18:19. For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Ps. 118:15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous ; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. Jer. 10:25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name. Eph. 6:4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

289. *What is the duty of church members, as citizens ?*

They should live peaceful, holy, and unblamable lives, in all honesty and fidelity ; adorning the doctrines of God our Saviour ; and, as far as lieth in them, securing a good report of them that are without.

290. *What is the duty of members of the church, as it regards property ?*

They should remember, that, in the possession of whatever amount of property they have, they are stewards for God, and must render an account to him, of the manner in which it has been used, for the furtherance of his glory.

2 Cor. 9:7. Acts 11:29. See also Prov. 3:9. 1 Tim. 6:17. Rom. 10:14, 15.

291. *Is a refusal thus to contribute to the support and spread of the cause of Christ severely reproved in scripture?*

Yes; it is distinctly said to be a sign of a graceless state; while, on the contrary, liberality is regarded as one evidence of christian character.

1 John 3:7. 1 Cor. 6:10. Eph. 5:5. Prov. 21:26. See also Ezek. 18:7, 9. Ps. 112:5, 9. 2 Cor. 8:1-8, 24

CHAPTER VII.

RELATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS, AND TO THE WORLD.

SECTION I.

Of Romanism.

292. *Did the church of Christ always continue pure ?*

Even from the very time of the apostles, the church was greatly distracted by numberless heresies and superstitions, of the most extravagant description ; and the bishops of Rome, pretending to be the successors of the apostle Peter, gradually subjected all the other churches to their control, and, at length, showed that they were that antichrist, which had been foretold.

2 Thess. 2:3-7.

293. *When did the church of Christ throw off the yoke of Rome ?*

Various churches and individuals attempted, at different times, to throw off the yoke of the church of Rome, some of whom only partially succeeded, while all of them were persecuted, and many destroyed ; till, at length, God raised up Luther, who, assisted by the German princes, protested against the authority of the pope ; and thus, ever since, the church of Christ has been a protestant church.

294. *Is the term protestant properly applicable to the presbyterian church ?*

It is properly applicable to it, in common with all the other reformed churches.

295. *Why are these all denominated protestant ?*

Because they still adhere to that solemn protest, which was made, by the reformers of the sixteenth century, against the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome.

296. *Name some of those errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, against which the church of Christ has thus protested.*

First, the church of Rome denies that the scriptures alone are a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Isa. 8:20. To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts 17:11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica. in that they received the word, with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. John 5:39. Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me.

Secondly, it receives oral traditions, as of equal authority, in religious matters, with the scriptures ; and thus substitutes human authority for the word of God.

Matt. 15:3, 6. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, by your tradition ? Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Gal. 1:8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Col. 2:8. Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Prov. 30:5, 6. Every word of God is pure ; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Rev. 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

Thirdly, it makes the apostle Peter the foundation of the church, and thus destroys the only true foundation, which is laid in Zion.

1 Cor. 3:11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Fourthly, it teaches that the pope of Rome is the visible and supreme head of the universal church, and thus denies the fundamental doctrines of the headship and supremacy of Christ.

Eph. 1:22. And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church. Col. 1:18. And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preëminence.

Fifthly, it conducts the prayers of the church in an unknown tongue, so that they cannot be profitable to the people.

1 Cor. 14:9, 11, 14, 16. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 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?

Sixthly, it pays divine worship to the virgin Mary, which is idolatry.

Matt. 4:10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Phil. 2:9, 10, 11. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Seventhly, it teaches its members to pray to saints and angels, as mediators or intercessors, while there is, as scripture teaches, but one mediator between God and man.

Rev. 19:10. And I fell at his feet, to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. 1 John 2:1.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 Tim. 2:5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. 8:6. But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Eighthly, it uses images in worship, and pays adoration to the sacramental elements, and the images of saints, which is also idolatry.

Exodus 20:4, 5. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Ninthly, it teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, which is at once absurd and idolatrous.

1 Cor. 11:26, 28. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Tenthly, it teaches the doctrine of purgatory, which is pagan in its origin, debasing in its tendency, and contrary to the express teaching of scripture.

1 John 1:7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 2 Cor. 5:2. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Phil. 1:23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Rev. 14:13. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

Eleventhly, it teaches the superstitious observance of times and places.

Twelfthly, it enjoins self-righteous penances.

Thirteenthly, it assumes the power of granting dispensations and indulgences, which is to put itself in the place of God.

Fourteenthly, in direct opposition to scripture, it teaches the necessity and virtue of the celibacy of the clergy.

Against these, and many other errors of the church of Rome, the presbyterian church, in common with all the reformed churches, bears its testimony, as being antichristian, and, in their tendency, destructive to the souls of men.

297. *By what title should this church be always spoken of?*

Either as the Romish, or the Roman catholic church, or the church of the pope, that is, the popish church.

298. *Why should you never speak of that church as the catholic church?*

Because, as has been shown, the term catholic, both as it means universal, and as it means orthodox, applies to all true churches, and not to any one particular communion, such as the Roman, or Anglican.

299. *Do you, then, consider the application of the term catholic, to the Romish church, to be positively wrong?*

I do, for several reasons. 1. Such a use of the term is in itself absurd. 2. It is no distinction, as thus used, any more than the term christian would be, since it applies equally to other churches. 3. It is unjust, as it regards ourselves; for, when we call the Roman the catholic church, it is implied that we, ourselves, and all other churches, are heretics or schismatics. 4. It is uncharitable towards them, since it encourages them in their error, and affords to them a plausible argument against other denominations.*

* The use which they make of it, when it is conceded to them, cannot be unknown. Dr. Milner, in his *End of Religious Controversy*, (Letter xxv.) says of the (episcopal) church: 'Every time they address the God of truth, either in solemn worship or in private devotion, they are forced, each of them, to repeat, I believe in the catholic church; and yet, if I ask any of them the question. are you a catholic? he is sure to answer me, No! I am a protestant! Was there ever a more glaring instance of inconsistency, and self-condemnation, among rational beings?' See Whateley's *Romish Errors*, p. 331. Let us, then, avoid, in future, this inconsistency and self-condemnation.

300. *In what sense may the Romish church be called a true church?*

The Romish church may be admitted to be a true church, inasmuch as it is a *real*, not a fictitious church; but it cannot be allowed to be a true church, in that sense of the word true, which would imply that it teaches true doctrines, or is conformed to the order and discipline laid down in the word of God. In this sense, the Romish is not only not the true church, but has no claim to the character of a true church at all.*

SECTION II.

Of prelacy.

301. *What opinion is to be entertained of those churches, which, with an orthodox creed, have adopted the prelatic form of church government?*

They are to be regarded as churches of Christ; and yet, as not being, in their constitution and order, in full accordance with the word of God; and therefore imperfect.

302. *Why do you denominate theirs the prelatic, rather than the episcopal form of church government?*

For the same reasons, in part, why we refuse to speak of the Romish, as the catholic church; and, also, because we believe our form of church government to be more truly the primitive and apostolical episcopacy, since the term bishop (that is, *episcopos*, whence episcopacy) was, by the Holy Ghost, originally given to presbyters, and is applied to them throughout the New Testament.

See question 92.

303. *Do you, then, design to convey any reproach, by using the terms prelate, prelacy, and prelatic, instead of bishop, episcopacy, and episcopal, as applied to this denomination of christians?*

* See Whateley's Logic, Appendix, Art. *Truth*, p. 381, Eng. edition.

Certainly not, since, in so doing, we use terms which are constantly employed by their own writers, in a good sense; and by which this denomination may be better distinguished from others.

304. *Can you name some of the points in this prelatie system, to which presbyterians object, as being without support in the word of God?*

First, they object to the power claimed by prelatie churches, to decree rites and ceremonies, in the worship of God, and to institute offices in the church; Christ, alone, as king and head of the church, having any such authority.

Prov. 30:6. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Rev. 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. 1 Cor. 6:12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Ps. 2:6. 1 Pet. 5:3. See also Eph. 5:23, and Matt. 28:20.

Secondly, while they do not deny the propriety, or reject the use, of all forms of prayer, or of administering ordinances, they object to the imposition of a fixed and stated liturgy, which excludes all extemporaneous prayer; believing that it tends to prevent the exercise of spiritual gifts; to induce formality and deadness in devotion; and to prevent its adaptation to the state and circumstances of the church, and of individuals.*

Acts 1:24, 25. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostle-

* The Book of Common Order of the English Church at Geneva, drawn up by Knox, and approved by Calvin, was received, and approved, by the church of Scotland, and ordinarily prefixed to the Psalms in metre. Neither has the use of this truly excellent and beautiful order ever been proscribed, or forbidden; and its use, in a modified form, might be still advantageous. Like the liturgies of all the French presbyterian churches, it is not exclusive, but provides for the introduction of extemporaneous prayer, and for modifications. Its use has been lately recommended, in an edition by the Rev. J. Cumming, of the Scotch church in London. Our church also allows of forms of profession, baptism, and marriage.

ship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell, that he might go to his own place.

Thirdly, they object to the appointment, and *stated* observance, of holy days, as being not only without scriptural warrant, but positively discountenanced by it; as interfering with the due sanctification of the Lord's day; as having originated in improper motives; and as necessarily leading to many and great evils.

Gal. 4:9-11.

Fourthly, they object to the interposition, in baptism, of god-fathers, and god-mothers, between parents and their children. For this practice there is not a shadow of evidence in the New Testament, nor in the practice of the church, for five hundred years after Christ. It was unknown, also, among the Waldenses, and is to be regarded as one of the many superstitious usages, introduced into the church with the progress of corruption.

Fifthly, they object, for the same reasons, to the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, and, also, because it is associated with the superstition and idolatry of the Romish church, in which it is considered as essential to the validity of the ordinance of baptism, is applied in every step of religious life, and is formally and publicly revered.

Sixthly, they object to the rite of confirmation, because they can find no authority for it in the word of God, or in the purest ages of the church; because it is altogether superfluous, and answers no practical purpose, not otherwise provided for; because they regard the form of its administration as teaching dangerous and unscriptural doctrine; and because it serves to foster, in the minds of the young, the most delusive and self-righteous hopes.

Seventhly, they object to the practice of kneeling at the Lord's supper, because it is contrary to the posture assumed by Christ and his apostles, who employed that in which it was then customary to receive ordinary meals; because it was unknown in the christian church for a number of centuries; because it is opposed to that gladness, gratitude, and affectionate intercourse, of which this ordinance is expressive; because it is a rem-

nant of the Romish ritual, and of the adoration of the host ; and because it was retained in the English church against the wishes of a large body of its most learned and pious divines.

Eighthly, they object to the *regular* administration of the Lord's supper in private, as opposed to the social character of this ordinance ; as being unwarranted by scripture ; as fostering superstitious notions of the inherent virtues of the sacrament ; as liable to great and manifold abuses ; and as likely to do much injury to many, both among the living and the dying.

Ninthly, they object to bowing, in the public service, at the name of Jesus. This, also, is without any authority from scripture. It attaches some superstitious virtue to one, among many other titles, of our blessed Redeemer. It seems to imply that the second person of the ever-glorious Trinity is entitled to peculiar adoration. And as it was first introduced about the fifteenth century, it should not be retained among a reformed christian people.

Tenthly, they object, for similar reasons, to the practice of praying toward the east ; of wearing, in the reading-desk, or during the prayers, a white surplice ; of speaking of the Lord's table as an altar, of the Lord's supper as a sacrifice, and of christian ministers as priests ; these terms being pagan in their origin, Jewish in their spirit, and the last being at variance with the whole system of the gospel, and destructive of one of its most important characteristics.

They also solemnly protest against reading the apocryphal books, in any service regarded as connected with the worship of God, which is done continually in prelatial churches, on their holy days. These books form no part of the inspired word of God ; they contain false doctrines, misstatements, and not a few things adapted to promote ridicule, rather than edification ; and are acknowledged, by prelatists themselves, to be uncanonical, and very exceptionable in much that they contain.*

* The church of England omits the public reading of two hundred and eleven chapters of the Bible, and substitutes one

305. *As some of these ceremonies appear unimportant in themselves, why is the observance of them a ground of serious objection?*

Because such observance encourages superstition and 'will-worship;' is opposed to the sufficiency of the scriptures, as the only rule of faith and practice, and to that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and upholds the unscriptural and pernicious principle, that men may innocently and profitably add to the institutions of Christ, and the terms of communion in his church, these ceremonies being regarded as mystical and significant.

Col. 2:20, 23.

306. *Is there any thing else, to which presbyterians object, in the prelacy?*

Yes; they object to the power of ordination, and other ecclesiastical functions, being vested exclusively in the unscriptural order of prelates, since this makes void the word of God, and leads to spiritual despotism.

1 Tim. 4:14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Matt. 20:25, 27. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Again; they object to the unscriptural distinction between consecration, or the setting apart of prelates, and ordination, or the setting apart of presbyters, to the work of the gospel ministry, as being wholly unauthorized by the word of God.

Further; they object to the doctrine, that, by

hundred and one chapters from the Apocrypha. The Homilies speak of Baruch as a prophet, and expressly ascribe the book of Tobit to the Holy Ghost. See Homily Ag. Disobed. and Rebellion, Part i. p. 475, and on Almsdeeds, Part ii. p. 328. These homilies make a part of the formularies of the episcopal church in this country. For a full exhibition of the grounds of our objection to these ceremonies, see Dr. Miller on Presbyterianism, &c. ch. v. p. 63, &c.

water-baptism, an infant is regenerated, made a member of Christ, and a child of God; and to various other things, contained in the canons authorized by this church, and in the Book of Common Prayer.

James 1:18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. 1 Pet. 1:23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Finally, they lament the extreme laxity of many of the prelatical churches, in reference to the characters whom they admit to their communion and privileges, and the difficulties thrown in the way of any of their godly ministers attempting to exercise a scriptural discipline.

SECTION III.

Of congregationalism.

307. *In what light do presbyterians regard those churches which adopt the independent or congregational form of church government? **

As far as they hold to those doctrines which are regarded, by the presbyterian church, as the doctrines of grace, we consider them, also, to be true churches of Jesus Christ; but as defective, and not *fully* accordant to scripture, in their forms of government and discipline.

308. *Name some of the reasons why presbyterians object to this system of church government.*

First, they object to it because, so far as it makes

* The reader should be apprized, that, in this place, congregationalism is considered, in its theoretic and essential principles, as a system. In its practical operation in this country, it is found acting upon those principles of consociation and union, both in ecclesiastical and benevolent matters, which gives such unity and strength to the presbyterian church, and is, therefore, essentially presbyterian.

each congregation independent of every other, it destroys the unity and power of the church.

1 Cor. 12:12, 26, 27. 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. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. John 18:36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Secondly, they object to it because it is thus opposed to the constitution of the apostolic church, in which there existed ecclesiastical courts, as bonds of union between the churches.

See chapter IV.

Thirdly, they object to it because it destroys the original distinction recognised in scripture between the rulers or officers, and the members of the church.

Heb. 13:17, 24. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.

Fourthly, they object to it because it unfits the church, in her distinctive character, and through her own organization, to perform her appropriate duty of extending the kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

Matt. 18:19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Fifthly, they object to it because it gives an unrestricted, and therefore unscriptural, power to its members in the government of the church.

See chapter III.

Sixthly, they object to it because it deprives the pastor, or any aggrieved member of the church, of the privilege of appealing to some court of review.

Acts 15:2. When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small

dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

SECTION IV.

Of the doctrine of the apostolical succession.

309. *To what other doctrine, common to both Romanists and prelatists, do you object?*

To their doctrine of the apostolical succession.

310. *Is it not important that there should be a regular succession of scripturally appointed ministers?*

It is important as a matter of order, but it is not essential to the salvation of souls, since a broken succession can never frustrate the efficacy of the divine word, or an unbroken succession sanctify 'the doctrines of devils,' or the 'works of darkness.'

311. *Are there any who believe in the absolute necessity, in order to covenanted salvation, of such a succession?*

Yes; the popish church, and a large party in the episcopal churches of America and of England.

312. *What is meant by this doctrine of apostolical succession?*

By the prelatical doctrine of apostolical succession, it is taught, that as Christ delegated all power to his apostles, so have these apostles delegated it to the order of prelates in personal and perpetual succession; that these prelates are the sources of all spiritual grace and authority; are alone empowered to ordain other ministers, so that without them there can be no valid ministry at all; that they alone possess or can bestow the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and that without them, all preaching and ordinances are vain, delusive, and deprived of the promised blessing of Christ.*

* See the author's Lectures on the Prelatical Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession.

313. *Can this doctrine be proved from scripture?*

No; it is not even pretended, that this doctrine can be found in scripture. It is granted, that it is not clearly revealed in the word of God; but that it depends upon tradition and the authority of the fathers.* This doctrine, on the contrary, is actually denounced by Christ; and is opposed to scripture declarations, warnings, and precepts, to its promises and prophecies, to its facts and decisions, and to the only remaining commission of the ministry. †

Mark 10: 42, 43, and 9: 33-37. Matt. 23: 8-11.

314. *Can this personal succession be shown to have been preserved in a valid and unbroken chain?*

In order to show this, it must be proved, that the ordination of every prelate in this entire succession was valid, first, as to the form of ordination; secondly, as to the subject of ordination; and, thirdly, as to the ministers of ordination, which is an impossibility. ‡

315. *Can this personal succession be proved as a historical fact?*

On the contrary, it cannot be proved, that the apostle Peter, the first link in this chain, was ever at Rome, or that he was ever bishop of Rome, or that he ever appointed a successor to himself, as such. Neither can it be decided, whether there were one or two bishops originally at Rome, nor who were the first successors in that church; while it is certain that many invalidities have occurred in the progress of this succession, both in its Romish, Anglican, and American branches, and also in all the other prelatic churches; and that it has been broken in numerous instances, and in innumerable ways. §

316. *Are prelaties really and in fact successors of the apostles?*

Prelates are not successors to the apostles, in fact.

* See full proof of this position in author's Lectures, pp. 73, 83, 87, 99, 103, 133, 134, 136.

† See *ibid*, lect. vi. and vii.

‡ See *ibid*, lect. v

§ See *ibid*, lect. viii. and ix

They are not apostles, in the true sense of this title, which was limited to the twelve ; nor in their call, which was immediately from Christ ; nor in their endowments for their office, which were supernatural ; nor in their office itself, which was the oversight and instruction of the whole world ; nor in their duties, which involved the indoctrination, care, and government of ALL the churches. *

317. *Can this doctrine be sustained on the ground of reason ?*

No ; it is most unreasonable, inasmuch as it substitutes the theory of man for the word of God ; the visible organization and ministry of the church, for spiritual christianity ; ordinances, rites, and forms, for doctrines and inward graces ; the authority of the church, for the supremacy and headship of Christ ; and the means of attaining salvation, by giving efficacy to the truth, for that salvation itself. †

318. *Does this doctrine necessarily lead to popery ?*

This doctrine necessarily leads to popery, because it invests the church with all authority ; because it subjugates the laity and the ministry to prelates ; because it consigns to these prelates the interpretation of the word of God ; because it has ever formed the basis upon which the system of popery rests its exclusive assumptions ; because, wherever it has been carried out, it has led to the introduction of the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Romish church ; and because it is now leading extensively to the same results. ‡

319. *Is this doctrine also intolerant in its tendencies and results ?*

That this doctrine leads to intolerance in spirit and in practice, is proved from its history in all past ages ; from the character and doings of many ancient and modern prelates ; from its necessary tendency to exclude the laity from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to consoli-

* See author's Lectures, lect. x.

† See *ibid*, lect. xiv.

‡ See *ibid*, lect. xi. and xii.

date a spiritual despotism, and to claim absolute authority over the persons, conduct, and opinions of its adherents; from its bitter, sectarian, and uncharitable spirit towards all other denominations; and from its clear opposition to civil and religious liberty. *

320. *What further objection have you to this doctrine of apostolical succession?*

I object to it, because it necessarily implies that the church of Rome is truly catholic, apostolical, and indefectible in doctrine and practice, and that all other churches, being excommunicated by it, are cut off from the church of Christ; and because it is schismatical, leading its abettors, like the ancient heretics, to cut themselves off from all other christians, to assert that they alone constitute THE catholic church of Christ, and to deny to all other branches of the church either a valid ministry or efficacious ordinances; and because it is thus contradictory to the charity, to the spirituality, and to the divine character of the gospel. †

321. *Is this doctrine to be rejected because such claims might be advanced only by prelatists?*

On the contrary, presbyterians might far more reasonably urge these claims. For as all their ministers are bishops; as their bishops, at the reformation, were ordained by those in authority; as they can undeniably trace their succession upward through the Romish, the Waldensian, and the Culdee churches, to the very time of the apostles; and as in their time bishops were presbyters, and acted under the one and only commission given by divine appointment; it is therefore plain, that while their ministerial succession is certain and unquestionable, that of prelates never can be established.

322. *Why, then, are we not to glory in this succession?*

Because they only are true bishops of Jesus Christ, who are called of God; who receive his Spirit; and who

* See author's Lectures, lect. xiii.

† See *ibid*, lect. xv. xvii. xviii. and xix.

preach his truth in its purity and its fulness ; this being the all-essential mark of the church of Christ. *

323. *What evils arise from the assertion, that this unbroken succession of prelates is essential to a true church, to a true ministry, and to all hope of covenanted mercy ?*

This doctrine would destroy all existing churches, and thus, all hope of salvation ; since there is no church which can establish such a succession. It also fosters pride and ambition among the clergy ; lukewarmness, formality, and hypocrisy among the laity ; and carnality, contention, and animosity among all protestant denominations. It strengthens popery, by conceding its essential principles and its most arrogant demands. And it strengthens infidelity, by implicating christianity in a doctrine which is in itself unscriptural, in its tendency hurtful, in its evidence baseless, and in its reasoning absurd.

SECTION V.

The advantages and claims of the presbyterian church.

324. *What claims, then, has the presbyterian church on all her members ?*

She is scriptural in her character, ordinances, and doctrines ; apostolic in her forms, officers, and order of government and worship ; adapted to secure the religious liberty and prosperity of all her members, and to extend the blessings of salvation to the ends of the earth.

325. *What other advantages does the presbyterian church possess, to recommend her to all her members ?*

In her government there is found ample provision, according to the word of God, for the preservation of order, free from all confusion ; of peace and unity, free from schism and division ; of the truth as it is in Jesus, free from all error and heresy ; of piety, free from all scandal and profaneness ; of equity and right, free from all

* See author's Lectures, lect. xx. and xxi.

maladministration, whether ignorant, arbitrary, or tyrannical; of the honor and purity of Christ's ordinances, from all contempt, pollution, and profanation; of the comfort, quickening, and encouragement of the saints in all the ways of Christ; and of the honor of God and of our Lord Jesus, in all the services of the sanctuary.

326. *Name some of the further advantages possessed by members of the presbyterian church.*

They possess the right of choosing their own pastors and elders; they are neither subject to the spiritual despotism of a priesthood, nor to anarchy and misrule; they can bring any matter,—whether it be unfaithfulness in ministers and elders, or in the other officers and members of the church, or errors in doctrine,—before the church courts, composed of an equal proportion of clergymen and of representatives of the people, chosen by themselves, for investigation and decision; and they have the privilege and power, when their rights as citizens of Zion are assailed, of appealing from one church court to another.

327. *Are not the principles of presbyterian polity, in perfect agreement with the principles of civil liberty?*

Yes; in the equality of all her members and ministers; in her love of simplicity and order; in her opposition to all unnecessary distinctions; in her regard to the interests and wishes of her members, as well as ministers; in the open publicity of all her doings; in that model she has given for the exercise of the principle of representation; in that shield which she has thrown around the person and character of the poorest of her members; in that energy with which her various enterprises are carried on; in a word, in her perfect unity combined with diffusiveness and universality, she exhibits all the principles and features of true liberty, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

Matt. 28: 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

328. *What is the duty of members of the presbyterian church, toward members of other christian churches?*

They should respect their religious opinions and practices; avoid all bigotry and prejudice; abstain from all officious controversy, and underhand proselytism; reciprocate all acts of christian courtesy and kind regard; and coöperate with them in the promotion of every good word and work.

329. *What, then, is the claim which the presbyterian church makes upon the regards of all her members?*

She claims to be regarded as a true and pure church, having the pure word preached, and the sacraments duly administered; and as an entire and perfect church, having that apostolic form, order, and ministry, which can be traced back to Christ and his apostles. But while her discipline is the best, she does not wish it to be regarded as the *only* form of church government that gives validity to ordinances, or hope of salvation.

SECTION VI.

Of the relation of the presbyterian church to the world.

330. *In what relation does the church stand to the world?*

Christ has appointed his church to be the salt of the earth, that it may be preserved from premature destruction; to be the pillar and ground of the truth; and to be a missionary association, to send forth teachers, and gather all nations unto Christ.

Matt. 5:13. 1 Tim. 3:15. Matt. 28:19.

331. *What is the duty of the church as the salt of the earth?*

As the earth is preserved only for the sake of the church, it is the duty of the church carefully to retain its purity, and to show a good example to all around; lest, having lost its savor, the judgments of God should come upon the world.

Matt. 21:22; 5:13, as above.

332. *What is the duty of the church as the ground of the truth?*

It is the duty of the church, as the ground of the truth, to preserve and circulate the scriptures, pure and entire; earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; and to adorn the doctrine of Christ by exhibiting in its members a walk and conversation becoming the gospel, that others, seeing their good works, may be led to glorify their Father who is in heaven.

2 Tim. 2:2. Jude 3. Tit. 2:10. Matt. 5:16.

333. *What is the duty of the church to the world as the pillar of the truth? **

It is the duty of the church, as the pillar of the truth, to consider herself as a missionary association, organized by Christ, for the promotion of God's glory, in the evangelization of the world.

Rom. 12:5-8. Rev. 22:17. Gal. 4:18. 2 Cor. 12:15. Acts ch. 13 and 15.

334. *What has Christ promised with regard to the future destiny of the church?*

Christ has promised, that all countries shall yet be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; and that with the ingathering of the Gentiles, the Jews shall be restored to their forfeited privileges, and made full partakers of all the blessings of the gospel.

Rom. 11:25-27. Matt. 28:19.

335. *What influence is the church fitted to exert upon the state of the world?*

As all misery sprung originally from sin, so is it maintained only by its continuance. And thus, when christianity shall be extended over the whole world, poverty and disease will be greatly decreased, while that which remains will be softened by the exercise of faith in God, and the sympathy of our fellow-men; — the happiness and prosperity of individuals will be increased, by the restoration of communion with God, and obtaining his blessing according to his promise, the faithful per-

* The reference is to pillars as anciently used for proclaiming to the world and to future times the knowledge of great events.

formance of the duties which men owe to each other, and promotion of truth, peace, and love among all men ;— the resources of nations will be increased, and their expenditures diminished ; — and the general happiness of mankind will be promoted, by the acquisition and enjoyment of health and wealth, the diffusion of industry, temperance, and morality, by providing conscientious servants, neighbors, and friends, and by establishing confidence, and diffusing intelligence, kindness, respect, meekness, and prudence, among all ranks and classes of society.

Eph 5:6. Isa. 32:15-18. Rev. 3:20. Job 36:11. Rom. 13:7-10. Luke 2:14. James 2:5. Ps. 117:17. Prov. 15:6. Eph. 6:3. 1 Thess. 4:11, 12. Matt. 5:5, 9. Prov. 14:34.

336. *Why, then, is it the especial and imperative duty of the presbyterian church, and of every member of it, to engage with all their powers in the great work of spreading the gospel throughout the earth?*

Since it is thus the great end and duty of the church to act as a missionary association, this also must be the great end and duty of the presbyterian church, as a branch of the catholic church ; and since the purest form of christianity will be the most efficacious in imparting its blessings, it is therefore the especial duty of every member of this church, which derives all its doctrines, polity, and worship from the pure word of God, to labor earnestly for its extension to the ends of the earth.

THE
PRELITICAL DOCTRINE
OF
APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION
EXAMINED,

AND THE PROTESTANT MINISTRY DEFENDED AGAINST THE
ASSUMPTIONS OF POPERY AND HIGH CHURCHISM,

In a Series of Lectures.

BY THOMAS SMYTH,
Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

Overture adopted by the Synod of S. Carolina and Geo. at its session in 1841.

That the publication of works intended to advocate the distinctive order and polity of our church should be encouraged, and their circulation among our people rendered as general as possible; and it having come to the knowledge of this Synod, that one of their number, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, has recently given to the Church, among other valuable publications, 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of Families, Bible Classes, and Private Members,'—and a series of lectures on 'The Prelitical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession Examined, and the Protestant Ministry Defended against the Assumptions of Popery and High-Churchism.' Therefore, *Resolved*, That the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia regard with pleasure and approbation these publications, as containing an able defence of the divine authority of the Protestant Ministry, and a full and satisfactory exposition of the order and government of our Church; and as demanded by the present state of the controversy on these subjects. And the Synod does, therefore, cordially recommend the said publications to all our Ministers, Elders, and private members, as works of high value, and calculated to advance the intelligence of our Church, on our distinctive peculiarities and doctrines.

Extract from a review of the work in the Biblical Repertory, for Jan'y, 1841.

'This book does no small credit to the industry and talent of the author. The importance of his subject, the correctness of his views, and the abundance of materials which he seems to have had at his command, entitle his performance to the most respectful notice. The author's mind is not only strong but lively, and his book exhibits traces of both qualities. The natural, (and may we not say,) national, vivacity with which he seizes on his topics and discusses them, enlivens in a very satisfactory degree even those parts of the subject which might otherwise have proved most irksome and fatiguing. In a word, the book, (which by the way is elegantly printed,) may be freely commended to the favorable notice of the public; and we doubt not that wherever it is read it will be useful, in apprising those who read it what the high church doctrine really is, and on what grounds it may be most triumphantly and easily refuted.'

From the Southern Christian Advocate.

'We have the pleasure to announce the probable publication of these Lectures at no distant day. As far as opportunity has allowed it, we have attended Mr. Smyth's course, and been both pleased and edified. Pleased, in witnessing a fine combination of candor, kindness, and strength, in the discussion of difficult and soul-rousing questions. Edified, in listening to a vigorous discussion of important first principles, where the lecturer was master of his thesis, and backed his reasoning by extensive authority of the highest value in this controversy. This volume, in which the Prelatic Doctrine of Apostolical Succession is considered, will be highly valuable to the theological student.'

From the Christian Intelligencer, of the Reformed Dutch Church, N. Y.

'This is an exceedingly neat volume of five hundred and sixty-eight pages, beautiful in its mechanical execution, and upon a subject of grave and exciting importance. The work is seasonable, and from the cursory examination which we have as yet been able to give to it, we believe that it will prove to be exceedingly valuable. The work before us, at the present crisis, is seasonable and necessary. It is more ample in its discussion than any that preceded it. It is the result of much and patient research, and will be found to reflect credit alike upon the talents and learning, and we will add also, the temper of the author. He has rendered the Protestant community a debtor. We desire that the work may have the widest circulation, and receive the careful perusal both of Episcopalians and Christians of every other name.'

From the Christian Advocate and Journal, of the Methodist Church, N. Y.

'This is a large octavo volume. The author makes thorough work of his subject, examining the pretensions of Prelacy with care and candor, and exposing their fallacy with unanswerable force and perspicuity. He gives the claims which are set up by Popery and High-Churchmen in their own language, and refutes them by arguments drawn from reason, church history, and Scripture. The Christian world seems to be waked up anew to the high and exclusive claims of Prelacy by the astounding assumptions of the Oxford divines; and we admit that such a book as that before us seems to be called for by the occasion, and will no doubt be read with great interest.'

From the New York Evangelist.

'A large and elegant octavo volume, on a most important topic. Its object is the examination of the claims of the Popish hierarchy, and of that portion of the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church which sympathizes with them, to the exclusive right to the functions and privileges of the Christian ministry and Church. These claims, always unscriptural, have of late assumed new arrogance and vigor, by the brief currency of the Oxford publications, and the greatly quickened zeal of the Papacy among us. The time has certainly arrived when their exclusive notions should be subjected to the searching test of reason and scripture. If there are those among us who will vauntingly assume that theirs is the only, the valid ministry, that with them are to be found the only authorized ordinances of salvation, that there is no safety but within the pale of their own denomination; let their pretensions be sifted, and the emptiness of their claims be exposed by the clear light of truth. That such a contest with the principle of Prelacy is yet to be waged, and that it is to be abandoned, there can be no doubt. We hail every effort to throw light upon the subject. Mr. Smyth has entered vigorously upon the field of controversy, and has spared neither pains or strength to do it justice. He has gone over the whole ground in a more extended manner than any writer before him in this country, and in an able manner.'

From The Presbyterian.

'The volume before us contains a very full and minute discussion of the doctrine indicated in its title, and is to be followed by another which will vindicate the claims of Presbyterianism. The necessity of the work arises from the

increasing boldness and arrogance with which the Episcopal Church obtrudes its claims as the only true church, with the only valid ordinances, and the only divinely constituted ministry. As to the manner in which he has accomplished his task, we are disposed to judge very favorably, from the necessarily partial manner in which we have been able to examine his work. He has acquired a clear and distinct view of the question discussed in all its bearings, and to each specific point he has brought a mind stored with the fruits of extensive reading. We have admired the extent of his research, and his diligence in learning all that had been said by preceding writers which could throw light on the discussion; and indeed we have rather regarded him as too redundant in his authorities; a fault, by the way, not often committed in this age of jumping at conclusions. Mr. Smyth states the question of Apostolic succession, so much in the mouth of modern Episcopalians, and he views it in all possible lights, weighs it in just balances, and pronounces it wanting. He not only proves that the assumption is unscriptural and unreasonable, but he traces the boasted succession, and shows its broken links, and finds after all the flourish of trumpets, that prelatists are glorying in a mere shadow. He carries the war, moreover, into the enemy's camp, and he carries off many trophies. Mr. Smyth is undoubtedly an able controversialist, and prelatists will find him well armed at all points, if they are disposed to attack.'

From the Southern Christian Advocate.

'The work before us is, we believe, the first distinct treatise published in this country on the subject of the Apostolical Succession, and in opposition to its arrogant assumptions. A very ably argued and well written work has been recently given to the English public, entitled 'An Essay on Apostolical Succession,' by the Rev. Thomas Powell, a Wesleyan minister, of which Mr. Smyth makes honorable mention. We consider, therefore, the publication of these Lectures as a valuable contribution to the religious literature of the time, demanded withal by the claims of that portion of our common Christianity, which is so unfortunate as to have no participation in the anointing oil of prelatical consecration, and which lies beyond the range of apostolico-succession-covenant blessing. Mr. Smyth has executed his task in a candid, kind, and courteous spirit, while he has subjected the theory of Apostolical Succession to the scrutiny of a thorough, extensive, and fearless examination. Innumerable authorities are cited, and a copious index concludes the volume, which embraces upwards of five hundred and sixty-nine pages, and is gotten up in the finest finish of the typographical art.'

From the Charleston Observer.

'Notice was taken of these Lectures while in course of delivery. They are now published, and with the notes, which contain as much reading as the text, make a large volume of five hundred and sixty-eight pages. The typographical execution is in the best modern style, from the press of Crocker and Brewster, Boston. Our design, at present, is simply to apprise our readers that the work is published, intending at our leisure to give it a more formal notice. As the basis of the opinion controverted, rests upon what is familiarly known as the Apostolical Succession, it is here that the author has exhibited his chief strength. And were we to say that he has made good his position, it might be regarded as only a judgment expressed in accordance with previously existing prejudices in its favor. But we hope, on the other hand, that none will undertake to condemn it unread. The advocates of High-Churchism, whether Roman or Anglican, are chiefly concerned in the discussion, and possibly they may find in the work something that will moderate their exclusive zeal, and lead them to the exercise of more charity for the opinions of those from whom they differ.'

From The Presbyterian.

'MR. EDITOR:—I ask room in your paper to commend this work to the attention of the ministers and intelligent laymen of our Church. If there be any among them who doubt whether a work of this sort was called for, their doubts will not survive the reading of the first Lecture, entitled 'The Necessity for an Exam-

ination into the Prelatical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession.' The discussion, therefore, in which Mr. Smyth has embarked, was provoked by the growing disposition among High-Church Episcopalians, to unchurch the Presbyterian body, and challenge exclusive salvation to the members of churches under Diocesan Bishops. His work is not an attack, but a defence—a defence conducted with great ability and skill. I venture to commend it to the notice of your readers, because I am satisfied they will be instructed and profited by the perusal of it. The lectures are evidently the result of much study, and very extensive research. No single volume I have seen, contains such a mass of authorities and seasonable testimonies, on the Prelatical controversy as this work. It is equally creditable to the author's talents and industry, that he should have found time to prepare, in the midst of his pastoral duties, an octavo of five hundred and fifty pages, on a subject requiring so much study, and involving an examination of several hundred distinct works on either side of the controversy. Such labors ought not to go unrequited; but his brethren will be rendering themselves and the cause of truth a substantial service, by placing it in their libraries; and it is for this reason that their attention is invited to it by one who has no other concern in it than that which is common to every Presbyterian.'

From the New York Observer.

'A formidable volume this is in appearance, and on this very account will repel many who might otherwise be attracted to examine its pages. In a course of twenty-one lectures the author has, with great industry and research, and no mean ability as a controversialist, examined the question before him, and presented, in the compass of a single book, a mass of testimony that must be of value to those whose time and means will not allow them to pursue the investigation through all the original sources, which Mr. Smyth has so perseveringly explored.'

From the Watchman of the South.

'We offer a few general remarks at present, intending at an early day to notice them, or at least that last named, far more fully than we usually do. One thing must strike every one who knows the history of the author of these works. We refer to his industry. Without very firm bodily health, and having a very laborious pastoral charge, he still economizes time sufficient to bring out, through the press, from time to time, important contributions to the cause he loves. This is as it should be. Mr. Smyth is, of course, a *growing* minister. His influence and usefulness are constantly extending. It is also obvious to any one who reads Mr. Smyth's works, that he has, or has the use of a very good library, and is a man of no mean learning. His works show the importance of ministers' salaries being such as to enable them to 'give themselves to reading.' But Mr. Smyth is not a mere reader. He arranges and uses what he reads. His character as a writer rises every year. Mr. Smyth is also ardently attached to Presbyterianism. Further remarks may be expected in a week or two.'

From the Charleston Courier:

'We would call the attention of all those who profess any regard for the literary character of our southern community, to a work recently published by our esteemed fellow-townsmen, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, entitled 'Lectures on the Apostolical Succession.' Whatever may be the opinion of the intelligent reader on the subjects of which it treats, he will acknowledge it to be a striking example of extensive and profound research, and most diligent investigation. The author appears to have enjoyed some remarkable advantages in the prosecution of his inquiries. Possessing, as he does, one of the best private libraries in this country—probably the most complete in the theological department—he has had access to an immense mass of authorities, not usually within the reach of the American scholar, and his abundant and voluminous references make his book an absolute index for the use of future writers. His industry, indeed, has left but scanty gleanings, as it would appear, for any who may desire to follow him in this discussion. His style is easy and animated, and the interest of the reader is kept up, without flagging, through an octavo of nearly six hundred

pages. We hope the success of this highly creditable effort may be such as to induce the learned and reverend author to complete his task, by giving promptly to the public the second volume of his course, promised in his preface.'

From the Christian Observer.

'From a cursory examination of this work, we think it well adapted to accomplish the good purposes for which it is designed. It exposes and refutes the extravagant assumptions of High-Churchmen, who claim to be the successors of the apostles in the ministry, exclusive of all those who reject their views of Prelacy. The work is worthy of a more extended notice, which shall be given at an early day.'

From the Christian Watchman. (Boston—a Baptist paper.)

'This volume has lain on our table a considerable time, to enable us to give it such an examination as the subject and the merits of the book demand. The discussion throughout is conducted with candor, impartiality, and kindness; and displays no small share of ability, learning, and diligent research. It is decidedly the most able and thorough vindication of the Presbyterian view of the subject which we have ever seen. The discussion, too, is timely, when Episcopal popery is receiving a new impulse from the Oxford writers, whose sentiments find so much sympathy even in our own land. We commend the book therefore, to the attention of our brethren in the ministry, not as taking in every instance that ground which we, as Baptists and Independents should prefer to see taken, but as an able defence of the truth, and an extensive collection of authorities and facts.'

From the Christian Examiner and General Review, (Boston,) Nov. 1841.

'We by no means intend to intimate that the work is ill-timed or superfluous. Such is not our opinion. We believe it will do good. It will meet the new phase of the controversy, and supply what we have no doubt is, in some parts of our country, a pressing want. Even the greatest absurdities, iterated and reiterated in a tone of unblushing confidence, will gain some adherents. Besides, the old treatises on the subject are in a manner inaccessible to the general reader, and will produce a deeper impression, even if it be not more applicable, which in ordinary cases it will be, to the state of the times. The present volume we regard as not only suited to the times, but in itself a production of no trifling merit. It indicates great industry, and no little research on the part of the writer, and its statements appear, from such an examination as we have been able to give it, entitled to confidence. . . . There is an earnestness, good temper and thoroughness which mark the work, which we like, and we can very cordially commend it to the attention of all who feel an interest in the subject.'

From the Southern Quarterly Review.

'This is one of the ablest works of theological controversy, that has appeared during the present century, and we are happy to be able to add that it is the production of a Charleston clergyman. . . . We say then, in the outset, that the Presbyterian church has, in our opinion, in the author of the work before us, a powerful champion, who wields a polished pen, and one who seems to be eminently fitted, by his learning, his talents, and his industry, to maintain manfully the cause he has espoused. We have read his book with deep interest, and with great respect for his ability, and the general candor and fairness of his arguments.' [April, 1843: pp 534—537.]

From the Magnolia, a Literary Magazine and Monthly Review.

'The Doctrine of Apostolical Succession is here examined in an elaborate course of Lectures, twenty-one in number, by the Rev. Thos. Smyth, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston. It is not within our province to examine them. We can say nothing, therefore, of the question which Mr. Smyth discusses. No doubt he discusses it ably. He certainly discusses it ear-

nestly. He is ingenious and forcible, and displays a wonderful deal of industry and research. Here now is an octavo of near six hundred pages, brimful of study, and crowded with authorities. We perceive that Mr. Smyth wins the plaudit 'well done,' from numerous high sources, advocating the same doctrine with himself. They seem to think that his argument has done ample justice to his subject; and we may add, so far as we have been able to examine it, that it has been urged in a candid and Christian temper.'

From —, Attorney General in the State of —.

'Your Lectures I read with the highest satisfaction, and take great pleasure in acknowledging the obligations which I think the friends of Christian truth, religious liberty, and I will add, of the pure undefiled gospel, owe to you for them. Your vindication of the Church, by which I mean the humble followers of our Lord, by whatever name called, from the claims of usurped ecclesiastical domination, seems to me to be complete; and whilst you have, in succession, destroyed and dissipated every ground of doubt on the subject, in the minds of the unprejudiced, your extensive and enlightened research and discrimination, have enabled you to furnish an armory, where every one may supply himself with weapons for defence against individual attack. Nor am I less gratified with the candid and charitable tone and temper with which your views are propounded, than with the overwhelming mass of argument and illustration by which they are demonstrated. Your lectures seem to me to have been written in a truly Christian spirit; and if they have been cavilled at on that ground, it can only be because men always feel attacks upon their prejudices to be unkind.'

From the New England Puritan.

'This large octavo, of five hundred and sixty-eight pages, is a highly seasonable offering to the Protestant Churches of our country, and displays an amount of learning, of research, of skill and power in argument, of fertility in illustration, of combined candor and earnestness of spirit, rarely to be met with in any volume either of home or foreign origin. We have not had it in hand long enough to master the whole of its contents—but long enough to be satisfied of its happy adaptation to the sad times on which we have fallen, and of the richness of the treasures it offers to the acceptance of the true friends of Christ. The volume before us, though perfectly calm and candid in its discussions, leaves this matter plain as sunlight. More formidable foes to Christ and his apostles are not to be found amid all the tribes of religious errorists, than those arrayed beneath the banners of Popery and High Churchism. It is to be hoped that our brethren in the ministry will avail themselves of the labors of Mr. Smyth, to become thoroughly acquainted with this imposing form of error, and arm themselves with 'panoply divine' to meet it and confound it, ere it attains the preëminence to which it aspires, and which, unresisted, it will inevitably attain.'

From the Boston Recorder.

'This is truly an elaborate work. Our attention has been but recently called, in a special manner, to its contents, but our highest expectations of the candor and ability of the discussion have been more than satisfied. The object of the author's animadversion is not episcopacy, as such; but the arrogant and exclusive claim of High Churchmen and Romanists to be the *only* true Church of Christ; his *only* real ministers, and the 'only sources of efficacious ordinances and covenanted salvation.' The volume is eminently appropriate to the times, and, if read with a sincere desire for the truth, must, we think, prove an immediate corrective of any tendencies towards the Church of England or of Rome.'

From the Christian World, by the Rev. Mr. Stockton, of the Protestant Methodist Church.

'The Lectures which have led us to these remarks, are a valuable addition to religious literature, and more particularly, the polemical department of it. They number twenty-one, and fill a handsome volume of five hundred and fifty pages. The chief aim of the author has been to test the prelatical doctrine by Scripture,

history, and facts—to exhibit its popish, intolerant, unreasonable, and suicidal character, and to show that it has been condemned by the best authorities. The latter part of the work is devoted to a consideration of Schism, and to a discussion of the true doctrine of Apostolical Succession. The plan covers the whole subject—the execution is well managed. It is bold, but temperate—fearless, but not reckless—a fine specimen of good tactics in a defensive war. As a textbook it is worthy of high commendation, abounding as it does in copious extracts, and presenting the views of all our standard authors. It is a focal point where many rays have been gathered—we had almost said at the risk of good taste—a hive, where many bees had deposited honey. If it be not as eloquent as Mason's Essay on this subject, or as cogent and imaginative as Milton's Tracts on it, we have no hesitation in preferring it to either, for compass, variety, and clear demonstration.'

From the American Biblical Repository.

'This well filled octavo volume has come into our hands. Its leading subjects, as indicated in the title-page, are of sufficient importance to demand a thorough discussion; and we agree with our author in the belief that the time has come when such a discussion is necessary for the proper vindication of the rights and duties of the great body of the Protestant ministry and churches, against the assumptions of a portion of their own number, who take common ground with Romanists in excluding from the pale of communion in the 'holy, catholic, and apostolic church,' all who dissent from their doctrine of 'exclusive apostolic succession.' These assumptions are not only found in many of the old and standard divines of the Church of England, but have been of late zealously put forth in the Oxford 'Tracts for the Times,' have been avowed by English and American bishops, and by a great number of the Episcopal clergy of both countries; and the assurance with which they are urged in many recent publications, calls for a patient and thorough examination of the arguments advanced in their support. Such is the work undertaken by our author. The topics of the twenty-one Lectures comprised in this volume, are as follows, etc. These subjects are discussed with great earnestness and strength; and the ample and numerous authorities by which his statements and reasonings are confirmed, show that the author has spared no labor, and dispensed with no available aid, in his investigations. As far as we have examined them, they appear to us thorough and satisfactory, and we cordially commend the work to the diligent study of our readers.'

From the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D. D. Extract from a Letter.

'REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Though personally unknown to you, yet have I been so pleased with your Lectures on the Apostolical Succession, that I thought it but fair to tell you of it. . . . I believe you are doing a protestant and a christian work; and while I regret some incidental differences of another kind between us, I am happy to assure you of my God-speed, and of my prayers for a blessing on your labors.'

From the Rev. Dr. Lamson.

Dr. Lamson in his Lecture on the Uses of Ecclesiastical History, (Christian Examiner, Sept. 1842, p. 12,) in alluding to the claims of prelacy, and the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, says: 'It has been found necessary to take the field, and already a goodly sized octavo, manifesting no little industry and research, has appeared, printed in this city, though written by a Presbyterian of the South, in refutation of these, as we are accustomed to consider, perfectly absurd and obsolete claims.'

From the Protestant and Herald.

After speaking of the author's Ecclesiastical Catechism, a writer in this paper says: 'He had before prepared us for such a treat, by favoring the *Protestant Church* with a profound, learned, and eloquent argument on 'the Apostolic Succession,' utterly refuting the exclusive and inflated claims of all High Churchmen, or '*china men*,' as they have been appropriately styled in the *Biblical Repertory*

Of this production of his, I have the means of knowing, that *the venerable champion in the cause*, has privately declared 'that Mr. Smyth has quoted books in the controversy, which he had never had the privilege of seeing, and which were even rare in Europe.'

From the Honorable Mitchell King, of Charleston, S. C.

'REV. AND DEAR SIR:—You have done a lasting service to the Presbyterian Church, by the publication of your work on the Prelatical Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession. The question which you there discuss has assumed in our times a renewed importance, from the efforts recently made to claim for particular bodies of Christians an exclusive right to the benefits of that covenant of grace, which Christ came to make with all true believers. This question was, as you and I believe, long ago settled by the thorough investigations and conclusive arguments of men worthy, if mortal men can be worthy, of the great cause in which they were engaged; who were influenced solely by the love of truth, and followed that, wherever it might lead them, without regard to merely human authority; and many of whom sealed their testimony with their blood. These times have passed away. But earnest endeavors have been lately made, to shake the confidence of many Christians in the principles of their fathers, and to overthrow their faith in that Church which we believe to be founded on the words of everlasting life. Your work, therefore, I consider as most seasonable and valuable, as reviving and spreading the knowledge of the fundamental truths on which our Church rests. It contains a fuller review of the reasonings and authorities on this subject, than any other work with which I am acquainted, and will, I am persuaded, henceforth be an armory in which the defenders of Presbyterianism can find weapons of proof ready prepared for them. That you may go forward in the course which you have so honorably begun, and that the Great Head of the Church may follow your labors with his rich blessing, is the earnest prayer of, Rev'd and Dear Sir, yours very truly,

M. KING.

From the Rev. John Bachman, D. D., of the German Lutheran Church,
Charleston, S. C.

'MY DEAR SIR:—To my mind your Lectures on the Apostolical Succession covers the whole ground, and is, without exception, the most triumphant vindication of our views on this subject, that I have ever read. I regard the work as the most valuable contribution that has ever been made to the Southern Church.'

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CRITICAL NOTICES.

Overture adopted by the Synod of S. Carolina and Geo. at its session in 1841.

That the publication of works intended to advocate the distinctive order and polity of our Church should be encouraged, and their circulation among our people rendered as general as possible; and it having come to the knowledge of this Synod, that one of their number, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, has recently given to the Church, among other valuable publications, 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of Families, Bible Classes, and Private Members,'—and a series of Lectures on 'The Prelatical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession Examined, and the Protestant Ministry Defended against the Assumptions of Popery and High Churchism.' Therefore, *Resolved*, That the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia regard with pleasure and approbation these publications, as containing an able defence of the divine authority of the Protestant Ministry, and a full and satisfactory exposition of the order and government of our Church; and as demanded by the present state of the controversy on these subjects. And the Synod does, therefore, cordially recommend the said publications to all our Ministers, Elders, and private members, as works of high value, and calculated to advance the intelligence of our Church, on our distinctive peculiarities and doctrines.

From the Biblical Repertory, for January, 1841.

'Mr. Smyth must be regarded as among the most efficient and active authors in the Presbyterian Church. His valuable work on the 'Apostolical Succession,' reviewed in a preceding part of this number, is a monument of his reading and industry, which has been extensively acknowledged. The 'Ecclesiastical Catechism' before us, is another present to the Church with which Mr. Smyth is connected, which we think adapted to be universally esteemed, and highly useful. It is, as all such manuals ought to be, brief, comprehensive, simple, adapted to weak capacities, and yet sufficiently instructive to gratify the most intelligent minds. The Scriptural quotations to illustrate and establish the principles he lays down, are perhaps, in some cases, unnecessarily numerous, and in a few instances, of questionable application. But it is on the whole so well executed, and possesses so much solid merit, that we hope it may be extensively circulated and used.'

From the Rev. Geo. Howe, D. D., Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia.

'The design and the execution are excellent. It contains a more complete explanation of the order and government of our Church, than I have ever before seen in so small a compass. I think it admirably adapted to the purposes for which it was designed, and could wish to see it in every Presbyterian family, and studied by all our young people, as an appendix to the doctrinal catechisms.'

From The Presbyterian.

'We have received a neat and well-printed little volume of one hundred and twenty-four pages, entitled 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of Families, Bible Classes, and Private Members;' by Rev. Thomas Smyth, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C., into which the author has compressed a large amount of very valuable matter, explanatory and illustrative of Church order, and which we regard as particularly serviceable at the present time, as supplying a desideratum in the education of Presbyterian youth. Although the author modestly remarks, that his Catechism is an *attempt* rather than an actual *accomplishment* of all that he believes to be demanded by the necessities of the Church, yet from the attention we have been able to bestow on it, we should regard the execution of the attempt as highly creditable, and we believe the book to be deserving of an immediate adoption in the instruction of the youth of our Church.'

From the Christian Intelligencer, of the Reformed Dutch Church, N. Y.

'The members of the Presbyterian Church should possess a full and satisfactory acquaintance with the principles of Presbyterian government, polity, and worship. This little volume is exceedingly well adapted to aid in gaining this acquaintance, and is suited for general and popular use. While industrious efforts are employed by other denominations in opposition to these principles, it is highly important and desirable that a popular manual, in elucidation and vindication of their creeds, as is provided in this volume, should be circulated. The following are the subjects of the chapters, each of which contains several sections, or subdivisions:—I. The Church. II. Governments of the Church. III. Officers of the Church. IV. Courts of the Church. V. Power of the Church. VI. Fellowship of the Church. VII. Relation of the Presbyterian Church to other denominations. The catechetical form of the work, and the copious scripture-references and authorities, adapt it to the use of instruction. Such a volume as this was needed; and we feel indebted to Mr. Smyth for the preparation of it, as we deem it, in matter and manner, meeting the desideratum required.'

From the Charleston Observer.

'Of the first edition of this work we spoke in terms of commendation. But this is a very considerable improvement, not only in the style in which it is gotten up—for it is very neatly printed and bound—but in the arrangement and matter. It supplies a place that is needed, and yet it is issued merely as an *attempt* to furnish the Church with a brief compend of her worship and polity. As a denomination, we have been remiss in the duty of letting the principles and polity of our Church be generally known. Many of our own members need information on this subject, that they may be established in the truth and order of the house of God. And information is needed also by others, to correct the erroneous impressions respecting it, which have been designedly or undesignedly made upon their minds. The work deserves general circulation.'

From the New York Observer.

'The preparation of this little work was the result of a suggestion by Rev. Dr. Miller, of Princeton; and in it the author has presented the peculiar features of the form of Government in the Presbyterian Church, in questions and answers, and in simple language, that the sentiments inculcated may be readily learned and remembered by the young.'

From the Protestant and Herald.

'MR. EDITOR:—During the past winter, the Female Bible Class of my pastoral charge, have memorized '*The Ecclesiastical Catechism*,' prepared by the Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, South Carolina. I make this statement in your columns, in order to excite and secure the attention of your readers to the utility and value of that little volume. The ladies have manifested an unusual degree of delight and enthusiasm in their recitations. The result has been, if I mistake not, 'a full and comprehensive acquaintance with the principles of the worship and polity of our Church.' Such was the hope of its worthy and able author in the preparation of his book. The proof-texts are generally printed at length in the Catechism. Without attempting an analysis of this book, allow me to urge Pastors, and Ruling Elders, and Deacons, and Sunday School Teachers in our Churches, to procure this interesting and attractive and cheap compend of Church order, and indoctrinate their families and pupils into these cherished principles of our denomination. Are we not, as a body of people, quite remiss in this high duty? Let the standard-bearers in our host, testir themselves as they ought, to circulate this work, as a Presbyterian Sabbath School book, and make it, if you please, what it deserves to be, next to our Larger and Shorter Catechism—a *Presbyterian classic* in all our family instructions.'

From the Magnolia, a Literary Magazine and Monthly Review.

'This little volume was meant for, and is acknowledged to have supplied a want, among the members of the Presbyterian Church. It is a copious compilation, containing a large amount of religious information, and we take for granted, that, among the class of Christians for whose use it was prepared, it is far superior to any thing of the sort which had ever been offered them before. It shows industry, reading, and analysis.'

From the American Biblical Repository.

'This little volume is issued by the same publishers as the preceding work, by the same author. It is a well-digested system of questions and answers on the Church, its government, — its officers, — its courts, — its powers, — its fellowship, and the relation of the Presbyterian Church to other denominations. It is a useful manual for Presbyterians, and may be instructive to others.'

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