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## PAPERS

BY THE LATE

HENRY BORLASE,

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CONNECTED WITH

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE CHURCH.

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LONDON;  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.,  
AND T. BALLE, EXETER.

1836.



## PREFACE.

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HENRY BORLASE, the Author of the following Papers, was a native of Helstone, in Cornwall. He completed his education at Trinity College, Cambridge, was ordained in the Establishment, and held for a short time, the curacy of St. Keyne, in Cornwall.

After resigning his connection with the Establishment for reasons detailed in the following Papers, he resided chiefly at Plymouth. The rupture of a blood vessel in the beginning of the year 1834, was the commencement of a disease which terminated in his death in the November of the following year.

We think it right to state, in thankful remembrance of the Lord's faithfulness and tender mercy, that the closing period of his life was one of unbroken peace. He said to a friend a few days before his death—that he could not have

conceived the enjoyment of such peace as he possessed possible to any whilst in the body: and about two hours before his departure, whilst in the extremity of weakness, when asked whether Christ was near to strengthen him, he replied, "Yes; very exceedingly;" and these were very nearly his last words.

It may be desirable to add—that he continued to express until the last his deepened conviction of the truth and value of the principles advanced in the following papers.

Our affection would lead us to enter more into the detail of his life, but as this could not be done at all satisfactorily in a brief memoir, we have contented ourselves with putting before the reader only what seemed necessary. Believing the principles he has advanced to be of the deepest importance, we have been more anxious that he should speak for himself than that we should give our estimate of his character.

THE EDITORS.

*Plymouth, June, 1836.*



REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING  
FROM  
THE MINISTRY  
OF  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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BY HENRY BORLASE,  
*Late Curate of St. Keyne, Cornwall.*



## REASONS, &c.

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THE following pages contain a brief statement of the reasons which have constrained me to withdraw from the Ministry of the Established Church. To my Christian Brethren, amongst her Ministers, I am more particularly desirous of addressing the considerations which have directed my mind to the conclusion at which I have arrived, with the earnest prayer that they may commend themselves to their consciences, as far as they are accordant with Divine Truth.

In common with many of my brethren in the Ministry, I have been aware of the existence of various defects in the Church of England; but every objection which arose in my mind has hitherto been overruled by the plea of the imperfections inseparable from all *Human Institutions*; and I considered it, if not perfect, as at least, approximating to the highest standard of attainable excellence. Since however I have seen, that the Church of Christ was never intended, in His own purpose, to be incorporated with the systems and expedients of Man; and that the toleration of known evil,

under any form of constitution and ordinances whatsoever, is as indefensible amongst those who profess to be gathered together in His Name, as the permission of it, in individual life and conduct; I have felt that no other course was open to me, but to withdraw from a Ministry which placed me in connexion with an Institution, not only countenancing great practical evils, but deprived, by its very constitution, from applying to them any available remedy.

Before entering upon the consideration which has most forcibly presented itself to me,—namely, the unscriptural Constitution of the Church of England; I must first speak of the difficulties of conscience which I have also felt in the use of several of her services.

It might seem a matter almost too obvious to require proof, that the Burial Service, was intended for such persons only, as have lived in accordance with the Christian profession; yet, in an explanation of my own feelings, it is necessary to point out what has been urged again and again. Indeed the whole character of the ritual testifies, that those only who are our brethren in Christ are supposed therein. The portion of Scripture from 1 Cor. xv. which forms a part of it, speaks of the Resurrection of the Saints alone. The death of the righteous is implied also in the expressions: “Forasmuch as it

hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed;" "with whom" (it is subsequently added,) "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity." "We commit his body to the ground in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life;" an expression which (however explained away,) is perfectly irrelevant, unless it be understood to be applied to the person over whose corpse the ceremony is performed. We give God hearty thanks for delivering "this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." And lastly our hope is again expressed in the Collect, when we desire, at our own departure from this life, to rest in Christ "as our hope is this our brother doth." The whole service is so manifestly the utterance of Christian Faith, Hope, and Thankfulness, over those who "sleep in Jesus," that it cannot be used with propriety, in the case of any, but those whose lives have afforded some evidence of their claim to the title and privileges of Brethren. And yet it is continually converted into a solemn mockery, by our being compelled to pronounce these hopes, over persons of the most profligate and abandoned lives; even if they have died in the actual commission of notorious sin. Nor is the application of the expressions fairly supported by the evasion,—that we may not limit the

mercy of the Almighty, and that different degrees of hope may be understood. Were silence at least permitted, where God Himself has closed the door to all speculation, it would be but reasonable; but we are often required to make a full and public recognition, as a Christian and a Brother, before the assembled congregation, of one who during life has been, in the memory of the by-standers, in no respect different from "an heathen man and a publican;" and to express thankfulness and hope, when, in point of fact, the only impression upon our minds is the awful reality of his having gone, with all his unrepented sins upon his head, to await "the righteous judgment of God." The injurious effect of this upon the minds of the ignorant and unthinking, by the degradation of the name and character of *Christian*, it is not easy to conceive. "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and the wicked." The evil however, does not lie in the terms of a Christian ritual; but in a Church without the power of Discipline, and under the entire control of the Law of the Land, which accounts all who are within its jurisdiction to be Christians, and constrains the Church to consider them as such. The burial and other services pre-suppose,—what the Church is absolutely precluded from exercising,—authority of Discipline, and power over her own members: and

the only remedy, (which her present connexion with the state renders impracticable,) would be, not that the ritual should be neutralized, and lowered down to the standard of the profane and irreligious, but that she should act up to the ostensible character of her services. Indeed, the contradiction between the language of the Burial Service, and its indiscriminate use, is so palpable, that a well known ritualist, after a faint attempt to palliate the force of its expressions, confesses, “that it is very plain  
 “from the whole tenor of this office; that the  
 “compilers of it, presuming upon a due exercise  
 “of discipline, never supposed that any would be  
 “offered to Christian Burial who had not led  
 “Christian lives.”\*

The office for Infant Baptism, has long been a source of painful questioning, to many conscientious ministers. With regard to the main point at issue, namely, whether the grace implied by the term “spiritual regeneration,” is, effectively, and in all cases, conferred in Baptism, though I am far from denying that God may be pleased in many cases to bless the ordinance, yet, to say that the communication of the principle of spiritual life, necessarily takes place under all circumstances, appears to me to be an assertion, entirely unwarranted by the word of God. We are required

\* Wheatley c. xii. sect. v.

however, without any provision for possible exceptions, in the words subsequent to the baptism, to make an unconditional affirmation that every child has been regenerated.—“Seeing now, &c. that this child is regenerate.” The force of this declaration is often extenuated, by supposing “regeneration” in this service to mean something less than deliverance from the power of darkness, and translation into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. i, 13); in fact by explaining it away, so as to mean little or nothing more than admission into the Visible Church. Those however who believe regeneration to mean the passing out of the state of sin and condemnation in which we are placed by the first Adam, into the state of righteousness and forgiveness in which we are placed by the second Adam, are reduced to one of these alternatives. If the Church of England uses the word *Regenerate* in a lower sense than the Bible, then is she unscriptural; but if in its proper sense, then are they inconsistent in not addressing all the Members of their Congregations as Regenerate, as they have previously pronounced them in Baptism. What the Church understands by the term, is shewn by the office of Private Baptism, the first formula of which declares, that every child so baptized, “being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the laver of regeneration in Baptism, received

into the number of the Children of God, and heirs of everlasting life." In conformity with this; all, when brought to the Bishop to be confirmed, have the following words pronounced over them:—  
 "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, *and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.*" Now although a strong faith may be exercised whilst administering the ordinance, and a lively hope may not unreasonably be entertained by those, who, themselves being believers, offer their children in faith to God, yet, as the office now stands, I do not know how it can be administered, unless we firmly believe every child to be regenerated *ex opere operato*; and consequently all the baptized inhabitants of the country to be the children of God. There is not the smallest room for the exercise of Faith: the child may be presented by ungodly parents; the sponsors may be persons of irreligious lives; yet the minister is obliged to pronounce "regenerate," and ever after to consider as "a child of God by adoption and grace," one who, as is inevitably too often the case, has been presented without faith, who may be nurtured in ungodliness, and pass from the cradle to the grave without the slightest exhibition of the change which the Baptismal Service affirms to have taken place within.

If the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, as contained in this ritual, be in accordance with the revealed Word, it stands a wonder and a marvel, as the single specimen of unperverted Truth which the Church of Rome, whence it is derived, has preserved in the midst of her corruptions.

I used to believe that the only error in the ritual was in the unrestrictedness of affirmation at the conclusion; and that for this a sufficient remedy was provided in the general tone of the doctrines of the Church, as contained in her Articles and Homilies, which so fully set forth the Scriptural views of Pardon, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. The consequences to which this absolute declaration leads, and the manner in which it is practically acted upon by the Church, I did not perceive; and I rather mention this, because I believe that very many of my Brethren, in the Ministry of the Establishment, are under a similar impression, that it is not her real doctrine, because the general meaning of the Articles appears opposed to it. I am further convinced however, that error is wrought up with the whole tenor of the Service. The purport of the ordinance, is stated in the second prayer to be this;—that whosoever is thus presented “may receive remission of his sins *by spiritual regeneration.*” The Church here intends by regeneration, the washing and sanctifi-

cation of the Holy Ghost, as stated in the prayer immediately preceding. But this work of the Spirit is assuredly the *result*, and not the *cause*, nor any way the antecedent of remission of sins;—which we are thus taught to ascribe to something besides the blood of Christ, which alone “cleanses from all sin.” In fact Pardon is made to rest, not upon the Atonement, but upon that which is properly a consequence of forgiveness; and by this confusion of things, the most precious Truths of Scripture are practically denied; and false views of their actual condition, and of its remedy, are introduced into the minds of numbers.

A farther consideration of this ordinance, forces upon my mind the same painful reflection as the last-mentioned ritual; with regard to the incorrespondency between its language and the actual state of things existing in the Church. Its terms suppose all present to have unhesitating and earnest faith, and the Minister to place implicit confidence in the Christianity of those around him; grounded of course on the same presupposition of Discipline in the Church, which is implied in the Burial Service. But what is the actual fact? I do not here inquire, whether it is possible for one person, in any sense, to answer for another;—but a Minister continually placed in the painful situation, of putting the most solemn vows into the mouths of persons, who

“ understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm ;” and the only feeling in his own mind must often be, that, as far as those around him are concerned, the whole is a mere formality, and that God is deeply dishonoured. It is true that, by the 29th Canon, it is provided, that no person be admitted as a Sponsor before receiving the Communion, but this rule (to say nothing of the practical difficulties attending it,) if enforced, would only add to the desecration of the Lord’s Supper by worldliness and irreligion. The truth again meets us, that the Church, professing as it does, to include the whole mass of the population, and legislated for by the law of the state, has neither the means, nor the power of exercising a spiritual judgment upon its members; and that its practice is only too consistent with the doctrine, that all within its pale are regenerated.

If the evils which I have just stated, had arisen merely from defects in practice in an Institution, in which the Scriptural essentials of a Church were preserved in their spirit and purity, a hope might be indulged that a remedy might be found. But what would be gained, by lowering the tone of the Burial Service, to suit the character of unbelievers; or by making the Baptismal Office to imply nothing more than admission into the *visible* Church? The evil in pinciple, which runs through the whole

system, the entire absence of Spiritual Power, without which the title of a Church is an empty name, is brought out still more fully in the Communion of the Establishment. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Him, as the outward symbol and instrument of Unity amongst His people. As often as they eat of this bread and drink of this cup, they "shew the Lord's death till he come;" and testify their own desire to be made conformable to that death, by presenting themselves, their souls and bodies, as living sacrifices unto God. It is a communion, not simply (as is frequently supposed) between the individual and God, which would tend to make the character of the remaining participants immaterial; but between God and the body of faithful persons thus united:—or as it is expressed in (1 Cor. x. 17.) "For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread;" and consequently those only who are believers have a right to participate. With this also, the degree of imparted blessing, and the glory of the Saviour are intimately connected. In truth, the purpose of the ordinance is utterly broken up, and its character destroyed, by an indiscriminate admission. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

(1 Cor. x. 16.) The Communion constitutes the Church; other things, properly speaking, being only accidents; and where it is corrupt, the very essence and life of the body is gone. Far be it from me to agree with those, who would frame arbitrary enactments of their own, as terms of Church-fellowship: I know of nothing that a Christian has any right to demand of his fellow-men, beyond belief in free pardon and salvation by faith in Christ; and the evidence of a life conformed to that profession. The one condition will always act as a counterpoise to the other. But these at least, in faithfulness to Christ, are required. In the communion of the Church of England, however, all distinctions are levelled; and every baptized person is considered by its rules, as qualified for admission:—"for by the law of the land, both ecclesiastical and civil, none are to be shut out from this Sacrament, but such as are notorious delinquents, and none are *notorious* but such as the sentence of the law hath, either upon their own confession, or full conviction, declared so to be." And here I have been led to perceive, how closely the supposition of regeneration in baptism is interwoven with the entire system of the Church; the sign being uniformly put for the thing signified. Thus, because those, who (1 Cor. xii. 13.) are indeed baptized by one Spirit into one body, are

really partakers of the Communion ; so, by the fiction of universal and necessary regeneration in baptism, all who bear the name of Christian, are considered as members of the body of Christ, and as such are entitled to claim admission to the Lord's Supper. The peculiar effects of the incorporation of the Church with the State are here seen in a remarkable point of view. By the Convocation the 141 Canons were made terms of communion, and terms more useless and absurd could not easily have been devised. The Canons however, not having been ratified by Parliament, are overruled by the secular power, to which the Church has subjected herself ; which obliges her Ministers to open her Communion to the whole embodied population of the country ; or otherwise to expose themselves to the hazard of a civil penalty. So that whilst she is theoretically more schismatical than any other communion, for such enactments make a broad rend in the mystical body of Christ ; in practice she is the most corruptly open of all ; since that which opens the door to other denominations, equally admits the careless and ungodly. No distinction is made between those in whose lives the fruits of Faith are manifested, and the world that "crucified the Lord of Glory." And even were the entrance closed against the openly profane, which it is not, the formalist and the

mere man of the world find unopposed access. Such is the unholy standard to which it is lowered. If it be urged, that the Church of England cannot possibly do anything towards effectually purifying its Communion; the answer is;—that the fact of a remedy being unattainable, proves the departure of the Establishment from its proper position as a Church of Christ. For what must be the condition of a Church; which is incompetent to pass a spiritual award upon its own members? It is not indeed an individual who can, or ought to be, the judge:—Our Lord himself has laid down a broad and general principle of Discipline for his Church; (Matthew xviii. 17.) “And if he shall neglect to hear thee, 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.” Discipline is the exercise of government *by the body*; and the decisions of a body gathered together, in the name, and “with the power of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. v. 4), are ratified by Him: “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. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” The

Romish Apostacy, well knowing the importance of this last-mentioned characteristic of the Church of Christ, has taken care to appropriate it to herself. In the Church of England, it is not only disregarded, but, from her constitution, is absolutely beyond her reach; and her awards are referred, not to heaven, but to the world. And where there is no Discipline, there can be no Church, in the Apostolic sense of the word. Where the hurdles of the fold are broken down, it is a fold no longer. In the present state of things Ministers are individually placed in the situation of ministering to the sin of those who incur the condemnation of being "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:"\* nor does the plea so often urged,—that a full and explicit warning addressed from the pulpit, shifts the whole weight of responsibility upon the head of the unworthy recipient, appear to me to exonerate us from the charge of dishonouring our Master, by solemnly acknowledging as his disciples and followers those who give no testimony of their faithfulness, either in life or profession. "Deceivableness" almost always belongs to the character of "unrighteousness;"

\* I need scarcely add, that the Rubric before the Communion Service is perfectly ineffectual, both from its complexity, and because it only professes to exclude those who are the pests of society; thus introducing (if it were acted upon) a low and worldly standard of judgment.

and many, who "live without God in the world," are by the very condition of their minds, incapable of understanding the warning, or of applying it to themselves. Nor have I felt, that the little which might be effected in the course of private visitation, exempted me from being responsible before God, (who judges us, not as insulated individuals, but by every relation in which we stand to others,) for enduring and countenancing evil, by continuing in connection with an Institution which subverts the entire purpose of his blessed ordinance, by the fact of its Communion being given up to the world; and thus annihilates the life-giving principle of the Church of Christ, as a visible union of "faithful men," declaring by this rite their Unity in him. For, in his own purpose, they were to be one, not only in Love, but *so* to be "gathered together in one," (John xi. 52.) as that the *world* might know that Jesus was sent of God. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21.)

A pure Church, in the absolute sense of that term, of course cannot exist on earth, its present state being necessarily imperfect. But the word of God, whilst it gives no warrant for the expectation of its being unmingled with error, at least asserts His claim upon it, that, as a *visible body*, it

should be "*called out,*" to be an adequate and distinctive witness of His Truth to the world; which is utterly incompatible with the anomaly now presented by the world being comprehended within the Church. The real point at issue is, not whether the earthly church *can exist without imperfection,* but whether *known evil* within it should be tolerated. A Church, for instance, is not responsible for hypocrisy in its members, but in retaining hypocrites after discovering their true character. But one which is brought into the position of necessarily countenancing notorious evil, must be so situated from one of two causes; either, in its origin, it was never gathered according to the Scriptural character of a Church; or it has departed from the Truth; and in either case placed itself in such a connexion with the world as to have no alternative. This consideration, whilst it illustrates what has been said of the Communion of the Church of England, applies also to its union with the secular power, and its consequent situation with regard to the world; both of which appear to me to be only modifications of the essential principles of the Papacy. For what was the great work of Satan in that Apostacy? Not merely in the perversion of every doctrine of Christianity;—nay, its very essence was in identifying the visible Church with the world, and thus merging all the charac-

teristics of Christians as a peculiar people into undistinguishable uniformity with all around them, by putting the name, the profession of Christianity, in the place of that inward principle of unity in the Spirit, by which they were originally gathered. The Spiritual Life of the Church was almost extinguished, whilst there was a *total* departure, not only from the doctrine of the Apostles, but from all that appertained to the form, government, and discipline of the Church of Christ. The Reformers vindicated the Authority of the Word as the pure fountain of Truth; and set up the Christian corner-stone of Justification by Faith. They were men who wrought well and wisely in their day and generation; but let it be remembered, that their work consisted, not so much in building up a Church, as in the establishment of the foundation.\* The erection of the superstructure was left to their successors; but they have failed to execute their trust. For the principle so fully brought out as the professed basis of the Reformation,—*that the Bible alone was the Rule of Faith*,—if it had been carried to its legitimate consequences, would entirely have disconnected Christianity from human systems, and led men to search into the Apostolical Epistles for the true model and system of the

\* The preface to the Communion Service proves their desire for, and the necessity of Discipline.

Church of Christ. In protesting against the errors of Popery, and upon the principle that the Bible only was their religion, Christians were assuredly bound to have sought for a re-union upon the rules of Scripture alone. But herein was the inconsistency of the English Reformation, that whilst many of the Roman Catholic superstitions were rejected, the basis of the whole system,—identification of Christianity with the world, and union with the secular power, was preserved. The whole nation was comprehended in the Establishment then constructed, and embodied as a Christian Church; thus presenting only a counterpart to Romish Unity;—the supremacy of the civil sovereign was substituted for that of the Pope, and the Church itself was made “part and parcel of the law of the land,” to which its spiritual jurisdiction was finally surrendered. In fact it was a simple transfer of the authority of the Roman Catholic See, to the temporal power of this realm; the world still held paramount sway; and Christ, the true centre and source of Spiritual rule, was excluded in one and in the other.\* Whilst I distinctly avow, that it is

\* The present state of things has often been vindicated by the example of the Jewish Church; and not unfrequently by an anticipation of the prophetic declaration, “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” (Rev. xi. 15.) The Jews however were called *as a nation* out of the world, and as a nation shall be restored; while the calling

the clear duty of all Governments to protect and maintain Religion,—nay, that they will stand or fall, according as in their principles, they acknowledge or deny, the supremacy of Him, by whom “kings reign and princes decree justice;” yet I am constrained to declare my conviction, that the resignation of spiritual authority by the Church, into the hands of the rulers of the world, is essentially Anti-Christian, and directly subversive of the Rights of the great Head of the Church, whose “kingdom is not of this world.” Nor will a verbal distinction of the Church of Christ from the National Institute, acquit those, who profess to derive their Commission from Him alone, of the charge of being implicated with an union which diffuses its pernicious consequences throughout the whole system. We have seen the fruits of it in some of

of Christians is characterised as the “gathering together in one the children that were scattered abroad;” the “taking out of the Gentiles a people for his name.” (John xi. 52. Acts xv. 14) And it remains a subject of wonder, that wise and good men should have founded their arguments for the identification of the Christian Church with the Commonwealth, upon the precedent of the Jewish Polity; a position which involves a theoretical contradiction, by supposing the possibility of union between the incongruous principles of two contrasted dispensations, and which could never be practically maintained, unless Christianity was a system of ceremonial; religion, or nations were to be effectually called as Spiritual Churches. Upon the second assumption a melancholy comment is supplied by the history of Christendom, since kings and emperors have been chosen by the Christian Church as her defenders.

the services of the Church of England; and more particularly in the character of her Communion, which by the control of the Law is brought down to the level of *the world's standard of religion*. The possibility of an effectual remedy for this is excluded by the very circumstances of her connexion with the Civil Polity, which supposes that "the whole Commonwealth doth believe," and renders the institution of a Scriptural Discipline impracticable. Yet without this, any hope of substantial benefit from other changes now called for would be illusory: for what would avail a Reformation in circumstantial, when that which constitutes the Life and Character of a Church is wanting? The Appointment of the Heads of the Church by the Civil Power, discloses another and a fearful result of this Anti-Scriptural union; of which the natural consequence is, that the whole ecclesiastical order is continually subjected to political expediency, and thus at the pleasure of an unprincipled Prime Minister, if such an one should happen to be in power, the whole system may be fatally affected down to its remotest dependencies. Yet in Christ alone is this appointment rightfully vested. "He gave some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry." (Ephes. iv. 11.) In these words does the Establishment,

in her Ordination Service, profess to derive her authority from Him who is the only true origin of Rule and Power in his Church; whilst, at the same time, she yields the whole regulation of her Hierarchy into the hands of those who *may be* the delegates of Satan. Thus does she become a political engine in the hands of Government; and the Ministers of Christ, *as far as their connexion with the State is concerned*, are degraded into a ministry of moral order.\* She has sold to the world the jurisdiction committed to her trust by Christ, and received as a recompense the world's power and splendour. And whilst we have been used to contemperate her attendant influence and greatness in that which meets the eye, we have forgotten to inquire, whether the external distinction thus conferred, does not imply an actual character, wholly at variance with the original principles of the Institution of Christ.

\* If the Church of England be considered *merely as a National Establishment*, the appointment of those who bear rule in it must necessarily come from the State; but in the character of a *Christian Church* such a derivation of authority is wholly irreconcilable with the true principles of the followers of Christ. *One* of these alternatives must mark the present character and consequent obligations of the Church of England; if only the Organ of the Civil Polity it is well that it should be directed by it; if it claims the title of a Church of Christ, the supremacy of the world cannot be owned, without the forfeiture of the designation. Under *either*, the possibility of union upon the principles of the Gospel, between the Church of Christ and the Nation is disproved; and thus believers have only to choose which they will serve.

Assuredly we shall not contend, that aid of such a kind, and acquired upon such terms, is essential to the success of the Gospel, when we remember that it records its principal conquests within a period, when it made its way, not only without the support of man, but even in opposition to all laws, through Him who is ever verifying His Word; "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Such are the considerations, which have painfully forced upon my own mind, the obligation of retiring from a Ministry, which I felt that I could no longer conscientiously exercise. They were presented to me in the following manner. An inquiry into the true and Scriptural purpose of Communion, led me to consider the character of the fellowship of believers in the present day, and more particularly in the Church to which I belonged. The anti-scriptural state of things which was there exhibited, appeared to me to arise in a great measure, from the utter absence of the power of Discipline; this inevitably revealed the true source of her weakness,—her incorporation with the State,—and all the numberless evils flowing from her subordination to the civil power; pointing out also the cause of the inconsistency of the language of the Burial, and Baptismal services, with the practical and necessary working of a system, bound up in

every part with the interests and arrangements of the world ; thus stamping upon her ordinances the character of the *form* of Godliness without the power. Resting as it does at present upon the power of man alone, and wholly governed and directed by the ordinary principles of worldly expediency, the presence of the Holy Spirit is entirely excluded from the Church as a Corporate Body ; and the language of many parts of her services, whilst they shew what *the power of the Church* of Christ *ought* to be, prove at the same time the utter defect of the pretensions of the Church of England to the Apostolical Power which she claims. In the Ordination Service her words are—“Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.” Thus does St. Paul exhort Timothy, “I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” (2 Tim. i. 6.) But where is the Power which the Church of England thus professes to communicate to her Ministry ? And if there be no power, where is the right or the efficacy of Ordination ? In truth, in her Services and her Administration, the presence of the Spirit is shut out ; the informing and animating power of the Holy Ghost, once the life of the Church, is now only a Name ; and the true

glory of believers in the power of their Risen Head, is lost in the overwhelming mass of forms and secularities with which she is encumbered. And it is only too clear, that though alterations in certain details may be introduced, yet the very circumstances of her constitution, render hopeless the expectation of any change, which would effectually raise her above the level of the world, so as to constitute a spiritual community. I have felt constrained to act without delay upon the convictions thus established, which I can only regret did not present themselves to me, before my entrance upon a ministry, of which I have been a member only between two and three years. I acknowledge the weight and authority of the illustrious list of Reformers and Martyrs, who have lent to the Church the sanction of their names; though I may be allowed to express my firm belief, that many of them, were they now living, would be the last to acquiesce in the present abuses;—I lament a separation from so much that is holy and excellent in my Brethren in the Church of England;—yet, with the view of the great and irremediable evils which has come before me, I feel that I have no alternative but to withdraw.

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The general correctness of the Articles of the

Church of England is continually appealed to, as a proof of her soundness and Apostolic character. Yet it seems scarcely necessary to say, that Articles of Religion and Confessions of Faith cannot constitute a Church in any sense of the word; neither can the actual state of a Church, at any given time, be determined by a reference to her authorized creeds and formularies; since theological accuracy in these is not incompatible with the existence of any conceivable degree of corruption. In truth, though framed "for avoiding diversities of opinion," they do not afford the slightest security for the doctrine actually taught; the shades of difference *within* the walls of the Establishment, being to the full as marked, as the varieties that exist *without*. In this, as in other things, an approach to an exterior shew of uniformity is all that has been effected. But it seems ever to have been forgotten, that, at the best, human expedients *may* hinder, but never can advance the cause of Christ; and that devices for ensuring the consent of men respecting religious truth, are only the substitutes of human wisdom for a better and more scriptural principle of Unity. The Articles of one Church, the Confession of Faith of another,—what have they done towards keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?—Nay, whilst they have been utterly ineffectual in excluding the enemy from the fold, they

have too often proved positive hindrances to the reception of those who are "weak in the faith." Whilst I believe the Scriptural Truths contained in the Articles, and admire the wisdom with which many of them have been constructed, I cannot but feel, not only that they have no tendency to produce their contemplated end—unity in doctrine,—but that this, even if effected, would be only a fictitious representation of that Unity, which flows from conformity to the mind of Christ.

If the union of *spirit*, by which believers are taught to recognize each other as brethren in Christ, (1 John, iii. 14.) is not of itself a sufficient bond of fellowship, to the exclusion of differences upon non-essentials; no effectual co-operation can be expected within the artificial intrenchments, which men have drawn around themselves to effect conformity of *opinion*. And the question forces itself upon me, whilst viewing the present disunited state of Christ's Church,—whether the charge of Schism does not in reality apply to those, who effectually divide it, by forming bonds of communion which God has not appointed? This however is the singular character of Churches in the present day; and probably much more so in other denominations, than in the Establishment, in which the overruling power of the world produces a kind of neutrality, preferable indeed to more rigid secta-

rianism, as affording greater room for liberty of conscience, though not less opposed to the true interests of Christianity. The striking fact is, that, since the Reformation men have been brought together upon *points of difference*, instead of the one simple principle upon which all believers are agreed, and which was appointed by Christ as the true centre of Union, the very Corner Stone of His Church,—a practical Belief in His Death. And thus have believers separated themselves from each other, to be conformed to systems which the world has framed for them; whilst at the same time, union upon grounds including more than the requisites for salvation, contains within itself the very essence of Schism, and in its most specious form, serves only to decorate the thralldom, in which the Church is at this day held by its subjection to those who “seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.”

It seems to have been forgotten how utterly, in the absorbing influence of the Apostacy, the Church had departed from its original constitution; and that all which, in polity as well as doctrine, the Wisdom of God had ordained for His people, had been entirely lost sight of. Has it then been restored, according to the Model which the Word has left upon record as the framework of that Primitive Institution, of which God Himself was

the builder through the Holy Ghost? Or was a return to Apostolic doctrine, a complete redemption from the fictions, with which the power of darkness had enveloped the pure ordinances of Christ? The fundamental Protestant Rule should lead us, in common consistency, to refer to the Scriptures, not only for that which ministers to the edification of individuals, but for the form of ecclesiastical polity which God Himself has revealed in His Word, which *in its general principles*, unless unanimity be *not* a duty in the Church of Christ, must be there fully and distinctly exhibited. Not to mention the obvious conclusion, that any material difference from this may be contrary to His will, it is a manifest confession of our weakness, when, with the affirmation upon our lips, that the Bible alone is our standard, we refuse to apply it as the sole rule and test of all religious ordinances. This however is our only standing ground against the Papist and the Infidel. But when this declaration is restricted, on the one side by formularies constructed as terms of communion, and on the other by systems of Church government devised by man, and accommodated to the circumstances of time and place; the state of the Christian Church presents an anomalous appearance, sadly at variance with its profession. In the word of God however may be found a complete exemplar of the Divine Will, in

the inspired constitution of the Apostolical Churches; and here in perfect order and symmetry exist the rules of government, edification, and discipline, devised by Infinite Wisdom, for those who were to be gathered in his Name, and “builted together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephes. ii. 22.) Thus fixed in visible union, (for men, not doctrines, were the materials of the spiritual building,\*) the Church was the “pillar and ground of the Truth,” and exhibited a representation of His mind to men; and thus only, if God should be pleased again to unite his scattered people, would the concentrated light of Christianity be opposed, in true and perfect contrast, to the darkness of this world.

The alleged existence of corruptions in the Apostolic churches, has long afforded a refuge for the perplexities of the defenders of the present state of Christianity; and an argument for the unreasonableness of expecting better things: as though any evil then exhibited, could serve as a plea for the toleration of the present abuses; or that God’s own revealed purposes for His Church, ought not, under all circumstances, to be the ultimate aim of every faithful Christian. It is indeed much to be lamented, that it has ever become necessary to seek, in the depreciation of the Apos-

\* Ephes. ii. 20—22. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

tolic Times, for a vindication of impure communions, and the monstrous corruptions of the present day. But it must be proved, not merely that evils *existed* in the Primitive Church, but that when *manifested* they were allowed to continue; or that any principle of Scripture authorizes the permission of them in the Body. The work of an enemy was indeed soon visible; but with all their declensions the early Christians were, upon the whole, real, though occasionally censurable believers, and ever joined with one mind, and one spirit, in purging out any leaven of wickedness that appeared within. The contrast, between the first period of the Church's existence, and the present, is seen at once by the consideration,—that *then unbelievers* appeared as spots upon a surface of general brightness and purity; *now, believers* are seen scattered abroad in the midst of a professing world of unrighteousness. One cause of this difference may be seen, from the consideration of a few passages of Scripture, which lead to the conclusion, that no one was admitted as a member of their communion who had not given evidence of his conversion. In the second chapter of the Acts we find the account of the formation of the first Church. Repentance and Faith were the evident tokens of a change of heart which was sealed by baptism, and blessed by the descent of the promised Com-

forter.\* An individual, (but conclusive) instance is given in the account of the Ethiopian in Acts viii. The ground of his admission into the Christian community was his believing *with all his heart*; and how much in his own case was included in this belief, may be inferred from the passage which he had been reading, and which Philip had explained, viz. the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. He must have believed that Christ was wounded for his transgressions, that with His stripes he was healed, and that on Him the Lord had laid his iniquity:—the Atonement in its full and cleansing application to the guilty soul. And by his confession “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” he testified his entire reliance upon his Divine power of Forgiveness of sins.—Another instance is afforded by the Apostolic injunction in Rom. xiv. 1. “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;” from which the natural inference is, that those who had *no* faith were not to be received; otherwise there could be little propriety in enjoining this tender consideration for weak believers.

As to the actual state of the Churches, though from time to time disorders crept in amongst them,

\* It seems evident, that in the last verse of this chapter, the expression *τους σωζομενους* means something more than merely such as should be saved.”

yet their general order and purity appears from the language of the Epistles. Nor is there any proof that any one who was called a brother was admitted to their fellowship, when his life disproved the reality of his profession. Discipline is the instrument appointed by Christ for preserving His Church from contamination; and that is a Pure Church in the Scriptural sense, not where there is an absence of impurity, but where defects when proved are not allowed to continue. By virtue of His own original warrant, authority was exercised in cleansing the Ancient Churches. Accordingly we find in 1 Cor. v. 11. a command, not to eat with a brother, when an inconsistency was discovered between his character and profession; in Gal. v. 12. the expression of a wish, that those who troubled them were cut off from the community; in 2 Thess. iii. 6. the apostle commands them to withdraw from every brother that walked disorderly; and adds an injunction in Ver. 14, which proves the subjection of the Church to the Divine rule; "If any man obey not our word By this "epistle, note that man, and have no company "with him, that he may be ashamed." The reason for the removal of impure members is given in Gal. v. 9, "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*" They were also Communities in which, "carefulness," "zeal," and "vehement desire," were shown

in clearing themselves of all impurities; and hence the apostle, notwithstanding his rebuke, rejoices that he has "confidence" in the Corinthians "in all things." (2 Cor. vii. 16.) And similarly, in his exhortation to the Churches in Galatia, to withstand those who would pervert them, he declares; "I have *confidence* in you through the Lord that ye will be none otherwise minded." (v. 10.) The character then of the first churches bears witness to their purity of Communion. They were not answerable indeed for the secret devices "of false brethren," until actually brought to light; and "deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" continually arose "to draw away disciples after them:" yet as communities they were characterized by the Apostle, as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2.), and "faithful brethren in Christ." (Col. i. 2.)\*

But not only is the necessity of separation from worldliness in communion proved by the actual

\* The Parable of the Tares is so often brought forward as a defence of promiscuous communions, that I cannot avoid noticing its obvious misapplication, which presupposes the field to be the Church, though our Lord expressly explains it to be the World. The tares also were sown by the Enemy, and not by the error of Christ's servants; and the whole parable shews, not the necessity of having fellowship with unbelievers; which would set Jesus the master, and Paul the servant, at variance (2 Cor. vi. 14.); but the impropriety of anticipating by persecution the award of final judgment.

character of these Churches, but, without it, *their model could not have been preserved*. They fell indeed, but it was only as the spirit of the world found an entrance by the relaxation of the Apostolic rule; and the barriers, placed by God around His peculiar people, which had been proof against all the assaults of persecution, were undermined by the insidious incroachments of secular interests, till all finally merged into one general current of apostacy. But in the Epistles still remain the rules and ordinances, by which the fair structure, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," was upheld and strengthened; and they have *comparatively* but a partial application, except when considered as being addressed to a body thus gathered into outward union, in separation from the world, and formed upon the same principles.\* And it remains a question of deepest import, whether the general Church, is not departed from the Truth, as far as it differs from the inspired Constitution of the First Churches; by which it has rendered the greater part of the Apostolic writings, totally inapplicable to itself *as a body*, and has afforded, by the width of the separation, a ground, both for the taunts of the Infidel, and for

\* Hence the controversial power which has been wasted on the support of half-truths, from viewing with reference to individuals only, those which were addressed to the collective body of the faithful, and which derive their full meaning from that consideration.

the self-justification of the mere professor, who shrinks from the full and obvious meaning of the precepts contained in the Epistles, in their practical application, and deprives the injunctions of our Lord, and their confirmation by His Apostles of all their spirit and efficacy. We may indeed plead a difference in circumstances, which, however, we have ourselves made; yet let it not be forgotten, that, amidst the ceaseless variations of time and place, the principles of the Spiritual world are unchangeable; and that nothing less than a new revelation can authorize systems, framed upon any other mould, than that which was given by the immediate direction of God, for the formation of His people in all ages. The difference in the development of the human and Divine model will be this; that the constitutive principles of the former will directly lead to unavoidable evil: in the latter, whatever defects may exist in practice, the whole *tendency* of every principle is towards unmingled good, to the ultimate purpose of Christ for his Church, "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." (Ephes. iv. 13.)

The apparent hopelessness of a better state of things, arising, in part, from observing the general failure of Communities, which began indeed with

some power of Truth, has contributed to depress the expectations, and to paralyze the free action of many, who have mourned over the declensions of the Christian Church. Yet, without entering upon a subject, which of itself would form a volume, it may be suggested, that this failure may be traced in general to two circumstances; first, that they were brought together upon artificial distinctions, and rested upon some contrivances of their own, instead of the simple, yet sure basis of Christ's kingdom; even the confession of His Name (Mat. xvi. 16;) and secondly, that after a period of testimony for Christ, more or less faithful, the spirit of the world has been admitted; and thus in the present day is Modern Dissent pre-eminently distinguished, in seeking a kingdom which "is of this world." The alleged impossibility, of finding amongst other Communions, one purer than our own, has also operated upon our minds. A Church however consists not in rites and ceremonies, but "*where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them;*" and such a refuge is open to the weakest of His people. In the mean time, whilst the evident approach of a time of trial for the Church of Christ has stirred up the hearts of many of his servants to increasing watchfulness; and the gathering darkness of the "last days" has deepened the earnestness and zeal

of others, I cannot but express my thankfulness, for the Mercy which has delivered me from the entanglements of a system, which is connected with so much that is opposed to the Truth and Glory of Jesus. I know that it is the belief of many, that God is now using the power of the world to advance His Church, and that the combined resources of the age are ushering in a period of light and glory. Such a view however is not only in entire contradiction to the general analogy of His actings, and the essential character of the Christian Dispensation, which shew that believers are "a peculiar people" (Titus ii. 14.); that "many are called but few are chosen" (Mat. xxii. 14.); that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. vii. 14.); but also in direct opposition to the plain declarations of Scripture of the darkness at its close; \* and the incongruous union proves, not that the world is raised up into the Church, but that the Church is lowered down into the world. And in committing what I have now written, to the Christian judgment of my Brethren, I would express my deep conviction, that the Church of Christ will not become what, in His purpose, it was intended

\* See Tim. iii. 1. 2 Peter iii. 3. Jude 18. also the summary given in Mat. xxiv. of the condition of the Church till the time of the coming of the Son of Man.

to be, as a spiritual community, until it again recognizes its true place, as the representative of Him "*who was in the world, and the world knew him not ;*" and by "*earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,*" regains the character which once belonged to it as "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*"

## PRESENT PROSPECTS.

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THE knowledge of the mind of God is the Christian's only security both for determining his true position in the world, and his being preserved in it, stedfast and immoveable. Where this is not ascertained, all must be doubt and perplexity, and his path must be uncertain—nay inevitably wrong; where this is known, he is, in a certain sense, omnipotent. This consideration has an especial application to the present state and prospects of the people of God. Many may say indeed, as to any enquiry beyond present things, "What is truth?" But the Scripture sets before us the clear and definite counsels of Him who changeth not;—marks out the distinct character of every principle, whether good or evil, in His view;—traces their respective advances, and exhibits the great general results, to which they are severally progressing. And these things the Church is directed to observe. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, *until the day dawn.*" And the same Apostle, after pourtraying the character of evil in the Last Days, specifies

*this as the safeguard of the saints, That they know these things before.* (2 Pet. i. 19. iii. 17.)

All our light then is darkness, unless our apprehension of the circumstances in which we are standing, accord with the revealed truth of God concerning them. To take a practical example.— One principal anxiety of the Believer, I mean of one who is accepted in the Beloved, with regard himself, is, that his service be given wisely to the Lord. But it seems evident, that unless the purposes of God, for this Dispensation, be gathered by him, from the written Word, his labours must often be misdirected, and possibly, as to their results, given more to the house of the stranger (Prov. v. 10.) than to God's; for instead of ministering according to his ability in God's Husbandry, his powers may be diverted into channels, whence no enduring fruit is returned to the Lord's glory, and where His Spirit would never have led him; and to all that is not done in that Spirit the Word of Jesus applies, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Unless the unchanging distinction between the CHURCH and the WORLD, up to the "time of the end," be seen, the expectation of a gradual diffusion of Christianity, must constantly operate to the consuming of our services upon that which will absorb in itself all the energy and power of the labourer, and which will still re-

main The WORLD.\* But the subject assumes an import even still more weighty, when considered with regard to the consummation declared in that portion of the revelation of God's Will, which embraces the present Age. For it must inevitably make a wide practical difference in the Christian's position in the world, whether he considers it as going on to Blessedness, or (on the contrary) to Judgment; since on this must, to a great extent, depend the actual character in which it appears to his eyes, and consequently his own conduct and views with regard to it. The views of surrounding things, taken by two Believers, one of whom, considers them to be thus far in their progress to perfection, while the other sees that the sentence upon them is delayed, only because "the long suffering of the Lord is salvation," (2 Pet. iii.) must be as different as light from darkness. Nor is it too much to say, that the character of their testimony will equally vary; for testimony is given in power, only in proportion as the truth of the circumstances in which he stands, is recognized by him who has to give it; and if his mind be resting upon the hope of a progressive enlightening of the world, while it may be that fearful darkness is fast closing

\* Of course I do not here speak of preaching the Gospel, or of otherwise meeting the World in Testimony,—the only way in which a Christian can meet it.

in, all his wisdom will be folly. Most of the Lord's people indeed, in common with others, feel that the aspect of the times is sufficiently awful: yet perhaps, the greater number are inclined to consider it as temporary, with the hope that it will subside. Let us then briefly try present things by the test of Scripture, for to this will be our safest appeal. If we judge by *sight* in any thing, we shall assuredly err, and therefore it is only by taking the Word as our criterion, though appearances may seem ever so contradictory, that our judgment can be true.

First then, How does Scripture uniformly describe the character of the Church throughout the Dispensation? And here we at once meet with the incontrovertible fact, that the whole tenor of the commands and exhortations, throughout the Gospels and Epistles, to the people of God, are from their very nature, applicable only to a comparatively small number, in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. The irreversible principle of the Dispensation is, that "MANY are called, but FEW are chosen:" and with this correspond all the practical addresses of our Lord and His Apostles. It is therefore in absolute contrast to a Dispensation, in which it is said, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." The two can never become identical; for, on the supposition that this Dispensation should grow into

one of universal truth, the whole character of the Apostolic Epistles, would gradually become inappropriate to the circumstances of the Church.—The characters to whom they are addressed, are thus described, “The sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” (Phil. ii. 15.) “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” (1 John iii. 1.) “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ.” (1 John v. 19.) “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” (1 Pet. ii. 9.) But more especially is the nature of the Dispensation, as regards His followers, described by the Lord: they are said to be “*the poor in spirit,—the mourners,—the meek,—the persecuted for righteousness sake; they are the salt of the earth,—the light of the world,—as sheep among wolves,—as the wheat among tares,*” which grow, increase, and ripen together, until in the end of this Age, τῶν αἰῶνος τούτου, the Son of man, shall send to gather *out of His kingdom* all things that offend. The present is a Dispensation of Witness, and of Witness only: (Matt. xxiv. 14.) and as such essentially incongruous with one of Universality. The Insignia of God’s people

*throughout are the Cross and the Reproach of Christ.* In truth, the position of the Church in the World, if it were faithful, never could be any other; and in the present earthly glory of the Professing Church, the light of Scripture exhibits only the deceit of Satan, and Apostacy.

The character of the World also is no less clearly and decisively given as being ever in invariable opposition and enmity to God and to His Christ; and so characterized, not in a vague and generalizing way, but as a definite mass, in which the "*Prince of the power of the air rules, even the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" Any supposed amelioration of the World as such, is only Satan's lie to bring the children of God into contact with it in some way or other, by inducing the supposition that the principles of God are working in it, to unite by degrees all in the Truth. Yet is the Church's state spoken of as being ever a suffering one till her Lord returns, and HE has spoken of no time of Blessedness to her, or to the groaning creation, until then. "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." But the sure word of prophecy does not fail us here. The Last Days are shown to terminate in the deepest shades of moral evil; and they have been

written for the Church's warning, if her eyes were but open to read them. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii.) "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His Coming?" (2 Pet. iii.) "Little children it is the last time, and as ye have heard that *the Antichrist shall come*, even now there are many antichrists." (1 John ii. 18.) The whole of Jude is also an awakening testimony to the same effect. But above all, in the last book of Prophecy, is the Dispensation presented in its true aspect both in progress and consummation. And here, whatever difference there may be as to details of interpretation, the *principles* exhibited in it are at least distinctly stated. Not a word is contained in it of progressive advance in the world, not one of the gradual spread of Christianity; but darkness, fearful darkness, is brought out in unvarying, direct opposition to the Light of Life; for the conclusion is, that

*the earth and the whole world* are gathered together in collective array against the Lamb. (Chap. xvi.) We see presented in it, (and this excluding all theories of interpretation) the principles upon which the world is acting, and how they end; and God's principles, their full and marked separation from the world, and their result; the progress and final developement of the Mysteries of Godliness and Iniquity; the separation of the Powers of Holiness and Sin. The obvious practical application to all, —even to the poor and unlearned, (for “blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, *and keep those things which are written therein,*”) is in the observing the characters of evil which are described in this book, in order to avoid being in any way mingled with them, and the final judgment in which they are indiscriminately involved. The principles on which the world proceeds must clearly end, not in Peace but in Judgment. And, whatever may be predicted from present appearances of the moral elevation of the world, all things that the children of this generation esteem—the riches, the luxury, the magnificence, the pride of man, come only to this—“Alas alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!” Let our hearts weigh this well, if we are looking for any thing better from the strength and power

of man, or are connected with that which gives place and distinction in the world. "The Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

But is there nothing *now* corresponding to these dark features? I say nothing as to the time when the full consummation of these things shall take place, though we may believe them not to be afar off: but is not the mystery of iniquity now working, and are not all the principles already in operation, which as soon as the restraining hand of God upon evil is removed, will burst forth into the full manifestation of the power of darkness? Let us watch the present movement in this country—in Ireland—nay, over the whole of Europe, and we shall see that it is not a superficial modification of things which is now in progress, but an impulse arising from the very central springs of this world's action: the mind of the Age is working definitely and steadily to one object, which to the infidel and the philosophizing Christian may seem the commencement of the renovation of society, but it cannot but be seen, by one who looks below the surface, that the very foundations of the established constitution of things are breaking up under an irresistible influence, which may produce the explosion at any hour; and that the apparent approximation to unity is but the selfish principle of man's nature, gathering together all which ministers

to his senses or his intellect, for himself and against God,—in a word—the unity of Antichrist. For a season indeed there may be an appearance of calmness on the face of things, but this we are prepared to expect, for deceivableness is the special character of the Last Days; and therefore the Spirit of God is more than ever needed to detect the falsehood which surrounding circumstances ever convey to the eye of sense, and to enable the Christian to judge of them as they are in the estimate of God. The natural man judging according to sense, must necessarily err in all his conclusions, for they are drawn from external appearances. Reason may be correct enough in its deductions from *natural* facts, but reason does not recognize the *one great fact* that **SIN IS IN THE WORLD**; and therefore all its conclusions are astray, because they are not based upon that which alone enables the spiritual man to account for all the apparent strangeness and contrariety of existing things. Man has not a thought in communion with God, except through his Spirit, which dwells in those who believe and know the truth; and it is marvellous, (seeing that the Fall brought utter disunion from God—that fallen nature, under every colouring that may be superinduced by the pride of civilized man, is still nature separated from God, and acting for itself,) that the supposition should be

entertained by any of our Christian Brethren, of a state of universal peace and righteousness being established through the causes which are at present in operation. There is and can be no foundation for the reign of Holiness, (setting aside all that prophecy teaches as to the introduction of this period) in a state of things built up by man, arising out of the necessity of his case; for the whole result of the energy and power of the world, is based upon a system of necessity, and that necessity springs from its alienation from God. Nay, such a reign as is looked for, would be nothing but the dominion of Satan, using for his own purposes the folly and self-will of men, and bringing them into confederated union with every outward display of human glory, against the Glory and Truth of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and if this day be expected it may not be far distant. The evident tendency of all the principles now at work in the world, is to bring men into organized association, upon the ground of their common wants and pleasures; and the result, hastened as it will be, by the resources afforded by modern inventions and facility of intercommunication, will be the acting upon a grander and more daring scale, the scene of gathering together against God, which has been prefigured at Babel; for "now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined

to do ;”—to be succeeded, indeed, by an outpouring of Judgment, of which the scattering of the nations, the destruction of the old world, and the fires of Sodom, have been merely faint foreshadowings. “As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man ; they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot ; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke xvii. 26.)

It may be well imagined, if these things are so, and the present Dispensation ends in Apostacy and consequent excision, that the whole policy of Satan will be used to divert the minds of Believers from the consideration of them ; and thus in truth it is, and we may observe his power exercised, both in leading some into unholy and unscriptural speculations, and also in using these as instruments for bringing the study of the simple truth itself into discredit in the estimation of others. Either way his end is gained, for “if we know not these things before,

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there is no security against being *led away by the error of the wicked.*" (2 Peter iii.)

In the mean time what is the Church doing—that which should be a light in the world, bearing a clear-shining testimony for God, and against all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, in separation from all evil? Even as it has ever done, seeking its own and not the things of Jesus Christ. We have one portion of the Establishment (in Ireland) defending its present position, on the lately discovered plea, that "*The body that professes to be guided solely by the written Word, is certain to be wrong in principle, and defective in practice.*" And proposing *Tradition* to be taken as the supplement of this deficiency in the means provided for the guidance and instruction of the Church of God.\* Another division, (at Oxford) having discovered the insufficiency of former vindications, have so far progressed towards Romanism, as to rest their claims upon Apostolic Succession alone, and already speak of *dispensing the sacrifice.*† In another quarter, the Dissenters are marshalling themselves in the ranks of the Infidel and the Socinian, and grasping at all the power and privilege that the world can give them; and the Evangelical body, alas! more guilty and inconsistent than all, (inasmuch as they profess a form of sound doctrine,) seeking to unite the confession of Jesus,

with the possession of credit and influence in the world, instead of being content to take the only portion of his followers here, even suffering for His Name's sake. Each party is contending for their own in present things, but in one thing they are all united—in closing their ears to the whole succession of fearful warnings which are pealing around them, and in soothing into slumber, themselves, and those to whom they should be as watchmen, in utter disregard of the clear and distinct announcements which, line upon line are given in Scripture, of the manner in which this Dispensation arrives at its close. “The vision of all, is become as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned.” (Isaiah xxix. 11.)

All these are indications of the Latter Days, which the Scripture leads us to expect: but there is nothing in them which need for a moment move or perplex the mind that looks at them in the light of God's Word; nay, the rushing in of evil on all sides even becomes, in mercy, the means of establishing the Christian more firmly, *because it has been spoken of before*; and that which in itself might disturb, does in reality only add to his confidence

in the sure word of Him who has written it for his warning, and who will deliver those who have kept "the word of His patience," "from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try *them which dwell upon the Earth.*" Yea, there is yet more, far more of comfort to be drawn from the evil day; one Thought in which the Believer may find rest, even in the hope of the coming and kingdom of Jesus, the period of Resurrection glory to His saints, and of righteousness and peace to the earth; when the kingdoms of this world shall change their present rulers, even Satan, and wicked spirits in heavenly places, (Ephes. vi. 12.) and become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST. "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice," was the especial character of the period of His absence; but He has fixed no interval to faith, and the point on which the eye of His disciple rests, is His Coming; when the word of promise shall be fulfilled, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

In the present crisis, as ever, there is but one position for the Church to occupy, and this in separation from "all that is in the world," and in keeping the "testimony of Jesus;" a position, of which the strength is in knowing that *in it*, God is *on our side*, and *against all sin*. It is a day in which

it well behoves Believers to look to themselves, that on the one hand they may be found walking in the Spirit, and on the other, that they may not be connected with any form of evil, however accredited. "Judgment must begin at the house of God;" and since nothing of human might or device will stand in that Day, it is of the deepest importance, if we look for it, to stand clear of all that will be swept away at His appearing. May the Lord enable us to abide in Him, and to walk in that simplicity which alone is wisdom, and which will remove every difficulty from our path.

**RESURRECTION,**  
**NOT DEATH,**  
**THE HOPE OF THE BELIEVER.**

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The great Truth which is opened to the heart of fallen man, when quickened by the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, is to know that the fulness of all blessing is in God. Self, under every form which it may assume, is the centre of all the thoughts of man in disunion from God. He was separated from Him in knowledge; and with loss of the knowledge of the fountain of good, came the alienation of his affections; and thenceforth, under the rule of another Lord, the object of all his powers was to serve the body of Death which became his dwelling. But Redemption, while it is deliverance "from this present evil world," is specially deliverance from ourselves; for being crucified with Christ, and raised up in Him, the presence of the Spirit is the continual death of the Flesh. Where there was darkness and death, there is life, and light, and glory. Where there was shame and fear, now "because we are sons, God hath sent into our hearts the Spirit of His Son,

erying Abba, Father," bearing witness, in that single word, of all that "manner of love" which He hath opened to us in Himself, and which He hath shed abroad in those whom He hath justified. And thenceforth the heavenly calling of the Christian is to know God—to be brought in communion with Him into that "knowledge of the Holy *Ones*," (Proverbs ix. 10) which is understanding—to have all thoughts and desires dwelling only upon Him, in never-ceasing contemplation of the blessed and blessing One, even as He reveals Himself according to the riches of His glory.

And from the knowledge of God in the Church, all outward exhibition of His character in the Life must flow. Where the apprehension of it is defective, there will necessarily be corresponding poverty of expression in every thing which constitutes the essential loveliness of Christianity; for it is only in proportion as God is manifested—manifested in Jesus—that there can be any representation of His mind in His people. The word of God, received into the heart in power, is the word of Life; and from its unhindered developement flows the true and healthful character of the saints. The simple state of the believer is to know that there is Life in Jesus, and that in Him he *has* eternal life, and thus to receive in communion with Him, the unmingled blessing which flows

down from the Son of the Living God. It is no longer a subject of doubtful questioning—uncertain feeling, but of undoubting peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For who that lives, doubts that he lives, or would seek to anatomize the hearing Ear, or the seeing Eye, to assure himself of the reality of that which is revealed to them? If the freedom of unconsciousness, in natural health and life, be the best proof of the functions of mind or body being undisturbed, and a morbid state be indicated by sensitive uncertainty, much more is the Spiritual life, which makes us one with Christ, in full and healthful course, only as it turns us away from ourselves to forget, to lose ourselves in contemplation of Him, on whom all the mind of God is occupied—with whom all the thoughts of His saints should be occupied. A child asks not about its life, but *lives* in actual enjoyment; and this is a picture of the child of God. Whilst walking with Him, His children often make most advance when least conscious of the work of the Spirit upon their minds; for their eyes are fixed upon His Glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and knowing that alone, they become changed into the same Image. It is the part of Faith to receive unquestioning all that God hath given in “the Son of His love;” and liberty of action will be proportionate—*liberty* because unquestioned.

The preceding thoughts have arisen out of others (painfully contrasted) regarding the present state of the Church. A fair inheritance and a bright earnest in present joy is its prerogative; but to one at all acquainted with the state of Christianity in general, the unhealthy character of the religion of the present day (I speak of God's people) is but too evident. Instead of the simplicity, the forgetfulness of self, the single undivided looking to God's glory which naturally flows from His free Spirit, the present isolated state of Christians (for they are scattered but as spots in masses of unbelief and worldliness) has naturally communicated to Christianity a character of individuality—nay of selfishness. Each one is engrossed with his own state, his own growth, his own fears and hopes; and individual progress is made a greater object than the glory of God, as though there could be a separation between the two. Instead of the mind being opened to new and fresh discoveries of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are laid up in Christ, (Col. ii. 2.) that which now is distinctively called Experience, is the soul stopping short of the full apprehension of Redemption, occupied with itself—not with God, discovering *itself*—not Him. The eye is turned inwards in profitless dissection of a heart which is “only evil,”\* and

\* Let it not be supposed that the peremptory duty of self-

therefore prevented from looking upwards: a search profitable indeed for a while it may be, if it stops not there but leads to God as the end and deliverance from all uncertainty. All experience of ourselves is only the experience of evil, experience of God alone gives rest and acquirement of positive blessing.

It needs not to speak here of the proofs of this morbid state of religion, as seen in its external form. Never indeed might the stir and excitement seem to be greater, but the very pomp and circumstances with which she walks, "silver-slippered, through the streets," \* proves, sadly proves, that the "*Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive*" is not there; that whilst she saith "I am rich," she is poor, and having a name to live, is dead; whilst the principal office of the Church, to be an exhibition to the world of the grace and truth which are in Christ, is well nigh or altogether lost.

In sad truth, the whole frame-work is in disorder, which is marked by the consequent want of healthy action in the members; and in the moral desolation which is around remain only slight traces of former order and beauty. The Church, being corrupted examination is here undervalued. "Search me O God and try my heart;" but the misdirected search for comfort *there*, instead of looking to the light which alone can make visible the hidden things of darkness.

\* Bunyan.

from the simplicity which is in Christ, has lost its glory, and with it its holy standing. The consequence to individuals (for all suffer in the failure of the body) has necessarily been a low and defective standard of holiness, and much want of a true estimate of the believer's right position in sonship with God.

A striking and lamentable proof of this tendency of the religion of the times to concentrate upon self the promises of Scripture, is seen in the almost entire loss (practically) of the hope of the Church, and the substitution of that which Christians can look for only *as individuals*, namely,—that the Resurrection glory, the *only* hope of which the gospel witnesses,—of which therefore the Spirit can witness, and in which the common interest of all the Redeemed is centered, as being the manifestation of the glory of Jesus, is almost lost sight of, except in theory; whilst in its stead *Death* is proposed to all, at least generally, as the point which brings in the consummation of the Christian's hope, and the fulfilment of all his desires. The principle is carried out in the whole course of popular interpretation of Scripture, and in public discourses, and individual experience,—little beyond this is spoken of or rested upon: the inevitable consequence is the separation, more or less, of the joy of the individual from the joy of Christ,

(which can only be fulfilled in the consummation of all) and the concentration of his feelings upon himself. True it is that "to depart and to be with Christ is far better;" the change is blessed whenever any of God's people are removed from a world of evil, and sin and Satan can no longer harass them; but *this* is not the point to which the eye is directed by revelation; for if there be one thing which is witnessed by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, it is that *Death* has been overcome. And His people look to Resurrection and not Death, because that in Christ the sentence *has* already passed upon them; they are crucified with Christ, therefore they know that the flesh is dead, and reckon themselves as dead—dead to sin—to the world. Their true standing is as being delivered out of a world lying in death, into the world of life. This is their present portion by virtue of their union with Him, who is the quickening Spirit. They are separated from the surrounding world of sin and death by the cleansing power of His blood, by which they are sanctified;—they are brought personally near to Him in communion by the light of life which He sheds abroad in their souls. As far as *faith* is concerned the crisis of death is passed by them, for they have died with Him, (Rom. vi.) and His own word is, "if a man keep my saying, he shall never see

death." (John viii. 51.) Henceforth they are privileged to have the mind of God—to have one object in view with Him whom they love, one common end (so to speak) with God and Christ, the accomplishment of all purposes in Him. The subject suggests a few considerations, though all would fall short of its unspeakable import.

The great work effected by Satan in the Fall of man, was the disorder and scattering of all things. The first Adam was the link between God and His creation, the medium by which all blessing was conveyed to every thing which He had made, as the appointed king and lord of all. When he broke his allegiance to God, the communication was severed; and having sold himself to another master, the operation of God's sentence was to bring himself and all his lost dominion into subjection to death. The Fountain of life was cut off, and it is now a world where death is the witness of sin; the stamp and character passed upon all things as the clear evidence of what they now are in the sight of God, and marking entireness of separation from their original standing in His favour.—Righteousness, life, kingly dominion, all are gone. Yet it is a marvel, when we know, by the light of revelation, the true character of all that is invested with the deceitful colouring of Satan,—to see that all that man glories in as his own, as the proof of his own

wisdom and excellence,—all that he does, and rejoices in, is but remedy—remedy against himself. The proudest results of science and art are but devices—imperfect devices, necessitated by the devastating effects of his own sin, without which they had never been, and simple proofs of his being reduced to do without God, and to act for himself. Thus does he endeavour to hide the witnesses of evil, which rise up against him wheresoever he moves; and for death too, if it might be, he would find a remedy, but there is none; he would put it out of sight if it were possible; but still it remains, the last humbling evidence of his actual condition, the true value of himself, and of all his works. Yet there is remedy—remedy for all the disastrous work of Satan, and the breaking up of God's order in his creation by the entrance of sin. The purpose of God, though apparently frustrated, was not so; for, in that purpose, Jesus was set up before the world began, to be Head and Lord of all. The mystery of His will, which was aforesaid hidden and obscure in Scripture, is now made known to us, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both those which are in the heavens, and those which are upon the earth, (Greek) even in Him." (Ephes. i. 10.) of this gathering, the Cross is the power of God in the fulfilment of this pur-

pose.—“Having made peace by the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.” (Col. i. 20.) The witness and seal on God’s part is in the Resurrection of Jesus, (who is manifested therein as the second Adam, the Head of life and new creation) the great testimony of Redemption, the declaraton of the future re-uniting to God of all that had been separated from His love,—man, and the groaning and tra-  
vailing creation around him. It is on this that the mind of God is resting, even the full accomplish-  
ment of His own wondrous counsels, and every thing has been directed by Him to this gathering; when the entire triumph of righteousness over sin—  
—life over death, shall be seen in the full unfolding of that love which has risen above all man’s evil.

And as a witness upon the earth of the glory of the Father into which Christ is raised, and His own glory with which He shall come hereafter, (Luke ix. 26.) the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead was sent down at His Ascension into the hearts of His saints, the earnest of the Resurrection power of Christ, and beginning of God’s gathering. The place, therefore, of the Church was to fulfil a two-fold evidence—“to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, that to them now might be known by it, the mani-

fold wisdom of God," (Ephes. iii. 10)—to the world as the witness, the only witness of redemption, convincing it thereby "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." (John xvi.) The Spirit of the risen Jesus could testify but of one thing—Resurrection, *because* it is the earnest of *that*; the revelation to the Believer of a day when the sons of God shall be manifested, and every thing which now bears the impress of death, in himself and around him, shall be swallowed up in life. The Church is the first fruits (James i. 18.) of God's purpose, of Christ's gathering, "in whom *we also* have obtained an inheritance." The great HOPE of the Church, therefore, is in the consummation of the glory of her Lord. The Spirit of God, the uniting Spirit, gathers out of the dominion of Satan this earnest to the praise of His glory.—For what is the condition of the Christian in the world? He is spiritually risen indeed with Christ, above the world of death, into the Resurrection world—the kingdom of God's dear Son; but he bears the record of death in his mortal body, and walks where it is yet swayed by Satan, where there is nought but ruin; and the more he has of the Spirit of God, the more must it testify of the godless anarchy and confusion which characterize the rule of evil. His members are upon the earth, though he counts them *dead*, and finds therein the secret of power

over sin, in the contest between the flesh and the Spirit. But the Spirit is life because of righteousness, and he overcomes in communion with the strength of the risen Saviour. Still death is to be overcome, though it be conquered indeed as to the conflict in which Jesus was the Victor, but a victory of which the *full* blessing is yet to be conveyed to himself, to the Church, and to Creation. But when? in dying?—*that* is but a *circumstance* in the way, touching his own individual case, in no way connected with Christ's glory, save that its power is lost upon him who passes through it, in virtue of the word—"whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." No, it is his privilege to have his eye removed from the thought and fear of the last enemy, in joyful earnest looking for that day which shall bring the realization of all his own hope, in the full entering of the Church into the joy of her Lord.—"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The contrast between the common state and lot of man, as descendants of Adam, and the blessed standing and rightful hope of the Believer in Jesus, is specially shewn in Heb. ix. 27, 28. Death, and beyond this, only judgment, are marked there as the general appointment passed upon men—their only prospect. But in the place of the one, the Church is directed to look to that one offering of Himself

by which Christ has borne the sins of many, in which the power of death, which came into the world by sin, is taken away; for He has borne the penalty in being made sin; instead of the other, is the promise of His appearing, "to those who look for Him, the second time, without sin unto salvation." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* eternal life, and shall not come into judgment. (*εις κρισιν*)" The Christian is as sure of salvation, as that there will be a judgment; for the Son of God, for whom "he waits from heaven," (1 Thess i. 10.) who "will judge the world in righteousness," is the same Jesus "which *delivered* us from the wrath to come."

The practical effects occasioned by this limitation of the true hope of the saints, are not the less to be lamented because unsuspected in the minds of many of God's children. Looking short of Resurrection implies an inadequate view of the state of the world, in the hopeless misery of its *present* state of alienation from God, as having the full sentence of death already passed upon all around, and of the entireness and actual *character* of Christ's redemption from it. It is also almost necessarily accompanied by a false view of the future prospects of the world; for whilst the individual indeed is separated from present things by his own departure, it brings to the mind no thought of interruption to

the busy schemes and interests of the millions around, consequently the external aspect of things is unaltered, and may be supposed to continue for successive generations. But the Scriptural truth is, that the expectation of any prospect for the world, save of judgment, is untrue, and leads immediately to wrong practical conclusions. The whole of the present state, fixed as it may seem, hangs but upon a hair, for He is "READY to judge the quick and the dead," a word which at once sweeps away all stability from the constitution of things. *This* view implies *endurance* to the world, and therefore places the mind in a false position. But that, which should be nearer than aught besides to the soul of the Believer, is, that the glory of Jesus is obscured; for what is contentment in this hope only, but the severing of the thoughts of the individual from union in the common blessing, for which the Church and Creation are looking in earnest expectation, in the appearing of Jesus to "take unto Him his great power and reign," "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe"—and centering them upon a state, in which though there is bliss, yet there is not glory, —though there is communion with Christ by his Spirit, as it is written, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? If I make my bed in Hades, behold thou art there;" yet there is not full fruition; that

can only be in the presence of His person; for it is together that His people shall see Him, and with the whole of His redeemed only that He will be glorified.\* There is of necessity therefore in looking *no further*, little apprehension of the person of Jesus—of that glorious person to whom His members are predestinated to be not only morally but corporeally transformed, for “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself;” and those who look not habitually to the glory of the Resurrection, will probably find, on examination, that their thoughts dwell but little upon the personal presence of Jesus, and all that is implied in this; though they may have many of His spiritual blessings, which they enjoy in common

\* The intermediate state is of a surety happiness unalloyed by present trial, yet little more is known of it in the obscurity in which it is left in Scripture; for the state between Death and the Resurrection is barely hinted at in the New Testament. This inquiry does not pretend now to enter upon the question *where* the place of departed souls may be, though it is called *Paradise*; yet it is impossible not to notice the unscriptural character of much of the theology of the day, which generally assumes the spirit to be in heavenly glory in the presence of God as soon as it quits the body. If it has every thing then, there would seem, in this idea, but little end in the Resurrection, at least for just men. And this assumption is usually supported by transferring to the intermediate state, passages of Scripture, which speak either of the *present calling* of the Church, or its state in Resurrection.

with others. And is there not much practical disbelief in this secret passing over the redemption of the body, as if the spirit had all its joy when separated from this tabernacle? But verily if the Scripture speaks of joy to the redeemed, it is in full redemption; and every thing in the Gospels and Epistles witness of this. Little is said (beyond a passing word) of the separate state; but the minds of the writers, or rather of the Spirit in the writers, rests upon the fulfilment of promise, (1 John ii.) and every thought, every longing hope is strained towards this, and lives in its expectation, for the Spirit of God "calls the things which are not as though they were." Time, present or future, is but a moment till the day when the word shall be verified—"Behold I make all things new." Oh! the power and triumph of Jesus can be little estimated when we rest not on that which shall *prove* Him "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and in which the power of Satan and of sin shall utterly be dissolved.

The grievous consequence is, that the Church has lost its place in the world as the witness of Redemption, for only as conformed in spirit to its title as Church of the first-born, can it testify of this. To the Resurrection—to "the redemption of *our* body" little importance is attached, though believed in *as a fact*. The connection between

the Resurrection of Christ and that of His saints is little realized, though that same Spirit which raised Him up, now dwelling in His people, shall quicken them into life.—“ If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” There is a general belief like Martha’s, “ I know that He shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day ;” but what saith the Lord? “ I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” It is one of the saddest proofs of Satan’s power that this present bondage is so little felt, and the grand hope of release quenched in the bosom of the redeemed, by that which is so generally substituted. Truly it is looking to that wherein the *hand of the enemy* is seen, and away from the hand of the living God.

But viewing Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life, places us rightly, and in full liberty of communion, through the one Spirit which He hath sent into His Church, it will and must give the true character to our desire and hope. Let us refer to a very few passages out of the whole burden of the Spirit’s testimony in the Epistles, to the deliverance of the Church and Creation. Thus

speaks the Apostle Paul, " For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the Creation (*κτίσις*) waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God.—For the Creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same, in hope ; because the Creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." (Rom. viii.) Here is the practical position of the Church, Looking for Death?—Nay, but for the glory which shall be revealed *in us*, sympathizing with the Creation, cursed for *man's* sin—*our* sin ; the Spirit witnessing of the world and body of death in which they dwell, and *waiting* for the redemption.—And they themselves daily sustained and upheld in this HOPE, which lifts them up within the veil, where is seen the Surety of all,—“ We are saved by hope.” Again, what is the prospect opposed to present suffering ? The “ exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” In

death? nay, *the reverse*; "We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened: *not for that we would be unclothed*, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.) Again, what is the strength against afflictions? their termination by death? nay, but "we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God that raiseth the dead."—"Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus—delivered to death for Jesus' sake, knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you"—"In heaviness through manifold temptations;" but "the trial of faith" is to be found "unto praise and honour, and glory, at *the appearing of Jesus Christ*."—"Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that *when His glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." What is the consolation to those who sorrow over departed friends? Is it the hope of their own departure?—The wish for this would often be unfaithfulness and impatience; but a comfort far more rich is presented in the assurance "that if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." What is the "HOPE of righteousness but Resurrection, for *that* is based on righteousness? What is the hope that maketh not

ashamed, but in the unlimited glory of God, the necessary result of a Righteousness, which is the very Righteousness of God, made ours through Him “who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification?” It is the testifier of restoration in our hearts, for it comes of the love of God, witnessing within us that we are HEIRS of God—heirs of glory. Take the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, one strain runs through them: the leading motive is “waiting for His Son from heaven”—finishing in the last chapter with the prayer that they may be directed into “patient waiting” for it, the “patience of Christ;” as John in Rev. i. “your brother in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ” (*υπομονη*) The grand object of hope throughout is—Resurrection, for the appearing and presence of Jesus brings this to the living and the dead, these being raised by His coming, those changed in the twinkling of an eye. And here is the one Hope of our calling, of which the Apostle speaks; not indeed in death, “for we shall not *all* sleep,” but when “we which are alive and remain,” lose mortality in life, and they who have passed *out of death* before us, receive their glorified bodies.\* The great result of the work of

\* The Apostle’s purpose in 1 Cor. xv. will be understood by observing that it does not appear that the Corinthians doubted a future existence of the soul after death, but that the Resurrection was *lost sight of*.

Jesus, and the development of God's purpose will then be manifested; for man will be set up again in Jesus, the second Adam; and present corruption, dishonour, and weakness, will be raised in incorruption, glory, and power. God's word was "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." Behold its glorious accomplishment. Man has borne the image of the earthly Adam, he shall also bear the image of the heavenly Adam, of Him who is One with God—of Him "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,"—when "Death is swallowed up in victory." God's word was "Let them have dominion;" behold it verified in the "Restitution of all things;" (Acts iii.) (for the work of Jesus is nothing less) and over the whole Creation, redeemed into life and glory, the second Adam and the Church "His Bride," are destined to hold their reign; for He is "Heir of all things," and His Church are "joint heirs" with Him. What is God occupied with? For what is Christ waiting? The believer's privilege is to have the mind of God; *that* must rest on the accomplishment; and we fall short of that mind when we rest not on it also. To rest on any thing short of this, is unbelief; robs Christ of his glory, and proves that so far our hearts are not in it. The only thought,

which can gladden the heart, that has "an ear to hear" the groaning of Creation—that which has been subjected by man's sin—is that it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The only joy for him who is pent up within this tabernacle of death, is the whisper to the mind by the Spirit of its bursting forth in Immortality—The fervent craving of the heart, in a world which crucified the Lord of glory, is to see Him triumphing where He was put to shame. The One Hope which fills the soul, is to "Behold the Man."

And how near is that coming? Surely it is "yet a little while," Even as "the Spirit and the bride say, Come;" as we—as the Church travail for it in supplication, so it is in nearness; for it is the cry of the Spirit of Jesus in His people which He must know and answer, though if *He* be patient, *they* may well endure.

Well then might the Apostles with great power give witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus—the one subject which they had to herald through the world—*He that was crucified, is risen*—and wherefore? but because their hope was in it. It was a testimony to the world that it was judged,—to him that received the testimony, that there was Life—escape out of the Death in which he was dwelling, and both to be revealed in the appearing of Him whom God had raised up. *Jesus had won*

*Resurrection.* It was strange tidings to the world, as indeed the truth of God is of all things most strange to the natural man, (Acts xvii. 26) and well indeed is it now, if it be not strange (practically) to the Church also. But in the depth of evil nothing is so difficult for the mind to realize as glory. This, as all other knowledge, can flow only from that which is so hard to the flesh, a full and simple subjection to the Spirit of God. This delivers out of all which is of *self*, and draws the mind from feeding on the husks within, to the contemplation of the true object of living faith, for the Spirit must glorify Jesus. (John xvi.)

One thing more to be pressed on our minds is, that the apprehension of the person of Jesus, and the looking for the Resurrection, to be raised up in His likeness, is the secret of practical holiness. For in it the mind is directed to the true standard to which it is to be conformed, and beholding it by faith, is proportionately changed into its image. Nothing less was the aim of Paul—"That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death, *if by any means* I might attain unto the Resurrection (*ἐξανάστασις*) of the dead." Many are the objects of others, "but this *one* thing I do," saith Paul. Nothing less than Resurrection holiness can satisfy the mind

which knows of Christ's glory; "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness"—for here only is perfection attained.\* The hope of Resurrection is the stamp of the Spirit upon all a Believer's walk; to be conformed to it, his aim; and verily if he rests short of the one in desire, he must also of the other. The criterion of his spiritual state is as he is resting upon the thought, the soul-purifying thought, of Resurrection. To this the energy of the Spirit draws, for it Gathers into Christ; and even as it unites with Him, as Believers live in the glory, they will be proportionally separated from the world. The full manifestation of Death on all sides is shewn by it, with which God can have no fellowship; the veil with which Satan hath covered the charnel house is removed; the whole aspect of things, with all its many-coloured diversities of human passion and interest, is placed in its true light—is proved to be but the LIE of "the Devil, *which deceiveth the whole world.*" (Rev. xii. 9.) But above, and only above, are Truth and Life. Let us be carried forward by the Spirit into the inheritance which is our hope, laid up for us in heaven, and see what all that is of earth will seem when looked back upon.

\* A thought which seems an answer to the endless questionings, on the one side and on the other, respecting perfection; for although Jesus on earth is the example which we are to follow, yet Jesus risen, is the standard to which we are to be conformed.

A strange sight is the Church of God now—divided, scattered abroad, (for the common hope which would unite them is merged in other interests, though individuals may earnestly look for it) instead of rejoicing in the truth, confined by *systems* of theology from discovery of God, and contending for doctrines, which may be done where vital godliness is not; minding earthly things, looking for blessing to the earth before the Resurrection comes, and practically evincing their belief “that it might be a tolerable world if all would agree to make the best of it.” And what is this but, as St. Augustine saith, “*Beatam vitam querere in regione mortis?*” Believers have need to cry for the Spirit of God to raise up the hearts of His people into their true position—the apprehension of “the heavenly calling”—“the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”—“the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe,” a power no other than that “which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” But the eye that is not dimmed by fellowship with unrighteousness, may see that the Lord is working even now. The division for the final *gatherings* is going on. He is separating to Himself on the one side, and Satan is concentrating his own strength on the other.—The conflict is between holiness and sin; and the hour is fast coming which will irrevocably fix the

side taken by each individual. The Lord keep His servants unmixed with the world, and simply looking to His glory; for even as they who of old waited in this hope lost not their labour, for they were in the position of obedience, and consequently of blessing, it shall surely be so now. They may mourn and weep now, but they shall be comforted. For the day is rapidly hastening which shall bring together the revelations of judgment and glory. (2. Thess. i.) The reign of Death and Sin shall be put down for ever, and they who have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Saviour, shall be "presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." The ransomed Church and Creation shall praise the Lamb that was slain, and the Lamb shall offer up all to the Father. "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.—Amen.

## SEPARATION FROM APOSTACY NOT SCHISM.

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IN observing the different forms which error may assume, it is well to remember that, in every case, it is the combined result of many influences; often indeed dissimilar, and apparently opposed to one another, yet each tending to the same point, and slowly and silently it may be, though surely, working towards the same end. In the individual it is the product more or less of the special circumstances and principles of the period in which he lives; so that the Character of an Age is stamped in its general features, with whatsoever diversity of detail, upon those who are born in it. Instances of peculiar aberration unconnected with the general spirit of the time, are of comparatively rare occurrence. In like manner, the errors which belong to any given period of the history of the Church or of the World, date their origin from causes which do not immediately meet the eye, but may be traced back through a long series of circumstances which have gradually conspired to produce the final con-

summation. Each generation, in its principles and character, is the moral result of the whole succession of those which have gone before; the accumulated influences of each have flowed onward, gathering fresh additions from the succeeding epochs, until the entire exhibition of the mystery which has been working unsuspectedly is visible in the completeness of manifested evil. And when it is remembered from whom all error emanates,—even from the Father of Lies—his power of deceiving is placed in a fearful light, by the consideration that it extends not only to individuals but to generations; and that in the prosecution of his destructive schemes (limited of course by God's overruling power) he can cause each successive age of the world, as it passes onward, to converge gradually towards the intended crisis, by directing the evil tendencies of the heart of man towards the same point; and in such a manner, that the degree in which each æra is contributing to the future evil, shall be unnoted at the time from its apparent insignificance.

The declension from original Truth has always been so gradually effected by the silent operation of centuries, that the actual movement is almost imperceptible to the eye of an individual, which can only comprehend within its view a very limited portion of time; and it is only by putting out of

sight the intervening facts, which have been the progressive evidences of departure from God, and by a direct and plain comparison of the state of things at any period with the original source of Truth, that the magnitude of the deviation from it can be estimated. It was the slow work of the agency of evil, which, in the case of the Apostasy of the Nations, gradually obliterated from man's mind the knowledge of the living and true God; each generation, as it arose, became heir to the waywardness and perverse imaginations of the preceding, and transmitted them together with its own to its successors; until one after another the fragments of Revelation were entirely dissolved, or altogether lost sight of, under the power of the dark and fearful alchemy which "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Under a form more unsuspected, because not characterized by the grossness of Pagan abominations, the Apostasy of the last dispensation is presented to us, in a nation delivered from the idolatry which had polluted their ancestors, and distinguished by every outward circumstance which could mark purity of religious observance—in short a Religious World. Yet the word of the Just One declared that they were, even then, filling up in themselves the measure of the

guilt of the whole line of mankind from the beginning; and therefore were to be visited for their own deeds and for their fathers also, "That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation." The Apostasy had been gradually progressing from the day that their Fathers came out of Egypt; the enmity against God had been working throughout the whole mass, and wanted but the occasion to be openly exhibited,—an occasion which was afforded by the presence of God himself on earth, whose light made their evil manifest. Most instructive is it also to observe that, as a nation, they were departed from God, notwithstanding the several partial and temporary reformations in different reigns. The burden of the denunciation of Jehovah against their Apostasy is not the less directed against them in the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, when apparently almost an entire purgation was wrought; nor did their second temple remove the character branded upon them. They were Apostate,—and a Dispensation which has once apostatized is ever regarded as such, whatever may be the revivals of religion at any given place or time; not because God has precluded return, for He has continually sent the warning "by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending;" but because of the continued oper-

ation of the same unhindered evil which brought it into Apostasy.

The connexion of these remarks with the present state of things in the Professing Church, is sufficiently obvious. One dispensation indeed never learns by the experience of the past ; or the perfect analogy which exists between the circumstances of the present and the preceding, would be more generally acknowledged. Thus much however is undeniable, that there is the historical fact of a general Apostasy from the principles of this dispensation, and the certainty, from the precedent of the Jewish, that any partial return to Truth does not a whit rescue the Gentile body from the general charge. The Spirit of God has indeed been poured out in a measure here and there, with different degrees of power ; followed in each instance by speedy declension, as in the Jewish revivals. But as with them, so with us—the full tide of apostasy has been setting in from the beginning. Israel “served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and of the Elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord which he had done for Israel ;” and when their testimony was removed, followed after idols. In the same manner, during the watchful care of the Elders that had known the true Joshua, the church as a whole, was maintained in its position of obedience ; though the latter

writings of the Apostles give clear intimations that the Mystery of Iniquity was already working, which after their departure gradually corrupted the Church from its purity. The progress of evil has been so slow and deceitful, that each century in its ease and carelessness, forgot to note the gradual descent of the stream which was carrying the Church further and further from its original position; and thus the present age manifests the result of all the destructive influences which have been in operation from the days of the Apostles downward. The deceitfulness of the human mind will indeed discover various ways of defence and explanation, such as difference of circumstances, and accommodation of Scriptural principles to the present state of the Church; but the startling width of separation by which we are removed from the primitive exhibition of Truth in the Church, is only seen by simply bringing the Oracles of God—the Charter, as it were, and Statutes of the dispensation, to bear upon the circumstances of the day,—“Remember how thou hast received and heard,” and “repent and do the first works” is the only message from the Lord, *He* can take no lower standard, nor can *we* if we would form a right judgment.

But it has been rightly said, “When truth becomes important, it begins to be questioned;” and the accuracy of the remark is forcibly seen at

the present period, when the necessity so extensively beginning to be felt, of recurring to the Scripture alone for every thing relating to the ordering of the Church of God is met sometimes by denying that we are in possession of the *whole* Word of God; at others by the assertion that we can have nothing to do with regulations dependent upon the presence of the Spirit; and by every possible attempt to sustain their present position, by maintaining the authority of things appointed since the Apostolic Age, and which therefore whether good or evil in themselves, are little more than way-marks in the road down which the professing Church has been receding from its appointed standing, each indicating a farther progress in declension. This is simple matter of history, for none but the Apostles were ever authorized to make enactments for the Church of Christ; and all that was ever entrusted to the Church itself, was to carry into effect those already made; the actual ministry of present order, according to the principles, and by the enactments laid down by them.\* Every step beyond this is necessarily evil;

\* I believe in the actual sufficiency of Scripture, not in the letter but by the Spirit. The Spirit might order by living men; *He did so*, God chose thus to order by it; by the Word the Spirit now orders through living men, and that is the difference. All besides will be found a cause of disunion, because the Spirit is not given for the purpose, and therefore such

for either it is the virtual assertion that the provision made by the Lord and His Apostles is insufficient—that is, that the Word and Spirit of God are not enough; or, it is the proof that the Church is no longer in circumstances to be governed by Scripture alone, and therefore not in circumstances to be governed by Christ. But the fearful truth is, that the declension of the professing Church is such, that if it were possible for one who had known it in its first estate, at once to be set down in the midst of the present anomalous state of things, he would scarcely recognize a vestige of the character which formerly belonged to it; and would see only an entire perversion of its constitution, ministry, ordinances, and practice, but above all, of its position in the world; yea a perversion so strange, that even now upon a recurrence to regulations could not claim the subjection of all Christians; “If any man be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord:” when this is so I bow, otherwise I detect the spirit of rebellion.

I deny that there is any thing not met by the Apostolic injunctions; or, that if it were not, that it could be according to them. If we act according to the Spirit we shall find that we have fulfilled Apostolic enactments or statements to a tittle; though we might not have been able to see the enactments for the case beforehand; and thus our spirituality is tried; and it is thus the truth and availableness of Scripture is shewn, while nothing but spirituality can do it, because the attempt by the letter will break down somewhere, perhaps in some great principle not coming from the same Spirit. Hence the force of the enactments, though not in literal detail unless necessary.

Scripture, it is at once seen that the Apostolic addresses have no collective application to any thing now called a Church. We look through the various exhortations in the Epistles, and wonder how they cannot in the present day be acted upon, except in limiting them entirely to individual practice, which of course affords but a partial representation, and takes away almost all the force of their application.\* And the inquiry naturally arises—How came the Church into a position where she cannot exercise in any corporate shape the functions of the body of Christ? A question to which the history of the last seventeen centuries must supply the answer. The idea of an inspired Epistle to any of the Bodies of the present day, in the terms and character of address of those which were of old written to the Churches of God, would strike any one as an absurdity. Whether addressed to the Church of England or to the Church of Rome, they would be equally disregarded, because

\* The necessity to which Christians, in the present day, are reduced of *individualizing* all the various passages which apply to them as members of a body, and which can be acted upon only in this capacity, is a most remarkable evidence of the false position in which they are now placed, by being scattered throughout a number of sects, and cast here and there in the midst of masses of nominal profession, without the power of exhibiting the Lord's commands in the distinctness of living union. And no less singular is the inaptness of many parts of the Epistles, for being so severed from their collective application to a Christian body.

equally inapplicable to either—equally useless, for neither could act upon the commands. But there is no need to make a supposition, for the actual case is, that the Church is not in a state to be ruled by the Apostolical directions which it has, and by the Spirit of God which is the only true and rightful Sovereign. It is not governed by Christ as the Head of the Church. God indeed rules in it by His *Providence*, as He does in any earthly system, as He does in the world at large, but the Holy Ghost does not order it; a distinction not sufficiently adverted to by many, who would affirm a system to be of God, because he has allowed it to continue. There is Order indeed, if an order in the flesh may be so called, which continually produces the greatest disorder in the things of the Spirit; and of which all the arrangements are but contrivances to sustain a system without its presence. A special proof of this has been seen in the Church of England, when, for the greater part of the period, since the Reformation, according to the acknowledgement of many of her own spiritual members, the doctrines of grace were preached in scarcely a single pulpit; and the awakening which had taken place had subsided into a general spirit of slumber.—And yet there are perhaps not a few, who glory in their own shame, because the system itself was maintained; that is, it did not fall, although the Spirit

of God, by their own confession, had altogether gone from it. A Roman Catholic might, with much more shew of justice, argue for God's approval of Popery, because the "True and Apostolical Church" had stood its ground for so many centuries. According to such reasoning, if the system of the Church of England had been suggested to the Apostles, there never could have been an Apostasy. All the Churches might have slumbered and slept, and dead works have taken the place of living faith,—every kind of secularity and worldly corruption might have flowed in,—ungodliness might have borne the chief rule in the ordering of the Body, and the Spirit of God have been utterly shut out; but still they could not be held Apostate, but "pure and Scriptural," because they had framed certain confessions of faith to which, on any criminating charge, they had only to point in proof of their soundness. But Christ has made this point clear to his followers. It was not the *Doctrine*, but the *Confession of the Doctrine*, that he was "the Christ the Son of the living God" which was the foundation of the Church, and the proof of its being His; the confession in the heart and life, not in dead writings, which evidenced it to be builded upon Him. Would the Church of Rome be otherwise than Apostate, were all the decrees of Councils and Popes committed to the flames, and

the formularies of the Church of England adopted in their stead, or, all the confessions of faith which have ever been composed? Nay verily, no more than the Jews were not Apostate, when the idols had been purged from amongst them, and they, to all appearance, were serving the God of their Fathers, in all the strictness and formality of the most devout worshippers. For what is Apostasy? Not merely the maintenance of false doctrines, or superstitious and heathen observances; these may all be wanting, and yet the Church be Apostate.\* Apostasy is in the Church, what it is in an individual,—a turning back from Christ, and losing the special characteristics of his holy calling, by being again mixed up with the World out of which it was taken to be a peculiar people, a witness for his Name. It is in short as to its result, Identity

\* The body or system being led by the spirit of evil, not by the Spirit of God is the proper character of Apostasy, such being nominally or consequently identified with the Church of God. Now though false doctrine be Apostasy, (see 1 Tim. iv.) it seems rather to be the part taken by individuals. But this, in the first place, is grievous to the Spirit, then lets in Satan who is the God of this world, and puts the Church into the world, i. e. into His power, and here is its Apostasy. Now the Reformation was the recovery of the principles of individual salvation, and hence its faith became (as for individuals) Orthodox. But the Reformation did not, as regards the present question take the system out of the world, and therefore left the Church, as to individuals, the instrument of individual salvation; but, at the same time, in the identical position, as a system, in which it was before.

with the World. Corruption in doctrine may more or less abound in such a state of things, or there may be a perfect form of Orthodoxy; but where this one character is found, there is the irretrievable mark of Apostasy.

For what is a Church? *the* Church of God. Scripture testifies of what it once was, a gathering together of believers upon the ground of *the common Salvation*, (for this was the simple bond of union which knit them together) and ordered by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Churches at Corinth, Thessalonica, and in Asia, whatsoever the special need of rebuke might have been for each, were thus distinct from the ungodliness around them, and were in a position where Christ could exercise his administrative power. The only signification of a "Church" in Scripture, is a union of Christians; it is not represented as composed of written documents, but of living individuals; and, as a whole, a union of believers *as such*, and in this manner the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, a speaking, acting testimony for God. To this corresponds the Church of England's own definition of the visible Church, (often urged and as often disregarded,) as "a congregation of *faithful* men, in which the pure word of God is preached," &c. a definition by which she utterly destroys *her* own title to be considered a Church; and by her

own words her members must of course abide. For the common benefit of believers in every nation, doctrines most important were rescued from the rubbish of the Papal system, by individuals of different countries, views, and characters; but there was nothing framed in England corresponding to the preceding definition. The removal of a part of the abuses of Popery, and the exhibition in her documents of certain truths of Scripture, did not clear her from the Apostasy,\* for the essence of that was preserved in the *fact* of her identity with the world; nor could any thing have redeemed her from it, for a body which has become Apostate, cannot restore itself, for the plain reason that the world *has* gained the majority. And, whatever may be alleged respecting corruptions elsewhere, or in times past, there is all the difference imagin-

\* A word must be said respecting the ordinary fallacy of the *Martyrs of the Church of England*. The fact is that, as every one must know, they died for truths, not as being peculiar to this Church, but truths held and avowed by every believer. They and all the Martyrs of God from the beginning of the world, are the common ancestry of *all* who follow their faith. When they suffered, it was the *Church of England* that made them suffer, for *then they were the Nonconformists*. Let it be remembered also, that what was done at the Reformation, fell far below the desires of the Reformers; being in many cases merely an accommodation to the Popish feeling of the people, whilst they were obliged to limit their work by the inclinations of those who were in power. Yet how constantly are their names used to consecrate unscriptural abuses in the present day!

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able between a body, as in the primitive churches, proceeding upon the principle of recognizing as its members Christians only, gathering the Church out of the world, and a state of things which systematically and designedly includes, without the slightest attempt at discrimination, all sorts and degrees—godly and ungodly; in short which is framed, theoretically and practically, to include THE WORLD. She is not A Church according to her own rule. In THE Church she can only be included as a part of the Apostate Church of Christendom.

For a Christian mind therefore, not taking for granted that things are as they should be, but judging by the plain Truth of God, there is but one course, and that is to separate from the evil. And such separation is not Schism, on the contrary it is nothing more than is due to God's glory, to Christ's honour, to purity of Conscience, and to the fairness of the Christian name.

It has been sometimes said by unshrinking apologists, that whatever be the corruptions of a Church, yet if it *be* a Church, it is a sin to leave it. But this argument, if good for anything, would prove that we ought to have remained until this day in the bosom of the Romish Church; for as far as nominal order and constitution go, she has a much more ostensible title to obedience than the

Church of England ; for it is at least derived from a purely ecclesiastical source, whatever that may be ; whereas the Church of England receives the whole of her power at the hands of the State ; by which she was actually organized at the Reformation, and which appoints all her Hierarchy, and has otherwise a large share in directing her.

Nor is the argument drawn from the Jewish dispensation more sound—that an individual is bound to the National Church now, in the same manner as of old the Jew to his own. For let it be considered, that the Jews were a single family chosen out of the earth. But what family is called now by the principles of this dispensation? *They* were a nation taken out of the world not to be mixed with other nations ; but what nation or people is now recognized by Scripture, but the “holy nation,” the “peculiar people,” composed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?” The points on which the last Dispensation and its Covenant rested were, a *Land* and a *People*. But that which was the leading principle of the constitution of the last, when acted upon now, destroys the principle of the present ; for the Jewish was the precise representation in outward carnal order, (see Hebrews) of what the Christian one is now spiritually. The two dispensations correspond by analogy, but are not coincident ; and to copy the last dispensation

is to mistake the character of the present, and necessarily to lose sight of it.\* For the Church now to be identified with the nation or the world, is the same sin as it was for the Jews to give up their separate standing, and to mix with the surrounding nations. It is Apostasy in both cases. The Church as such, in its present identification with the world, comes indeed under God's administration. But how? Not for ordering through His Spirit, that cannot be, but simply for judgment. It has all the responsibilities of the Church of God, without one of its rights or claims. Doubtless the rending of Christ's body is a deep sin; but where is that body now, so as to be recognized? They

\* To mention one example of the manner in which men build again the things which Christ destroyed. The Priesthood, which was confined to one tribe, did not necessarily require Spirituality in those who belonged to it; it was an external order only, and they were the Priests of the Lord, whatever their moral character might be, and as such were to have due honour rendered to them. But not unfrequently do we hear of the gratuitous assumption, that the same rights are transferred to all who receive nominal authority to minister in the present dispensation, on the ground that it was so in the last; and thus a Caiaphas may be adduced as a plea for requiring spiritual submission to an ungodly Minister. Surely if the character of this Dispensation, as stated by its great Lawgiver, is that "the True Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth." (John v.) nothing short of this can designate the ministering servants of God, and those whom now He does not own Himself, does not "seek to worship Him" He cannot have required his people to acknowledge; *Grace only*, is to be obeyed in spiritual things.

who maintain the charge of Schism, must first prove that they are the true Church, and the *onus probandi* lies upon them. The command is to keep the unity of the *Spirit*. But where is this spiritual union, where is the union of believers, as such, that it can claim the title of the only True and Apostolic Church transmitted to them from the Apostles? Such a body alone, ruled by the Holy Spirit, would have a claim on Christian men; for in *Spiritual things* God has appointed obedience to be rendered only to His own Spirit; entire subjection to that, whether in individuals, or in many, is imperative, but to that alone. It is the distinctive character of the dispensation, *because* it is the dispensation of the Spirit; and to godliness alone is any one required to render due and loyal fealty.\* But this may be in testimony or in office; that office being the exercise of spiritual energy in the sphere which God has appointed for *His Spirit*, for the individual so endued by the Spirit for that purpose.

There would be Schism in separation from a "congregation of faithful men," to which the nominal church does not answer; the visible Church has been broken up or blended with the

\* Widely different is the case in temporal things, where it is the Christian's duty to render implicit unquestioning obedience to all that are in authority as to God's ordinance for governing the world. "The powers that be are ordained of God."

world. *But Schism from the world is always right*; for a system thus associated and organized is but the World, though the people of God may many of them be connected with it. The Word of God is clear—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, &c. wherefore come out from among them," &c. (2 Cor. vi.) But it is sometimes said, you may separate from what is worldly and ungodly in the Church. Scripture however contemplates nothing of this kind, nor gives any command about it. It is for the Church "to withdraw themselves" "to put away that wicked person," "to purge out the old leaven." But, it is replied, how can we do this when those who are merely nominal christians, are the ruling number? Assuredly it is an impossibility; but then you prove your own guilt, you confess yourself placed in a position where you cannot help doing wrong, or tolerating iniquity. Is a disciple then to follow the multitude, because the multitude cannot but do evil? The command is "Avoid such." Does the command therefore cease to be binding on



those who see the evil, because the Church cannot help herself, and those who have light persist in having fellowship with it? The first command to a Christian is, "Be not partaker of other men's sins, keep *thyself* pure."\* That which the Apostle so often urges on Timothy must be of equal obligation upon all Christians; "From such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. vi. 5.) "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 19—21.) The Apostasy, though its germ was already visible, had not then manifested

\* "Now I beseech you brethren mark them which cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine ye have learned*, and avoid them; for they that are such, *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ*," &c. (Rom. xvi. 17.) Therefore if any one taught a doctrine contrary to those exhibited in the Epistle, as for instance, to Justification by Faith—to the work of the Spirit, &c. the Christians of Rome were to turn away from them, though they were of themselves. And yet, it is to be feared that, there are not a few who endanger the souls of the simple and unwary, by enjoining them to continue their attendance at a place of worship where the minister may be an ungodly man, and preach directly contrary to the doctrine received from the Apostles. When St. Paul enjoins to avoid such—they enjoin to receive them as spiritual superiors. What is this but proving a preference for *their system and their minister*, above the Church of God and *His ministers*; not to speak of disobedience to the word of the Lord.

itself, and therefore there was no command to leave that which had not sunk into the world; but it is anticipated, and the Christian's course provided in that anticipation, so that whatever may be the fair appearance of rituals and confessions, he is not left in any delusion as to his own duty. The description given of the future evil is thus summed up, "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,"—the command consequent upon it, "from such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 5.) I would add one further warning from Scripture.—The last command to the followers of the Lamb, and given in reference to that mystery of evil which includes every thing connected with the world, is "Come out of her my people, *that ye be not partakers of her sins*, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii.)—Yea, though the world and the visible Church be *identified* with each other, it is "Come out of her." So far from being Schism, thus to act is the imperative duty of a Christian; and to advocate an alliance which brings him into direct fellowship with the World, and forces him to recognise nominal Christianity, is both to manifest a practical contempt of all that Scripture testifies concerning the world, and a disregard for the souls of the multitude who, as every day's experience shews, are deceived into a belief of their own Christianity by the system which calls them

Christians, and unreservedly admits them into the privileges of such. *That* cannot be right which prevents a distinct disclaimer of Worldliness. There is indeed such a thing as Schism, but it is not in a Christian's refusing his sanction to that which is The World, and which is governed by the World's rulers.

What then is Schism? This is a question which must needs bring a crowd of painful thoughts into the mind of any one who has learnt from Scripture what the Church once was: when "all were of one heart and of one soul." So fearfully different are our present circumstances that the possibility of such a union is now, so to speak, scarcely credible. Time was when it could be said of the *visible* Church, standing, as it did as God's witness in the world—the first fruits to His name—"There is one body and one Spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." A sevenfold unity which appertains indeed to all the children of God scattered throughout the world, in virtue of their union in the heavenly places in Christ, a unity which was not hidden as it now is, but visible and open union manifested in meeting as members of that body into which they were all baptized by *One Spirit*; a fellowship of which

no forms of outward union can make us partakers. But this was speedily lost as soon as the interests of Christians were separated from the one object wherein their desires met, when they forgot that their "citizenship was in Heaven;" worldliness produced division, until all, with the exception of the remnant, sunk back into the world again, to be built together by Satan into a fitly framed union of his own.

The external unity of Romanism was perfect as far as outward conformity could go—so perfect as to shame believers, for the "children of this world" are much more single eyed in their common desire and therefore more strongly knit together than the "children of the Kingdom;" but such conformity and fellowship was but "the friendship of the world," and therefore "enmity against God." It did the works of its Father the Devil, and perverted all the truths of God.

This, at the Reformation, was shivered into a number of smaller masses; but the separate fragments of the Church owned by God were never reunited. And now the very idea of unity seems altogether lost. If ever it is inquired for, the answer sometimes is, that we are to look to whatsoever the ruling powers are pleased to make the Church, which is no other than the principle of Romanism. And on all sides the perverted use

of the right of private judgment has split the union of Believers, and severed them from each other, in a hundred different ways, each asserting its own claim to preeminence, and denying its own share in the charge of Schism.

The only way then of deciding the question, What is Schism? is to refer at once to that which is given in the Scriptures of the principles and character of the Churches. And these, by the evidence of all the Apostolic Scriptures, were each, as before said, simply a union of believers upon the ground of the common Salvation; "congregations of faithful men," ordered by the Spirit of God. Nor does it appear that any thing, beyond the mere ascertaining, as far as it was possible, that they were believers, was necessary to make them partakers of this fellowship. The whole tenor of the accounts given for our instruction prove this, and that the terms required were none other than those which make a man a member of the body of Christ, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I repeat that this ground of the common Salvation is the only one which is sanctioned by Christ; that it is meeting as believers only which is Spiritual union, or which can be owned by Him. The question is not now as to

whether evil may or may not exist among them, but as to the *principle* on which, as the preliminary to obedience, Christians are bound to be united, and that is as Christians, and Christians only. Any union which has not this principle as its basis, which is brought together upon a point of secondary importance, (and all else is secondary) or which enjoins any thing which might prove a stumbling block to the conscience of the weak, is contrary to the mind of Christ, and is inevitably Schism, because the Unity of the Spirit, the only one which Scripture contemplates, can only exist when those who confess Christ are brought together upon this simple ground. Nay it is a paramount and immutable obligation upon believers so to meet, and it only proves how little of the Spirit is now in the Church, that the children of God are content to be divided from each other, and seek not union. The power of the Spirit, if greater, would necessarily draw together all who were partakers of it, as to a common centre, in the common joy. "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one;" but they meet not in the glory, therefore are they divided. It is the sad proof that the Church has lost its glory. "Whereas there are divisions among you, are ye not carnal and walk as men?"

And since it cannot be gainsayed that this *was*

the actual standing of the Church, it is manifest that any addition to the requirements of Christ, which may in the smallest degree affect the conscience of another, is a deep sin against the Spirit of God. Nor has the power to frame such enactments ever been given to the Church, and therefore she has not the slightest claim upon others with regard to them. And when tried by the true and actual simplicity of Christian union, it will appear that the Church of England, setting aside the fact of Apostasy, has been more guilty of the sin of Schism than any other communion since the days of the Apostles. Let us consider a very few points which amply prove it. She is guilty then of Schism ;—

1st.—In acting with invariable contempt of the Apostle's command, " Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but *not to doubtful disputations.*" (Rom. xiv.) Her assumption on the contrary has been, that in things indifferent, the Church hath power to frame requirements, and to make them binding upon her members ; a power *never given to the Church* ; for in things indifferent, no one has any power from God to make laws ecclesiastical, or to enforce those things which He hath declared to be immaterial. The Apostles statement is most distinct, he enjoins " that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his

brother's way." And wherefore? The thing in itself may be indifferent, but one man's conscience cannot be the rule of another's, "to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." (see Rom. xiv. 14.) To disregard this is to walk "not according to charity," and the consequence must be disunion. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." It is a strict command and a fearful warning." "Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones." But the Church of England has made them submit, for her own pleasure, to an endless list of additions to the word of God, in things wholly indifferent. As for example all those ceremonies which in the reign of Elizabeth were imposed by *her* on the Church (not by the Church, be it observed, but by the civil power alone,) as of equal authority with the ordinances of Christ. The consequence of which was, that the consciences of the weak, and even of the greater number of the most spiritual, were disquieted, whilst the careless and ungodly found no difficulties. The real Schismatic was doubtless the Church of England, which thus disjoined many of her most spiritual members; and both then and at other periods,\* she has been the cause of all the

\* In the reign of Charles II. the Act of Uniformity, as it is well known, caused the ejection of one thousand five hundred of the most pious ministers in one day.

Schism of which from time to time her unscriptural requirements have necessitated ; for each sect, as it separated itself, was a testimony against some error which she would not, or could not alter.

But the Church's own manifesto is unequivocally set forth in her Canons, which prove her to be more bitterly Schismatical than any other collective body. Nor let it be said that some of them are virtually obsolete, and not now enforced, and that therefore it is not fair to judge of her Spirit by them in the present day ; for the argument might admit of a destructive application. If the charge of corruption in practice is answered by pointing to the purity of her Articles, with equal justice may the assertion of her mild and tolerant spirit be met by a reference to her Canons. Both stand together as her statements, and the one is no less accredited by her than the other. The assertions made by the Anti-Catholic party, in the debates of late years, that Popery had changed its character in modern days, were always met, and justly too, by a reference to the unrepealed decrees of the Council of Trent. Now it is not possible to conceive a set of regulations more opposed to the spirit of Christianity than these Canons ; they are full of the severest penalties against conscientious objections to mere human inventions, and exalt the enactments of men into equal importance with

the ordinances of Christ. As for instance, "Who-soever shall hereafter affirm that any of the Nine and Thirty Articles are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto, let him be excommunicate, *ipso facto*," &c. so that, strange as it may seem, a large portion of the Church of England is probably already excommunicated, as there is perhaps not a single individual who assents to every statement in the Articles, and every one who affirms that any Article is in part erroneous is *IPSO FACTO* excommunicate.

A word may be said here upon the subject of Formularies and Creeds. Of these it may be truly affirmed—Converted men do not want them; unconverted break through them. The question is not whether they may be good, in themselves, but whether their ostensible purpose is effectually answered by them. It may be fearlessly asserted then, that on the one hand they have disturbed the conscience of many a godly mind, as being utterly unsanctioned as requirements by the Word; whilst on the other, they do not hinder shoals of unconverted men from pressing into the ministry every year. It is not intended to undervalue the *intrinsic value* of Creeds, as expressions of Christian belief. I may be very thankful that the early church *did* compose these confessions, and fully allow the

value of the exhibition of Christian doctrine comprehended in them. But they are not depreciated by being placed in their true scale of importance ; and that which is here maintained is, simply, that they are no security for godliness ; and that on the other hand an individual may be a Christian, and give evident proofs of it in his life, who yet may not be prepared to sign Confessions of Faith which he may not understand, or the mode of expression of which he cannot agree to, though he will make a similar confession in other words. For example, I acknowledge the full worth of the Athanasian Creed, and the value of the astonishing strictness and accuracy of terms, far above the power of the present day, in which the most profound and important essentials of the Christian faith are conveyed ; every position of which strikes at the root of a Heresy. But all which is there stated in metaphysical language and exactness of position, an unlearned believer in the Gospel apprehends, as to its vital truth, by the *intuition* of Faith. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are particularly every thing to him which they are there stated to be, but it is obvious that he may be unable to assent to the Creed, and yet his faith be not a whit the less sound. Moreover it is a fact that many conscientious men have been excluded because of their objection to signing *any thing*, and

as it is not required by the word of God, the requisition of signature becomes Schism. The real evil is that the principle of union becomes *merely* one of *Knowledge*, an assent of the understanding to certain propositions which may be utterly unconnected with vital godliness, and which therefore is unscriptural, and tends only to divide the true body of Christ. The actual duty of a Church, is to ascertain, as far as it can, that its members have the Spirit of Christ, that their belief and life are Christian; but this the Church of England has never done, and could not do; and yet these feeble safeguards are vaunted of as her strength, and the proof of her Apostolicity. It has been said that they secure from heresies, but they did not hinder the Church of England, with scarcely an exception, from preaching the Popish heresy of justification by human merit, for nearly two centuries; and persecuting those who declared salvation by the righteousness of Christ. For a long and dreary period the stillness of Death reigned throughout the Establishment, for there was no blessing in lifeless Forms and Ceremonies. And when the Truth was revived, was it through her Articles, or was it not that the Spirit of God was poured out, proving that it was the *Spirit alone* which could work? Every day's experience exemplifies this. If there is a godly man who gives his whole soul

to the work of the ministry, good is more or less effected through him, he is blessed there, as he would be blessed any where; if a false teacher or idle shepherd, the forms are but the shelter for formality and worldliness. Nor have these devices produced the slightest approximation to the conformity which they profess to aim at. All indeed subscribe to them, but no where is there more discordance or division than within the walls of the Establishment. Every variety and shade of doctrine is preached by those who profess to "speak the same thing." Thus within herself, and this of necessity, she is full of Schism, in the true sense of the word, whilst according to the shewing of many of her spiritual members, nay by the testimony of the world itself, she comprehends in her ministry a vast majority of those who are Christians but in Name.

2nd.—She is guilty of Schism in her requirements for her Ministers. The principle of the Christian ministry was, "as every man hath received the gift (*χαρισμα*; see 1 Cor. xii.) even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet. iv. 10.) The Spirit of God, in the variety of His distributions, alone gave authority, and he "bloweth where he listeth," "dividing to every man severally as he will," without respect of persons. But the

practice of the Establishment, is a proof of the manner, in which the most direct and open violation of Scripture and rejection of the Spirit of God, is received without questioning, because it has been ordered and settled by those who have had authority in the World. If it were the rule of an insignificant sect, that none should be considered as competent to minister among them, but those who were found to have answered such qualifications as the following—to belong to a certain rank in society, to be possessed of means sufficient to go through a routine of expensive requirements, to be placed for several years immediately preceding their entering upon the ministry, in circumstances where they would be actually exposed to temptations more in number, and more perilous, than could be found in any other, and where the preparation for the sacred work in which they were to be engaged should consist almost entirely of Science and Profane Learning—such a system would be universally regarded as the result of the absurdest and narrowest Sectarianism. Yet this *on the whole*, is the unrebuked practice of the Establishment; the Ministry of which acts in two ways.—It is accredited as a profession for a Gentleman, and therefore occupied by the higher classes.—It is open to talent and learning, and many an one makes a gain of godliness by getting a step in

Society from being so accredited. Moreover the preparation for it is mainly Human Learning, acquired in circumstances, necessarily of a character the most unfavourable to Spirituality.\* And what is this but to assume that God hath given his Spirit, for the instruction of his people, to the Rich and Learned alone; and that, reversing the principles of the Dispensation, the mighty things of the world are now chosen to confound the weak, and the wise things of the world to confound the foolish. Surely such a system could not have been named in the days of the primitive Church. In truth it is an utter rejection of the Spirit of God; for whilst the ungifted, it may be, ungodly individual, who has answered these requisitions, is accredited hereafter as a Minister of Christ; the Spirit of God in Paul or Apollos would find no admission, unless it had passed through these purely human requirements. Is this indeed God's order for his Church,

\* Hear the confession of an able defender of the seats of ecclesiastical education, against claims which no honest man indeed can consistently justify. "Men complain of the temptations of the university—But these temptations are inseparable from the very condition of a system *intended to answer the purpose of a preparation and introduction to the world!*" If men are to be but citizens and servants of the world, this may be well; but what shall we say of such a preparation for those who are professedly set apart as ministers of Christ; stewards of the mysteries of God, successors of those whose character (and that of all his followers) is thus stated by their Great Master, "Not of the world, even as I am not of the World?"

or is it not, however sanctioned by numbers and authority, altogether schismatical, and a grieving of the Holy Ghost?

3rd.—She is guilty again of Schism, in excluding from the liberty of speaking and preaching all who are not in nominal office.\* Now, without entering into any question upon the nature of the offices mentioned in the Epistles, it does not appear that there is any warrant from Scripture for *so* confining the liberty of preaching; for though individuals might be set apart for the purpose of exercising the offices of Elder or Deacon, yet it by no means appears that the ministry of the Word was confined to them alone, any more than there was a necessity for its invariably forming a part of their own work. Of a Deacon's office it clearly was not an essential part. The Elders or Rulers are distinguished, as those who "laboured in the word and doctrine," and those who did not. But the testimony of the word proves that many preached the gospel without being set apart for it; † the gift being the only needful qualification. And in the only account given of a Church assembly, but given in that Epistle which is left to us as a model of ecclesiastical

\* See a paper on "Christian Liberty of Preaching and teaching the Lord Jesus Christ," in the second Number of the Christian Witness.

† See Acts viii. 4. xi. 19. xviii. 24—28.

order and usage, the line of distinction is drawn, not between ordained and unordained, but between men and women.\* In truth the Spirit's power, subject to the judgment of those who were themselves gifted, was the only title to speak. It is therefore the essence of Schism, a fresh hindering of the Spirit, to preclude the exercise of the gift of God, in those who have received authority from the supreme source, even Christ himself; and consequently either to quench the Spirit in those so precluded, or to drive them into what is called Schism; for as good stewards they cannot but exercise the grace of God which they have received. Yet the entire office of ministering, perhaps to many thousands, is frequently confined to one person, which is virtually to affirm that the whole of the Spirit's power, for edification, and the exercise of every function of Christ's Church, resides in the single individual thus authorized.†

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 34, &c.

† It may appear scarcely worth while to notice the notion of what is commonly called Apostolical succession, a Popish figment for securing the claim of the synagogue of Satan to hold authority over all Christians. As to the fiction of the transfer of the Holy Ghost through this succession which is assumed, *facts* are its best refutation. We say nothing of the source from which it is of necessity derived, though it might be well to refer to the Homilies "for Whitsunday," and "against Peril of Idolatry" for the opinion *once* expressed of the Popish Church. In truth it is nothing less than plain blasphemy (though not intentionally

4th.—And hence the ground of another charge of Schism. By confining the ministry to one individual, and by a fixed form of worship, entirely without warrant or precedent from the New Testament, the free manifestation of the Spirit is hindered in every assembly. Indeed the very purpose to which it serves, is to enable men to do without the Spirit of God. There may be an apparent order, pleasing to the natural mind, but this can present nought but confusion before Him who desires to be approached in Spirit and in Truth, and whose Spirit is sent forth into the hearts of His children to this end. But the presence of the Holy Ghost now, acting in others besides the minister, or in external gifts, would break up the entire system; a striking consideration to those who would extol merely human order. Yet so it is, the Ritual is irreconcilable with the supposition of the Spirit of God being present. It

so) to maintain the presence of the Holy Ghost throughout the foul corruptions of the Romish Hierarchy,—setting aside the circumstance that it does not appear from Scripture that any but the Apostles had the power of conferring it. They who look upon Christianity as something more than mere form, if any such hold this Doctrine, are entreated to remember that they are thereby constrained to acknowledge as the Church of God—the Mother of abominations, whom He never could have owned; and to reject that which was really the Church—God's witness, the poor remnant, persecuted and hunted down by her who had assumed the title and authority belonging only to the followers of the Lamb.

is remarkable, that in the only place where the word "schism" occurs in the authorized version, the Apostle is speaking of the interdependency of the members of the body, and their reciprocal communication of gifts exercised by all who had them, as being the means by which it is tempered together in order that this evil might be avoided—"that there should be no *schism* in the body." (1 Cor. xii.) It is perfectly true, that, in assemblies like the Church of England, the Lord's order could find no place—could not be exercised; for we should have the world assuming the place of teachers to the Church of God; but this does but prove the desperate state of things. Schism however it is affirmed by the Apostle to be, when the body is not thus tempered; and Schism is the result: the body of Christ is disunited and broken; and yet men triumph in the shew of so called Order, and Form, which is but a trophy of the exclusion of the insulted and grieved Spirit of God. The Establishment therefore is proved to be Schismatical;—

1st.—In offending the consciences of the weak, by assuming an unscriptural right of enforcing things not enjoined by the Lord.

2nd.—In imposing unscriptural requirements upon those who enter its ministry, and making these the test of their competency to be ministers of Christ.

3rd.—In exclusively setting up its own ordination as the sole title for preaching and teaching, nay, for addressing in prayer the One God and Father of all.

4th.—In services unwarranted by Scripture, and which directly shut out the order of the Church of God.—In each and all of these particulars, and others connected with them (for into the practical results we need not enter) is seen, most deeply marked, the sin of this dispensation, the rejection of the Holy Ghost. And thus, continuance in her Communion not only identifies an individual with Apostasy, but involves him in the guilt of Schism in the Church of God.

Such being the character of the Church of England, she has, of necessity, become herself the fruitful source of all the innumerable divisions, into which those who profess the name of Christ are separated; for God could not maintain the entireness of a system which presents so little of the features of his Church. But in the view of these results there is nothing for a Christian mind to glory, for by one who has in any measure entered in Spirit into the once beautiful unity of God's children, the present state of things can be looked upon only with feelings of the deepest shame and humiliation. No return to the principle of Christ's Church is to be seen. Christian assemblies of old

met for edification, communion, and mutual exhortation—but each sect now sets up an individual, and, comes to be preached to by him—surely the fulfilment of the Apostolic prediction, “they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” a state of things which has grown worse and worse.

—Ecclesiastical democracies. Ministers, *so called by the people*, as in many cases to be inevitably controlled by them to such a degree, that if they preached the convictions of their souls they would be left destitute. But I must hasten to a conclusion.

Of the modern Dissenting bodies it may be said, that their systems are on the whole more Scriptural than the Church of England, but their practice worse. It is clear also that (speaking of them as a body) the fact which gives the character of Apostasy to the Establishment (Union with the world,) stamps the same features upon Modern Dissent; and in a form more fearful, because, with infinitely less of Spirituality among individuals, it is more connected with the irreligion and ungodliness of popular feeling. But, passing by all the painful circumstances which in these days have changed the descendants of Howe, Baxter, and Owen into a political body, let us return to the question before us. The Nonconformists were not Schismatical in the point of their separation from the Establishment, it being in general upon just

and Christian grounds, though the secession was, for the most part, upon certain subjects of difference, of deep import indeed, but by no means comprehending the length and breadth of her actual dereliction from the true standing of the Church of Christ. But the character of Schism has been acquired by the nature of the unions subsequently formed. The principles upon which the different Churches have been respectively gathered, have never been such as would comprehend all the children of God upon the great essentials of Christian belief; but some special point has been made the ensign of each party, and they who have gathered round it, have proved their preference of the object in question, to the general unity of God's people. In truth they are now united, not simply as children of God, but upon the particular sections of Christian Doctrine, which give the names to their several divisions.

Is Christ then divided? Was it as Baptists, Independents, or Quakers, that the Churches were originally united, when in union they bore a witness to the world? Surely there is little conformity in these things to the mind of Him, who has given one simple mark by which His followers were to be recognized, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."

They have greatly sinned also, in requiring from

their members, assent to terms of communion which the Lord never enjoined, thus shutting out many of the weaker brethren, and by raising things of secondary consequence into the same virtual importance with faith in the Atoning blood of the Lamb, each of which has been a stumbling block. The case is not altered in the circumstance of individual congregations professing to admit others beside themselves to their communion, since the real question is, whether they themselves are united solely upon the ground of being Christians—for nothing short of this is a full recognition of the principle of Christian unity; and the point to be pressed again and again, is whether believers are joined simply as members of the body of Christ. Nor can *they* escape the charge of rending that body, who place the slightest hindrance to Christians thus meeting together; and these bonds of union are all hindrances.

All the devices of man, while he has been exulting in fancied strength, have only shewn his helplessness and folly. “But the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” The Lord who knoweth whereof we are made, and the tendency of the natural mind to make every point a subject of difference among brethren, has left the Cross alone as the centre of union amongst his people; the one thing in which all true believers are agreed; and

made that, which alone will make them One hereafter, the means of their union here. Where other or additional bonds are found, *there* is the spirit of Sectarianism, there is Schism *in act*, for the inevitable effect is to sever from each other those for whom Christ died. Again I ask was it not thus that Christians once met? Therefore if there were now but two individuals who met only in the Name of their common Lord, these would be acting in obedience to the command to keep "the unity of the Spirit," while the whole multitude who were gathered together, because called by this or that Name—because they had assented to this Creed or that Confession—would be the causers of division, and be acting in disobedience; for it is evident that the question is not decided by numbers or accredited authority in the world—the principle alone must be kept in view.

To act on any other principle, is but to add another to the hundred sects which are around; and better, far better would it be with the Prophet "to sit alone" (Jer. xv.) than to exhibit that, which, keeping the word of promise to the ear, is but a mockery of the desires of those who seek Christian communion. A gathering of Believers should be nothing less than an available point for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;

and when it ceases to be this, it ceases to have any value as a witness for Christian unity.

I have written plainly, it might be thought harshly, on these matters; but if they are true it cannot be possible to speak too strongly upon a state of things which must be most grievous to the Spirit of God. It is indeed a dark sign of the state of the Church, when we hear of vindications and apologies for non-continuance in union with any thing which is contrary to God; but, if a judgment may be formed from the aspect of the times, a period is rapidly approaching when every conceivable degree of iniquity will be tolerated to enforce an external union, and all godly turning away from it denounced as Schism.\* The consciences of many are becoming gradually seared, so that they are driven for consistency's sake to,

\* To speak of a retrogradation to the principles of Popery would be treated with ridicule by many. But there is more than meets the eye in the manner in which a variety of circumstances are now operating to produce a remarkable drawing towards it. Witness the respect evinced towards it by many who now regard it as the source from which their own spiritual authority is derived; the tone of conciliation lately assumed by some of the magazines attached to the Establishment; the present attempts to procure outward unity in the Church of England, which if followed out, must tend to identify the National Church with Popery, for the reason that Popery is the only consistent outward unity which includes the World. A similar approximation, though perhaps on different principles, is stated to be taking place in Germany between the Popish and Protestant communions.

vindicate many abominations in doctrine and practice, which were at one time a grief of mind to them ; and not content with continuing in it themselves, they would hinder others from denying ungodliness. It is therefore the part of Christian love in all who know these things, if they seek the welfare of the brethren, not to withhold their protest against the overflowing evil, especially when the inconceivably rapid progress of false principles is considered, and the manner in which in the present day *misapplied Truth* is made an effectual engine in the hands of Satan, to confirm multitudes, even of God's children, in sanctioning iniquity. May they be warned in season.

In the meanwhile those who desire simply to act as disciples, have a path before them in which they cannot err. There can be no pleasure in speaking of iniquity ; the present broken and disordered state of the Church of God is the common shame of all his people. Nothing but sorrow and abasement of heart becomes them, and the more they have of his Spirit, the more will this be their feeling, "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation ; our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." But for the sake of others, faithfulness in testimony is required. To look for a restoration of that symmetry which has been so

entirely destroyed, for the return of that Spirit which alone sustained it in power, would be a vain hope. But Believers may still walk in obedience to such measure of the Spirit as they have, always indeed seeking increased grace, and endeavouring to exemplify every principle of Christian doctrine. The Word still remains "These things I command you that ye love one another;" and they who are sanctified by the same precious blood, may meet in the common hope of the same Kingdom of Glory. The power of the Spirit wheresoever it is found, if not hindered, will draw together those who seek Communion. Satan will indeed endeavour to seduce them by the spirit of self-will and insubjection, (and this is the very spirit of Antichrist) but God is faithful—and the knowledge of real weakness is strength, when it brings his children into more simple dependence upon his unchanging Love.

## ELDER AND BISHOP THE SAME OFFICE.

EXTRACT FROM DWIGHT.

I.—“THE Elders which are among you, I exhort; who am also an Elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory which 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; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.)

The Elders are exhorted to feed (*ποιμαινω* i. e. to teach, edify, and rule the flock of God; they are also directed ‘to oversee it,’—the word *επισκοπουντες* is exactly rendered ‘overseeing’ or exercising the office of an overseer or bishop.”

II.—“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the ELDERS of the Church. A part of the directions which he gave to these Elders, is recited thus, ‘Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, *επισκοπους* to feed the Church of God which He hath

purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx. 17—28.)  
 "From which two verses it appears 1st—that in Ephesus there were several Elders of the Church: 2nd—that all these Elders were Bishops: 3rd—that the Holy Ghost constituted or made, these several Elders, Bishops: The original is εἰς αὐτοὺς constituted."

4th—"That in Ephesus all the Elders of the Church were Bishops: 5th—that therefore, there was no one Bishop of superior authority, or holding an office or character which distinguished him from other Bishops in that city: 6th—that Timothy could not be the sole Bishop or Diocesan of the Church in that city, because other men were Bishops in that Church."\*

\* It is said that Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete; and that as such, Paul directed them to ordain Elders or Presbyters in the Churches of Ephesus and in Crete. But it cannot be proved that they were Bishops of these places in any sense, much less in the *diocesan* sense, for the Scriptures say this in no place and in no manner whatever. They were simply fellow-helpers of the Apostle Paul, and delegates to supply his own personal presence where required, and quite as much so in other Churches as in Ephesus and Crete. It is certain that Timothy was an *Evangelist*, i. e. an *itinerant* minister; and therefore not a diocesan Bishop, for St. Paul directs him to do the work of an Evangelist, (2 Tim. iv. 5.) and directs him to come to him at Rome. (2 Tim. iv. 9.) Indeed by simply tracing out the history of Timothy in the New Testament, it will be sufficiently clear, that one who remained so little stationary, could not have had the office ascribed to him. When the business for which he had been left at Ephesus was finished, he returned to St. Paul again. What is true of Timothy, is equally true of Titus, he also resided in Crete but a short time before he returned to Paul at Nicopolis; and was not, so far as appears, ever settled in Crete at all, certainly not at the time specified in the Epistle. And except from the Epistle, there is nothing known about the subject. It need scarcely be added that the dates at the end of some of the Epistles were not written by the Apostles.

“ The Elders to whom St. Peter wrote, were all who dwelt in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia Proper, and Bithynia ; provinces constituting more than two-thirds of the Lesser Asia ; at that time full of Churches and Christians. *All the Elders of these Churches, he exhorts to exercise the office of a Bishop in the Church.*”

“ All the Elders in Ephesus, the chief city in the same country, St. Paul declares to be ‘ constituted Bishops by the *Holy Ghost.*’ Both Apostles speak the same language to the same persons, language which has obviously but one meaning,”

III.—“ Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons.” (Phil. i.)

“ Here the saints with the Bishops and Deacons, are expressly mentioned, but nothing is said of there being Elders in this Church *distinct* from the Bishops. Had the Epistle been addressed to Bishops, Elders, and Deacons, it would have been thought, by an advocate for Prelatical Episcopacy, absolutely decisive in favour of *three orders of ecclesiastical officers.* As it now stands, and as it is uncontradicted, by any other passage of Scripture, I think it is equally decisive that there were but *two.* The same passage proves that there was not at Philippi, a single Bishop presiding over a number of subordinate ministers ; nor is there any reason to conclude that this Church was in this respect differently constituted from other Churches.”

IV.—“No mention is made of Bishops by way of address (except the text just quoted from Phil. i.) or direction, or salutation.”

“The word *ἐπισκοπος* (Bishop or Overseer) occurs in the New Testament five times; once it is applied to Christ, (1 Pet. ii. 25.) and four times denotes officers in the Church. The word *ἐπισκοπή* is once used to denote *the office of an overseer or Bishop*; (1 Tim. iii. 1.) in two instances to denote *visitation*; (Luke xix. 44. and 1 Pet. ii. 12.) and once is quoted from Psalm cix. 8. to denote, by way of accommodation, the *employment of Judas as an Apostle*. *Ἐπισκοπεῖν* to oversee, or exercise the office of an overseer or Bishop, is used once with that meaning, (1 Pet. v. 2.) and once (Heb. xii. 15.) where it is exactly translated ‘looking diligently.’ In all the *addresses* of their several letters by the Apostles to each of the Churches, there is not, except in that, first mentioned, a single allusion to Bishops as a *peculiar* order of men. In the numerous *salutations* with which the Epistles are concluded, and in the several *directions* given to the Churches, there is not the least mention made, nor the least hint given concerning this class of officers.”

“The passages concerning ruling the Church, are the following.”—

“A Bishop must be one that ruleth well in his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?” (1 Tim. iii. 2—4, 5.)

“ Let the Elders who rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour ; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

“ He that ruleth, is required to do this duty ‘ with diligence.’ (Rom. xii. 8.) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of life. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.” (Hebrews xiii. 7—17—24.)

“ From these passages it appears, 1st.—that ruling is as extensively ascribed to Elders as to Bishops ; 2nd,—that the rule over the Churches was committed to many hands.”

V.—“ Another proof is drawn from the fact, that wherever the officers of the Church are mentioned together, no more than two classes are ever mentioned.”

“ In 1 Tim. iii. Paul instructs him at large in the qualifications of ecclesiastical officers, and more fully than we find done in any other part of the Scriptures. But even here we find no other officers mentioned besides the *ἐπισκοπος* Bishop, or overseer, and the *διάκονος* Deacon. Had there been an intermediate office distinguished both from the Bishop and the Deacon, and known by the name of *Elder*, it is strange that it should not be mentioned here.”

“ The account given in Acts xv. of the first council at Jerusalem, proves also that there was no one vested

with modern episcopal authority, or who took upon him the supreme rule, in that Church. 'The Apostles and Elders came together to consider this matter,' the decision is returned in the 'name of the Apostles, and Elders, and brethren.' 'It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us.'\* In this assembly there was no Bishop in the modern sense; James, whatever was the fact afterwards, was not now such a Bishop. The letter does not go in his name, nor with any authority whatever attributed to him, except as an Apostle, and as a member of that deliberative body; and in neither character any farther, than that he had one voice in the decision of that assembly. And neither at Jerusalem, nor in the Church at Antioch, nor in those of Syria and Cilicia, is there any evidence that such Bishops were established. The *brethren* of the Church at Antioch sent the messengers, the letter was *addressed to the brethren* of the Churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. Thus I think it clear that there was not a single such Bishop in the Christian Church at this period."

"The same truth is illustrated from the manner in which ministers are spoken of in Titus i. 5—7, where the reason given by St. Paul, why Titus should constitute *Elders* in every city, who should be blameless, is that a *Bishop* must be blameless."

"I have now mentioned every passage in Scripture

\* It is worthy of observation, that the consultation appears to have been in the hands of the *Apostles* and *Elders* only, the answer is then given as the opinion of the *whole* Church; and in this, as in all their assemblies, the Holy Ghost alone presided.

where Bishops are even glanced at, or the existence of such an order of ministers, distinguished from Elders, as countenanced even in the opinion of its advocates. If the distinction between Bishops and Elders can be found in the language of Scripture, it is found here. But here no distinction of this nature can be found." *Dwight's Theology*. cl. cli.

Dwight next brings forward a number of acknowledgements from different supporters of Episcopacy, that this distinction is not capable of proof from the Scriptures; of which one will suffice.—In a celebrated work called the "Institution of a Christian man," (approved expressly by Archbishop Cranmer, Bishops Jewell, Willer, and Stillingfleet, and the main body of the English Clergy, together with the King and Parliament,) is this declaration,—“In the New Testament there is no other mention of any other degrees, but of Deacons or Ministers, and of Presbyters or Bishops.”

We have made the preceding extracts, as giving, in a compendious manner, the evidence of Scripture upon the subject; and where the Scriptures alone, and not secondary or doubtful sources are relied upon, perhaps nothing more is needed to determine the question. The subsequent quotation also from one of the most early Protestant manuals in this country, alone sufficiently proves what were the original opinions of the English Reformers. The notion that subsequently arose in the Establishment, is further contradicted by two facts supplied by itself.—

1st.—That “the Reformers admitted the ordination of foreign Churches by mere Presbyters, till towards the middle of the reign of Elizabeth, when their validity began to be disputed and denied.” (Neale.)

2nd.—The assumption is further disproved by the fact, that not even now has a Bishop alone power to ordain, but Presbyters are obliged to be joined with him in the exercise of the function.

The sentiments of the Reformers, however, are but little inquired into by many who avail themselves of the support afforded by their names. It may be well to add a few extracts from Dr. M'Crie's collection of their real opinions on ecclesiastical subjects.\*

Cranmer expressed his opinion formally in writing, that, “the Bishops and Priests were at one time, and were no two things, but both *one office*, in the beginning of Christ's religion.” Thirteen Bishops, with a great number of other Ecclesiastics, subscribed this proposition “that in the New Testament, there is no mention of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only Deacons or Ministers, and of Priests or Bishops.” Cranmer says, “in the New Testament, he that is appointed a Bishop or Priest needeth not consecration by the Scripture; for election or appointment thereto, is sufficient;” and of the same judgment was the Bishop of St. David's. Latimer and Hooper maintained the identity of Bishops and Presbyters by divine institution, this also was the opinion of Pilkington, Bishop of Dur-

\* See Ryland's Church Reform.

ham. Bishop Jewell assents to it in his answer to Harding. Cranmer expressed himself strongly respecting the "glorious titles, styles, and pomps which were come into the Church, through the working of the spirit of Diotrephes;" and professed his readiness to lay them aside. In fact, the title of *Bishop* was very generally disused in common speech during the reign of Edward VI. and that of *superintendent* substituted in its place, and this change of language was vindicated by Ponet, Bishop of Winchester, in an answer which he published to a Popish writer. All the protestant Bishops and Divines in the reign of Edward VI. were anxious for the introduction of ecclesiastical discipline. Dr. Cox, (Oct. 5, 1552,) complains bitterly of the opposition of the courtiers to this measure, and says that if it was not adopted, "the kingdom of God would be taken away from them." When Grindal was appointed to the Bishoprick of London, he "remained under scruples of conscience about some things, especially the habits and certain ceremonies required to be used by such as were Bishops." For the reformed, says Strype, "generally went upon the ground, that, in order to the complete freeing of the Church of Christ from the errors and corruptions of Rome, every usage and custom practised by that apostate and idolatrous Church, should be abolished, and that the service of God should be more simple, stript of all that show, pomp, and appearance that had been customarily and before, esteeming all that to be no better than super-

siftious and Antichristian." Jewell writes to Martyr, that he "wished the very slightest footsteps of Popery might be removed out of the Church and minds of men; but the Queen would at that time suffer no change in religion." Grindal and Horn wrote to Zurich, that they did not approve of, but merely *suffered* kneeling in the Eucharist, and signing with the cross in baptism, with some other ceremonies, hoping that they would speedily obtain their abrogation. In the year 1562, the abrogation of the most offensive ceremonies, was, after long reasoning, put to the vote in the convocation, and carried by a majority of those present. But when the proxies were included, there was found a majority of one for retaining them. The arguments of Archbishop Parker's chaplains, to prevail upon the house to agree to this, derived their chief force from their being understood to be the sentiments of the Queen. Peter Martyr gave it as his opinion, that the "innumerable corruptions, infinite abuses, and immense superstition, could be reformed only by a simple recurrence to the pure fountain, and unadulterated original principles." And the prudential advice, that as few changes as possible should be made, he called "a device of Satan to render the regress of Popery more easy." Gaultier in a letter dated January 16, 1550, says, that such advices, though "according to a carnal judgment, full of modesty, and apparently conducive to the maintenance of concord," were to be ascribed to "the public enemy of man's salvation;" and he prophetically warns those, who suffered such

abuses to remain and strengthen themselves in England, that "afterwards they would scarcely be able to eradicate them by all their efforts and struggles."

Such are the recorded opinions of the Reformers. Why their own views were not carried into effect, is too easily explained. The Reformation instead of being conducted solely by disciples of Christ, and amongst His followers, fell into the hands of those who had to reconcile their own political purposes with the changes wrought in matters of religion; and beyond *their* will, those who desired better things could not go, however clear and scriptural their own principles might have been.

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## THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

THE preceding Extracts on the identity of the offices of Bishop and Elder, have been made in consequence of the importance which this question is beginning to assume, from the high authority which is again being claimed for the Episcopal office; and in order also that the language of Scripture may be placed in contrast with the passages from the Apostolical Fathers which will now be given. The Scriptural evidence upon the subject is perfectly simple and uncomplicated, and

clearly proves that the assumption of a third order above that of Elders, was made subsequently to the original order settled by the Apostles. They themselves were of an order peculiar and incommunicable. Their gifts were peculiar; (1 Cor. xii. 28.) their "signs" were peculiar: (2 Cor. xii. 12.) and they derived their authority only by the direct appointment of the Lord Himself, or the express revelation of the Spirit, as in the case of Barnabas; and it appears also to have been needful that they should have seen the Lord, in order to be witnesses to His resurrection.\* (see Acts i. and 1 Cor. ix. 1.) But since it is extensively affirmed that they transmitted their own peculiar

\* The distinctness of the Apostolic office is manifest from abundance of passages. They were inspired, in order that they might be legislators to the Church, but the power of legislation has not been continued since. An Apostle only could say "If any man among you seemeth to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him confess that the things which we write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

The word Apostle simply means a person sent; and in this general way it is sometimes used, as "He that is sent is not greater than He that sent Him." St. Paul also, in uniting Sylvanus and Timothy with himself, in writing to the Thessalonians, included them all under the name Apostles, in the 2nd chap. ver. 6, because, in their joint mission, Sylvanus and Timothy were practically invested with the authority of him whom they accompanied. It is clear that they were not Apostles in the official sense. But men soon began to lay claim to Apostolical authority.—"Thou hast tried them who said they were Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

office to others, that an individual as their representative was appointed to take the supreme charge of ecclesiastical affairs in each Church, and that Timothy and Titus were thus appointed to Ephesus and Crete, the reader is referred to the Note, (Page 131) where it is shown that they were simply fellow-helpers of the Apostle Paul in the several parts through which he travelled, without any special designation to a particular and limited district. This will more plainly appear from the following passages.—

(Acts xix. 22) “So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus.

(1 Cor. iv. 17.) “I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, &c. who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every Church.”

(1 Cor. xvi. 10.) “Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord as also I do.”

(2 Cor. i. 19.) “The Son of God Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus.”

(Phil. ii. 19.) “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you.”

(1 Thess. iii. 2.) “We sent Timotheus our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow la-

bourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and to comfort you,"

(2 Tim. iv. 5.) "Do the work of an **EVANGELIST**. —Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." (at Rome)

(Heb. xiii. 23.) "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."

2 Cor. ii. 13.) "When I came to Troas," "I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother."

(2 Cor. vii. 6.) "God comforted us by the coming of Titus."

(2 Cor. viii. 6.) "We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also."

(2 Cor. viii. 16.) "Thanks be to God who hath put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you."

(Gal. ii. 1.) "I went up again to Jerusalem and took Titus with me." (2 Tim. iv. 10.) "Titus is departed to Dalmatia."

Thus, then, neither Timothy nor Titus received any particular charge, but were commissioned as need required, to the different Churches, without being permanently stationary in any place. The argument therefore which is brought forward to support the pretensions of modern Episcopacy, by

asserting Timothy and Titus to be the precursors of Diocesan Bishops, is not supported by Scripture. And, as it has been before shewn that in all the different passages of Scripture, where Bishops or Elders are spoken of, the titles are indiscriminately used, (a fact allowed by many even of the supporters of Episcopal claims) the distinction, if persisted in, must be grounded upon other evidence than that of the New Testament. Accordingly we find in the present day, much use beginning again to be made of the Apostolical Fathers; an authority which would have less weight with many, if their writings were more generally known. They are triumphantly quoted by the defenders of the present state of things, in the Christian Church; and those who have not enquired beyond the passages which they may have incidentally seen, are not unfrequently disposed to attach more than usual importance to the testimony of the immediate successors of the Apostles, who are supposed to have drank immediately from the streams of the instruction of God's spirit through them. But how is the reader surprised, not only at the grievous lack of spiritual power, but the puerilities, and in some cases, inconceivable absurdities which are to be met with in these writings. It seems as if God had stamped at once the difference between His own Word, and the productions of weak and erring

man, by shewing us immediately the deficiency of that which His own Spirit did not dictate, even in the works of those who lived immediately after, or even within the times of the Apostles. Far less of edification indeed is to be derived from them, than from many of the Fathers of much later date. It has been truly said "Primitive Christianity discovers its character only in the Scriptures of the New Testament, for no sooner do we sink into the writings of what are called the Apostolical Fathers, than we begin to feel the poverty of uninspired theology, and the early efforts of the secondary Church to gain an undue and worldly authority." It is remarkable indeed to observe from the following passages, how soon, in default of the real moral power possessed by the Apostles, the tone of assumption and claim of prescribed reverence arose in the Church. The passages are given, because it is on these that the maintainers of Episcopal Succession lay the principal stress of their arguments, whenever doubts are raised respecting the validity of their assertions that the distinction between Bishop and Elder is actually to be found in Scripture, and that Timothy and Titus were such Bishops. The comparison of the extracts with the Scriptures, may be safely left to all, who look upon the word of God alone, to be in itself the ultimate and sufficient standard of decision.

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*Ignatius to the Ephesians.* IV.—“ For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is sent by the will of the Father, as the Bishops appointed to the utmost bounds of the earth, are by the will of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it will become you to run together according to the will of your Bishop, as also ye do. For your famous Presbytery (worthy of God) is fitted as exactly to the Bishop as the strings are to the harp.”

VI.—“ It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the Bishop even as we would do upon the Lord himself.”

*To the Magnes.* VI.—“ Your Bishop presiding in the place of God; your Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles; and your Deacons being intrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, &c.”

VII.—“ As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, &c. so neither do ye any thing without your Bishop and Presbyters.”

XIII.—“ Be subject to your Bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father according to the flesh; and the Apostles, both to Christ and to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost.”

*To the Trall.* “ Let all reverence the Deacons as Jesus Christ; and the Bishop as the Father; and the Presbyters as the Sanherdrim of God and College of the Apostles.—Without these there is no Church.”

*To the Rom.* “ Ye may give thanks to the Father through Jesus Christ, that He has vouchsafed to bring a Bishop of Syria, (Ignatius) unto you, being called from the East unto the West.”

*To the Philad.* “ I cried whilst I was among you, I spake with a loud voice ;—Attend to the Bishop, and to the Presbytery, and to the Deacons. He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, and I knew nothing from any man ; but the Spirit spake, saying on this wise, do nothing without the Bishop.”

*To the Smyrn.* “ See that ye all follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father, and the Presbyters as the Apostles ; and reverence the Deacons as the command of God.—Let that Eucharist be looked upon as well established, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by him to whom the Bishop has given his consent. It is not lawful without the Bishop, neither to baptize, nor to celebrate the Holy Communion.”

Such is the character of the testimony, on which (in opposition it may be affirmed to all the witness of Scripture itself) is grounded the main support which the question is considered to receive from the Apostolical Fathers ; for the appeal is principally made to the Epistles of Ignatius ; and it is remarkable that the tone of authority assumed in the passages above quoted, is not at all to be found in any of the other Fathers of the same date. Indeed it is remarkable that Clement, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, clearly supports the Scriptural view that there were only two offices in the Church ;—“ The Apostles appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be *Bishops* and *Minis-*

ters over such as should afterward believe, having first proved them by the Spirit. Nor was this any thing; seeing that long before, it was written concerning *Bishops and Deacons*. For thus saith the Scripture, in a certain place, ‘I will appoint their Overseers in righteousness and their Ministers in faith.’ We need not stop here to notice Mosheim’s opinion of the writings of Ignatius—that he esteems “the authenticity of the Epistle to Polycarp to be extremely dubious;” and declares “the question concerning all his Epistles to labour under much obscurity, and to be embarrassed with many difficulties:” \* for, granting them all required credit, it needs only to place them by the side of the Holy Scriptures to be convinced of the entire difference of the state of things therein upheld, with that which appears in the writings of the Apostles themselves; and we are constrained to refer to the Bible alone as the sole arbitrator of this and every other question concerning Christ’s order for His Church. It is one of the sad proofs how soon the Spirit of the Apostles passed away from the Church after their decease, and at what an early period the way was prepared for receiving human authority in the place of the government of

\* Mosheim says “In the first century the rulers of the Church were called either Presbyters or Bishops, which two titles are, in the New Testament, undoubtedly applied to the same order of men.”

the Spirit, by which the seeds of the general declension, which so soon defaced the Church's true and spiritual glory, were sown too effectually ever to be extirpated. Thus much is evident upon the face of the argument, that the government of the Churches, in the days of the Apostles themselves, was under the care of several Bishops in each; as in the case of the Church at Ephesus before-mentioned,\* and that they were appointed Bishops by

\* The order and regulations of all the Churches were essentially the same. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved Son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, AS I TEACH EVERY WHERE IN EVERY CHURCH." (1 Cor. iv. 17.) The order therefore which existed at Ephesus may be presumed to be the one generally established. It may be added, by way of comment, on the extract above mentioned from Ignatius's Epistle to the Smyrnæans, that at the first gathering of the Christians in each place, the Apostles did not appoint Elders for some time after; (Acts xiv. 21—23.) yet it is evident that the ordinances of Christ were not neglected during the interval, but that the Churches "continued in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." A clear proof that the notion of consecrating the elements, or of the absolute necessity of an ordained minister to dispense them, was then unknown, and that Christians then, as ever, possessed the privilege of breaking bread together. The Passover among the Jews required no Priest to give it validity by dispensing it; the Lord's supper had likewise nothing in it which was necessarily connected with an Apostle or Elder for its efficacy. Indeed it is remarkable that the Corinthian Church, which was particularly praised for observing the ordinances delivered by the Apostle, appears to have had no Elders at the time of his writing to them, nor is there Scriptural evidence, that there was any thing in the

the Holy Ghost.—This was therefore the Lord's own ordering. But if a change was subsequently introduced, it was a change of a Divine institution, not to be sanctioned even by the authority of the Apostolical Fathers themselves.

The following citations from the Fathers, (quoted by Dwight) will shew how conflicting and uncertain all the testimony posterior to that of Scripture has ever been.

Jerome says that "A Presbyter is the same as the Bishop; and that originally the Churches were governed by the joint council of the Presbyters." Again, "Let the Bishops know that they are greater than Presbyters, *rather by custom, than by the real appointment of the Lord.*"

And again, "Among the Ancients, Presbyters and Bishops were the same."

Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, says "that in two ordinances of Christ which made the "administration" of them the peculiar office of an Elder. But these simple commands of the Lord for his people's blessing were soon regarded as "mysteries," and then by the perversion of a text of Scripture which has no such meaning whatever, and which does not apply to Baptism or to the Lord's supper, to be "stewards" of these mysteries was naturally considered to belong of necessity to one peculiar order, who were soon exalted into a "Priesthood," whilst the elements became the "Sacrifice." The Church of England retains the one, though not the other, and hence a fair opening for the ridicule of her Papal competitors. "You have Priests without a Victim, and altars without a Sacrifice." (See Miller's end of Controversy.)

Elders is vested the power of baptizing, imposition of hands, and ordinations."

Hilary says "the Presbyters were at first called Bishops."

Theodoret says "Of old, they called the same men both Bishops and Presbyters."

Not to omit any part of Scripture whence proofs of Episcopacy are supposed to be derived, the argument sometimes drawn from Rev. ii. and iii. may be noticed. But it would be difficult to prove, that the angels therein addressed, mean an individual minister in each, superior to the rest. The addresses are applicable not to an individual, but to a collective body, as is manifest from their whole character: and it is observable that "in the first four of them, the singular pronoun *thou* is changed into the plural *you*, while the same person is still addressed. Thus Christ says to the angel of the Church in Thyatira, "but unto you I say (*υμιν δε λεγω*) and unto the rest in Thyatira." The *αγγελοι* have been explained to denote either the ministering Spirits employed in the invisible government of these Churches, or their visible governors as a whole who presided over them. But, however this may be, on a foundation so uncertain, nothing can be rested for the confirmation of a question like the present.

A few extracts are added from the Epistles of

the Fathers, with the view of showing how little trust is to be placed in names of note or antiquity; although Archbishop Wake in his preliminary discourse concludes, "that they were not only not mistaken in what they deliver to us as the gospel of Christ, but in all the necessary parts of it were so assisted by the Holy Ghost, as hardly to have been capable of being mistaken in it."

*St. Clement. 1 Ep. to the Cor. xxv.* "Let us consider that wonderful type of the resurrection, which is seen in the eastern countries; that is to say in Arabia. There is a certain bird called the Phoenix; of this there is never but one at a time, and that lives five hundred years; and when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh, and other spices, into which when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But its flesh putrifying, breeds a certain worm, which being nourished with the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers; and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which the bones of its parent lie, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt, to a city called Heliopolis; and flying in open day, in sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the sun; and so returns from whence it came. The priests then search into the records of the time, and find that it returned precisely at the end of five hundred years."

*Ignatius to the Eph. viii.* "My soul be for yours, and myself the expiatory offering for your Church of

Ephesus, so famous throughout the world." xviii. Jesus Christ was born and baptized, that through His passion He might purify water to the washing away of sin."

*Catholic Epistle of Barnabas ix.* "Abraham who was the first that brought in circumcision, looking forward in the Spirit to Jesus, circumcised, having received the mystery of three letters. For the Scripture says, that Abraham "circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house." But what, therefore, was the mystery that was made known unto him? Mark, first the eighteen, and next the three hundred. For the numeral letters of ten and eight are I. H. and these denote Jesus; and because the cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds three hundred, the note of which is T. [the figure of his cross.] Wherefore by two letters, he signified Jesus; and by the third his cross. He who put the engrafted gift of His doctrine within us, knows that I never taught to any one a more certain truth, but I trust ye are worthy of it."

From the Shepherd of Hermas, it is difficult to quote, on account of the incredible absurdities of which it is composed, and it is with much reluctance that the following passages are added.

Com. vi. 3. "There are two angels with man, one of righteousness, the other of iniquity. And I said to him, "Sir, how shall I know that there are two such angels with man?" "Hear," says he, "and understand; The angel of righteousness is mild, and modest, and gentle, and quiet; when, therefore, he gets into the

heart, immediately he talks with thee of righteousness, of modesty, of charity, of bountifulness, of forgiveness, of charity and piety. When all these things come into the heart, know then that the angel of righteousness is with thee, Wherefore hearken to this angel and to his works, &c."

Com. xi. 2. "When therefore a man who hath the Spirit of God, shall come into the Church of the righteous, who hath the faith of God, and they pray unto the Lord, then the *holy angel of God fills that man* with the blessed Spirit, and he speaks in the congregation as he is moved of God."

Simil. ix. 28. "As to the eleventh mountain, in which were trees loaded with several sorts of fruit, they are such as have believed and suffered death, for the name of the Lord, and have endured with a ready mind, and have given up their lives with all their hearts." And I said, "why then, Sir, have all these fruit indeed, but yet some fairer than others?" "Hearken," said he, "whosoever have suffered for the name of the Lord, are esteemed honourable by the Lord; *and all their offences are blotted out because they have suffered death for the name of the Son of God.*"

It is needless to multiply quotations. We have shewn that the testimony of the Scripture is plain as to the existence of two and only two offices in the permanent arrangements of the Church: but the Fathers recognize another office and labour, and invest it with the full authority of Christ.—The

value of their testimony may be estimated from the extracts that have been given, which do indeed prove their writings to have been emphatically the word of Man.

But the time is come when we have to make our choice between the word of Man, and the word of the living God.—The Papal system has made its choice and is practically consistent therewith. How many will be retaken in its tempting snare, is known only to Him who seeth the end from the beginning. The two master principles of men's minds, Dominion and Insubjection, are working in great energy, and they will bring to pass the strange exhibition of the latter day. All who are giving way to their lust for authoritative rule will cling to the seducing doctrines of Apostolical authority, whilst those who lust for liberty in the flesh, will take the opposite of political dissent.

But the flock of Christ shall not perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand. They will be taught the value of His plain and simple Word, and they shall be kept from that hour of temptation which is coming to try all the dwellers upon earth. Blessed are they who keep HIS commandments.

## ON CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

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ONE principal purpose which the Lord had in view, by continuing for a season in their present state the people who should be gathered together in one, through His death, was that a practical witness of the character of God might be given to the world; and this in the joint testimony of those, who by one Spirit were united together; and who, though not indeed taken out of the world, were to be delivered from the evil of it. Such was the Church, whilst continuing in holy separateness; it was a living warning to all around—"of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." But where is that witness now? A long and dreary period has passed away since the Church stood as a burning and a shining light; and the very name of Christian was sufficient to brand its possessor as an enemy of the world: its failure is continually and painfully exhibited in the overwhelming mass of nominal profession, which now assumes its place, and the perplexity and inconsistency which tarnish the walk of many a child of God in the present day.

But though as a collective body the Church has lost the place of witness, still is each believer a temple of the Holy Ghost; and as such, *answerable for being led by the Spirit* in all the circumstances in which he may be placed. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God THEY are the sons of God." One thing is clear, that with the world the Spirit of Christ can have no connexion; for it must ever lead from the world to God. As professing therefore to be guided by that Spirit, it is a sure and safe criterion in every case of doubt and perplexity, to consider how far God has fellowship in that which we do. The present day is so peculiarly characterised by the inconsistent walking of believers, and the efforts of Satan to unite them with one or another of the manifold forms of worldliness, that it may be well to notice some of the prevailing evils, which have contributed, in no small degree, to lower the standard of Christian practice; remembering that the word of God is clear—"All that is in the world is not of the Father;" and that upon all the natural heart desires, Scripture passes one unqualified judgment—"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

There is one special snare to which believers are peculiarly liable in the present time; more perhaps than in any other since Paul warned Ti-

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motly against the *ἐπιθέσεις τῆς ψευδῶς καλεωμένης γνῶσεως*,  
 "the oppositions of science falsely so called,"—  
 words which so well describe the character of the  
 antithetical philosophy of the present day;—we  
 speak of the seductions of the intellect, to which  
 many who may be free from the grosser forms of  
 self seeking are peculiarly exposed. The ex-  
 pressions of Scripture respecting the world and  
 worldliness, are too often qualified by them to suit  
 their own particular tastes and propensities; they  
 easily profess to abjure that for which they have  
 little or no *natural* inclination, whilst they stren-  
 uously contend for that which is only the world in  
 its more refined state; but which is more danger-  
 ous, because more delusive than the temptations  
 peculiarly addressed to the lower tendencies of  
 human nature. The two are distinguished by the  
 Apostle as the desires of the *flesh* and of the *mind*.  
 (Ephes. ii.) And verily the Spiritual Idolatry,  
 which is the sin of the present day, the consumma-  
 tion of all that man is capable of doing against  
 God, is infinitely more dangerous from its subtlety,  
 and the manifold phases which it assumes in the  
 mind, than all the other depths into which a way-  
 ward heart and the devices of the enemy may  
 beguile us. We argue not against the improve-  
 ment of the mind. Most assuredly it is desirable  
 that every faculty should be fully and healthfully

developed; and *Education*, in the proper sense of the word, i. e. opening all the powers of the mind, and directing them to God's glory, is above all things to be looked to. But the error against which we fervently contend is that of making the means the end. The desire for the improvement of the mind, considered by itself, is but a refined selfishness if it stops there, and does not train every power of the intellect with a direct view to the service of God. All that tends not to this service, all that may not in some way be wielded as an instrument in this work, is for self alone; and its results will invariably be found unprofitable, however splendid such acquirements may appear to the mind which judges of their value by the proportion of credit which they obtain amongst men.—For let it be considered that life, whether natural or spiritual, is—ACTION; and in the Christian, action constant and undivided for God's glory.—Nay more, the mind which is held to be the most informed and accomplished, is in fact but a wilderness, if it knows not the Only True Wisdom. It is grievous when we look, not merely to the pursuits of the natural man, following the wanderings of his own mind, and seeking a phantom which eludes his grasp, but to the objects which engage so much of the attention even of God's children, to see such an infinity of labour bestowed on what is called

truth, but is *not so*; and the practical denial of its only source—the knowledge never ending, never wearying of God—that knowledge which also opens a field for the richest and most varied application of every intellectual power, and maintains them all in true and healthful proportion. Any thing short of this (from which it is manifest that the great mass of what is called the intelligence of the world is systematically and voluntarily alienated) is but the laborious idleness of the mind seeking happiness in something *out of God*, and the evidence that it has never yet acknowledged the full length and breadth of the Spirit's testimony concerning Jesus —“that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It is well to realize how much God can do—how little man. All human aids indeed we take with thankfulness, as from Providence, who orders these things, as well as all others, to work together for His own glory, though men are little conscious of it; but they are still but *aids*; and one ray of the the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has more real effect in expanding the mind, than all the instrumentality of human genius and learning besides. Things are not depreciated, as has been rightly said, when placed on their true level; the machinery in ordinary use is not undervalued by the assertion, that when it has raised man to its utmost reach, God can raise

him infinitely higher. At a time when mere human power is rated so high, and the productions of that which is purely man's intellect, are gazed upon by many, as in no small degree approximating to a participation in the divine nature; it is well to remember the terms in which Scripture speaks of all that descends to us from Adam, not merely in this body of death, but in the mind which dwells within it.—“There is none that understandeth,” is God's estimate of all the boasted light of human reason; though *we* know it not till informed by the Spirit. “Having the understanding darkened”—the universal character of man, however bright the array of natural powers with which he is gifted may appear. And let it not be forgotten, that the source of much of this power is “the tree of knowledge of good and evil;” so that men ignorantly pride themselves upon that knowledge which found an entrance into the mind only through the first act of disobedience against God; and which, as to all its diversified semblances, proves itself in every natural man to be the legitimate fruit of the tree from which it sprang, which was good indeed in itself, but was obtained by the subtlety of Satan, in disbelief of God's sufficiency. It is instructive to observe that when Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord, the inventions and luxuries of life began; and doubtless power in

the earth continued exclusively with his descendants, until the "sons of God"—the holy seed, united themselves with the children of men, and all trace of separation in the fear of God, was lost in the indiscriminate exhibition of self-will and violence, which overspread the world.

The child of this world often professes to approach God by science and the study of nature. And here again the Christian is called upon to discriminate. In that which is truly and properly the work of God in creation, he cannot but rejoice; yea and renders "glory, honour, and power" to Him "whose hand has made all these things;" for they are His, and are the expression of His wondrous mind. We see in them (what we cannot see in the works of fallen man) the evidence and expression of His eternal power and Godhead; and so far glory in them. But as sons of God we are called to know Him in a character far more excellent and blessed—even as THE FATHER. And this knowledge we do not gain from *without*; for it is the Spirit's special office "to tell us plainly of the Father." All other ways by which men may profess to approach Him, bring them no farther than the Gentile outer court of the Holy of Holies.—An Israelite alone can enter in.

Let us learn by the example of one who had tried *every thing*; and not only sought out and

gathered to himself all earthly glory and pleasure, such as fell to the lot of none, before or after; "for what can the man do that cometh after the king?" but applied to the discovery such wisdom none ever had; and moreover exceeded all in knowledge, "for he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes; and there came of all people to hear of the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom." Yet what is the end?—"I, the preacher, was king over Israel, in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.—I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."

The character of the intellect of the present day, by which so many "professing themselves to be wise" are led astray, is but one of the manifold forms of human perverseness setting itself up against God; with more refinement it may be, but with no less determinateness of opposition, than in those who impugn God's declared will because He has

not written a revelation of it in the skies. "The Greeks seek after wisdom."—Hence have arisen the philosophical expositions of Christianity, and "metaphysical projections" of the Christian scheme, peculiar to this age and to the second century; all only the attempts of man to penetrate by the mere subtlety of human reason, the mysterious doctrine of the Cross; which is either never reached, or if seen, continues as ever—"Foolishness."

Take another view. The state of the world, as ignorant of God, is this—"Rejoicing in the work of their own hands." (Acts vii. 41.) But are there not many whose lives should be a practical testimony against it all; who appear as though their hearts were in it as much as others? It is wisdom to learn from an enemy—let us hear the testimony of the sharp sighted world against the inconsistencies of believers.—

"As far as we are enabled to discover, they (the serious) testify no reluctance to follow the footsteps of the worldly in the road to wealth; we look in vain for any distinguishing mark in this respect, between the two classes of society; that which is 'of the world,' and that which is 'not of the world.' All appear to be actuated by the same common impulse to push their fortunes in life; all exhibit the same ardent, active, enterprizing zeal in their respective pursuits."

Again.—

“They live in the common haunts of men, gratify their common desires, engage in their common pursuits, partake of their common indulgencies; they toil along with the worldly through paths beset with temptation in various shapes. They run with all imaginable alacrity and cheerfulness in the race after fame, and honors, and emoluments, where the faith and principles of men are most severely tried; they acquiesce in all the devices of luxury, to pamper the children of prosperity, and manifest the same indifference with others, to the cost of human happiness and innocence, at which these may be supplied.” (Edinburgh Review.)

These answers come from no friend to God's truth, yet they are but too true, and may serve to shame many a professed disciple, who is occupied by “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things.” We may add one remark in reference to the children of religious parents. In too many instances the same anxiety for placing them in situations which the world counts honourable, is manifested as in worldly families; and for this end, many a believer will not hesitate to place his child in scenes of temptation, and in circumstances of exposure to evil, where it cannot be expected that the care of the Spirit of God will follow them. The result is, that we believe it will be found in numberless instances, that religious parents have been visited

with a curse upon their children, just in proportion as they themselves have been involved in the world.

Is there not too little consistent exemplification of the Apostles command? "Let your moderation be known unto all men;" too little proof of our "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ our Lord." On the contrary, does not the deceitfulness of the heart, or carelessness of the Lord's glory lead many to seek by various sophistries to satisfy themselves that the Christian may have fellowship with the world, at least in *some* things, if not in *all*? But if there be any truth in every Scripture declaration respecting the world, this one thing is certain, that he who argues *deliberately* how far he may continue in the world, proves that his affections are in it altogether. The application of the expressions of Scripture is often indeed sought to be evaded by the question — What is the world? But is it probable that the Scripture would set forth so pregnant, so *critical* a principle, enforced by such fearful warnings, and then leave to every man's notions what he was to avoid? The truth is that its language is infinitely more exact than is commonly supposed; and the every day conversation of men, in the common use of the term "the world," invariably expresses the thing against which we are warned. But in fact

they who ask this question are able full well to answer it themselves. When they speak of rising in the world, of getting credit and a name in it, they know precisely what "the world" means: but when any thing is to be given up for Christ's sake, a sudden indistinctness invests every thing; and the unfaithful heart is allowed to draw its own line between what is, and what is not of the world. But in all the various appearances which it assumes, however fair and attractive to the mind and eye, it is *exclusively* spoken of in Scripture as a *thing to be overcome*. God has laid down a broad principle, which he who runs may read; and love and faithfulness to Christ alone, can be the true guide in applying it. It is judging of things rather by our own thoughts concerning them, than by the plain statements of the word of God, which keeps men in it; in truth the great secret of conformity to the world, is *taking for granted that things are as they should be*. It has been truly said that "There are many saints, but very few Christians:" many who owe to Christ the unspeakable debt of forgiveness through His blood, few who are willing to follow Him who has so loved them, even to the renunciation of all things. And what was His distinct unqualified testimony against the world? That "the deeds thereof are evil;" and whilst Himself in it, it was simply in witness *for* God and

*against* them. A disciple could not remain in it, for the call was ever—"Follow me;" although, like Jesus, he would be habitually there, as far as he was enabled to bring God's testimony to bear upon the consciences of men by his own conversation in the world. And this is the true answer to the question—"how far may we mingle with the world?" Even as far and as often as we can witness for Jesus. One consideration which at once overrules all others in a Christian's mind is this—that Christ's mission, as regards His people, was for this sole object—"that He might deliver us from this present evil world;" and therefore in pleading for conformity to the world, we plead for conformity to that, deliverance from which cost nothing less than the death of the Son of God. The practical question for the believer is, can I have fellowship with that with which He had none? The example of others is often pleaded, but to our own master we stand or fall. If many Christians are mingled with it, this only renders it the more imperative on any who see the mischief which is thus occasioned in the Church of God, to give by their lives a more distinct protest; and thus it becomes not only a matter of faithfulness to God, but of love for the souls of others.

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work;" "I have a baptism

to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." Thus did Jesus speak of His own labour of love, and who that professes to be a follower of Him, can set a lower measure for his own life than his Master's, "who has left us an example that we should follow His steps." Not indeed that he has no natural friendship with all that charms the senses or the mind of man, but the melody of the songs of heaven is heard above the voice of earthly music, and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory seen by the eye of faith, outshines the transient sparkle of earthly splendour. "THE TIME IS SHORT." Most blessed word, whether for the stirring up of our diligence in our Lord's work, that when He cometh we may be found doing His will; or for the gladdening of our souls in the prospect of the near approach of Him whose coming shall be "as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds." (2 Sam. xxiii.) Let us try every thing that the world holds dear by the glory of that day, by the power and coming of Jesus, by the joy of His saints, in whom He will come to be glorified, and then let our hearts decide whether we are ready to count all as dung, that we may win Christ.

One thing more remains. If we are looking with any thing of the mind of Christ, upon a world

which lieth in wickedness, it cannot be with the desire to share in those things which bind down the hearts of these who are deceived by the God of this world; yea which are the very objects that render it so hard even for Christians to leave it; nor in the unfaithful course which temporizes with the evil, but rather in the Spirit with which Jesus beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. True love for the souls of others, will lead to a clear and distinct disavowal of all connection with the world, that the testimony may lead those who are involved in it, to see their danger. But the charity, falsely so called, of the present day, is the most murderous principle of Satan, who first deceives, and then destroys.

The days are few and evil; the long-suffering of a God of love is waiting still, but we know not for how long. May He give us grace to do His work in the "little while."




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EXETER:

PRINTED BY W. C. POLLARD, NORTH-STREET.