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PLEA FOR PRESBYTERIANISM.

TWO DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW BRUNSWICK,

March 11, 1844.

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DISCOURSE I.

1 THESSALONIANS, 5 : 12, 13.

“ And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly (in love for their work's sake.”

ALTHOUGH all subjects are not equally important, yet each is valuable in its place. While it would be highly reprehensible to make Church Government a habitual theme of Sabbath discourse, it is every way proper, upon suitable occasions, when the public attention is directed to the subject, and when we may hope for a patient and favorable hearing, to set forth the arguments by which our peculiar tenets are defended.

Some are Presbyterians through the force of education, or the accident of relationship; others, because they have received their religious impressions from some preacher of this denomination; others, on account of personal predilections; and others, because they are persuaded that this is the best and most Scriptural system. In all the sects, probably, it is the smallest number that have joined from pure conviction of being right; otherwise, it would be difficult to account for so much indifference to sectarian distinctions, and so many instances of capricious change of church relations.

But it is proper that we should know whether we are right or wrong in our ecclesiastical preferences: that if we are in error, we may repair it; or if satisfied that we are right, we may firmly maintain our ground, and defend the church of our choice against the objections of our assailants. There are some claims set up in contradistinction to ours, which, if con-

ceded, would annihilate our orders, render invalid our sacraments, and take away every revealed hope of salvation. Since consequences so important are involved in the decision, and since all truth is, and should be, in order to godliness, it becomes us to inquire into our duty. "*Obey them that have the rule over you,*" is the command in one place; "*We beseech you, brethren,*" is the expostulation in another, "*to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*" These are cogent admonitions to pay due respect and obedience to the regularly appointed officers of the church, and in order to a compliance, we should distinctly understand who the scriptural officers of the church are. Some insist that Prelates have exclusive authority to rule and govern; others, going to the opposite extreme, are equally positive that we must be subordinate to the whole company of the brethren. Should we be convinced that either of these is right, the apostolic admonition binds us to obey the Prelate in the one case, the brotherhood in the other. Should we reject both extremes, and choose the middle ground of a Representative Government, and of the parity of the Clergy, we should be able to give a reasonable account of the steps by which we arrive at this conclusion.

Dismissing all other considerations as extraneous to the legitimate object before us, we have a right to insist on confining the inquiry to the New Testament alone, as the sole infallible rule of practice as well as of faith. Lest, however, it should be supposed that we shrink from appealing to other species of argument through fear, we hesitate not openly to aver, in the outset, that we have yet to learn the argument that can inspire us with fear.

It may be well, therefore, before proceeding to our main defence from Scripture, to touch briefly on a few preliminary points, more for the purpose of clearing our way, than of formal discussion.

I. However firmly we may advocate our position, we do so *in perfect charity toward those who differ from us in opinion.* Happily ours is a system which does not require, for its own establishment, the unchurching of every other denomination of Christians, as the Ottoman Sultans never think themselves secure till they have put out of the way all their brethren. We

must never lose sight of the distinction between what is essential to the *being*, and what is essential to the *perfection* of a church. With such as conscientiously prefer some different mode, and who assume for their favorite system no more than we assume for ours, a nearer approach to Scriptural order and perfection, we have no quarrel. If they show no intention to stand aloof and expatriate us from the city of God, we, on our part, cordially desire to cultivate amicable relations and intercourse with "all them that call on the same Lord, both theirs and ours." We delight to regard all the various sects that hold the fundamentals of evangelical doctrine, as so many branches of the one great common family of which Jesus is head. We may deem it our duty to contest this or that system, but we disavow all enmity to the persons who profess it. We desire to honor their virtues and emulate their piety, in whatever pale they may be found; and to recognize and love the image of our blessed Saviour, whosoever he may be that bears it. Far be it from us to offend against Charity, or send her back in tears to her native heaven! We would reverence and cherish that divine Charity, which, while it "rejoiceth in the truth," is yet the very embodying of love; the fountain of benignity, generosity, and goodwill; which discountenances intolerance; which breathes universal kindness; which inspires compassion and sympathy; which composes differences and reconciles strifes; which is not easily provoked, and is ready to forgive; and which soothes the sorrows even of its enemies.

We have been, indeed, grossly misrepresented and vilified, from the days of Pope to the present hour; but in spite of all the reproaches cast upon us, of bigotry and exclusiveness, ours is really not a whit less catholic or liberal in its spirit than any other of the sects of christendom. For the proof of this, we appeal not only to our uniform practice, but to the formal and explicit statements of our printed standards, which teach "that there are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these, they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other." And again, that in full consistency with our own belief, "we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians who differ from us, in opinion or in practice, on these subjects." From these extracts, a bigot is clearly seen to be out of his place in the

Presbyterian community. The standards which he praises frown upon him, and disdain the undue exaltation to which he would raise them. Learn hence the *candor* of those who aim to fasten on us the odious charge of *exclusiveness*. Such an accusation only betrays ignorance of our system and of our customs. The Presbyterian, has often been a *persecuted*, but never a *persecuting*, church.

II. As far as the *utility of a Succession* is involved, *we have it*. We are no upstart party, generated, like the reptiles of the Nile, from the muddy deposits of ignorance and presumption; but we are at liberty to boast as loudly as any, *should it so please us*, of a regular descent from the Apostles. Tracing our succession through the line of Presbyters, we may defy any one to find a flaw in our title, back to the Reformation; and prior to that period we share the common condition of all that are now Protestant Churches. Indeed, we occupy a safer position than the devotees of Prelacy; we stand upon a broader basis than they; for while they restrict themselves to a few Bishops, we have the wide and unlimited range of the whole body of Presbyters. In this range, too, we are at liberty to include the Bishops, for we feel no more difficulty in regarding them also as Presbyters, than Episcopalians feel in regarding the Pope simply as the Bishop of Rome. A usurpation of new powers by no means annihilates such as existed before.

At the same time, while our ecclesiastical genealogy is to ourselves so satisfactory, we take care never to elevate it to an undue rank. We hold that the succession of *Order* is infinitely less important than the succession of *Doctrine*. Therefore we would never hesitate to abandon a corrupt communion which, like Rome, should "make shipwreck of the faith," in favor of any society, whatever its lack of order, that should be found to maintain sound doctrine. It was the succession of sound doctrine that held the highest place in the Apostle Paul's esteem. It was the *truth* that saves, not official dignity that inflates, the careful transmission of which he impressed upon Timothy when he said, "*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" And when he exhorts the Thessalonians to esteem those that are over them, it is "*for their work's sake.*"

The Ordinances of God's house are valueless save only

on account of the spiritual benefits which they convey. To secure these blessings, attendance on the celebration of public worship is ancillary; the Ordinances themselves hold but a secondary rank; they are not the final object; they are *means* of grace only. As means of grace they are to be prized and improved, for the sake of the grace of which they may be the channel. To exalt them to the first rank, or to repose upon an operation or an administrator, as the sole guarantee of validity, is as preposterous as to prefer the scaffolding to the house, or the casket to the jewel it enshrines. But the well instructed mind rests not in mere churchmanship. While it duly honors the means of grace, it loves them chiefly for the ultimate benefits which they confer; and like David, longs to " *dwell in the house of the Lord,*" in order to gain accurate views of the divine character, and of its own duty, " *to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.*"

May not the stress that is laid on this doctrine of *Succession*, be traced to a real, and in some instances unconscious, belief in a certain sacramental efficacy; some mystical, occult, talismanic, superstitious, virtue, accompanying the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? While the simple truth is, as our Confession of Faith testifies, that the efficacy of a Sacrament depends entirely upon the work of the Spirit and the worthiness of the receiver.

After all that has been said and written about *Succession*, its value, both as a theory and a fact, has been questioned by men of great sagacity and learning whose opinions are entitled to consideration. As to the *theory*, it has been deemed very questionable whether Christ meant, by the promise of his perpetual presence, any thing more than that the *truth* should never be permitted to become completely extinct; that however particular churches or ministers might become corrupt, there should always be some, like the seven thousand unknown to Elijah, who would love and cherish the precious depository. The candlestick might be removed from the Churches of Asia, but the pure light should burst forth from some other, and perhaps unexpected, quarter. In Milner's excellent church history you will find an attempt to trace just such a succession or perpetuation of evangelical truth. As to the *fact*, no less a personage than the Archbishop of Dublin, the most accomplished logician living, gives it as his opinion, that

“there is not a minister in all Christendom, who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree.”

III. If *piety, and good works as its fruit, be made the test*, while we would be far from boasting, yet neither need we as a church hang our heads. And as it is reasonable to believe that the God of truth will not set his seal to a lie, success in converting souls, and being replenished with Christian graces, so as to be the song of the drunkard and the by-word of the worldly, and pre-eminently hated and abused by the infidel, may be interpreted as no uncertain sign that we are not altogether forsaken or disowned of the Great Head of the Church.

This mode of argument has indeed been sneered at as inconclusive; yet an apostle hesitated not to rely on its validity. Paul needed no letters of commendation to the Corinthians; “ye,” said he, “ye are our epistle, known and read of all men; the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. . . . Are ye not my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.”

IV. If the *early Fathers* are appealed to, we shrink not from the scrutiny. It is true we would not voluntarily cite them, for various reasons. They are inconsistent with themselves, and stuffed with puerile conceits. Take an example or two, if not the most apposite, at least such as now most readily occur to mind.

There is Clement of Alexandria, who discovers the mystery of Christ’s rectitude in the upright letter which commences the name Jesus; the initials of the same name he finds accompanied with the sign of the cross in the number of Abraham’s servants; the Ten Commandments he detects in David’s instrument of Ten Strings. And there is Augustine, too, playing on the letters of Christ’s name; and deducing a strong recommendation of the Sybil’s verses from their amounting to twenty-seven, which make a trine fully quadrate and solid, for three times three are nine, and three times nine are twenty-seven. Again, he finds a mysterious analogy between the proportions of Noah’s ark and Christ’s human body; and to perfect the type, he regards the window in the ark as marvellously corresponding to the wound in the Saviour’s side. He tells,

moreover, with the utmost gravity, amazing stories of miracles performed in his own time in the various churches, which constituted in his opinion the most crowning and unanswerable evidence to the pagan world of the truth of the Christian Religion.

So much for the puerile conceits of the Fathers. Of their discrepancies, which render their testimony very unsafe as to plain matters of fact, the following may suffice.

Origen represents Peter to have been bishop of Antioch; Epiphanius, of Rome, conjointly with Paul.

Eusebius and Jerome both affirm in one place that Peter first occupied the See of Rome, yet elsewhere each contradicts himself by placing Peter in the See of Antioch.

Tertullian affirms that Clement was the first bishop of Rome after Peter; while Irenæus is equally positive that Linus was the first, Anacletus next, and Clement not till third in order.

Eusebius makes Ignatius the immediate successor of Peter at Antioch; Jerome describes him as the third.

Eusebius again contradicts himself by stating in another place that Euodius immediately succeeded Peter.

Here we have Origen contradicting Epiphanius; Tertullian contradicting Irenæus; Eusebius contradicting Jerome; and Eusebius and Jerome both contradicting themselves. Which of all these discrepant statements are we to adopt? On whom shall we rely to learn the unbroken line of succession? And lastly, (a question by no means the least important of all that might be asked,) how can we depend on the subsequent links as unexceptionable, when so much uncertainty rests upon the first, the very starting point?

In truth, we may not unreasonably endorse the strong language of Milton, when he said, "Whatsoever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn down from of old to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weed, shells or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the fathers."

But the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers is far from condemning us, whatever else may be said of it. Even Ignatius, whom our opponents place on the witness-stand with such shouts of triumph, seems to us to speak very much like a Presbyterian. When he insists on the presence of the bishop as necessary in every case of baptism and the Lord's supper; on nothing being done without his knowledge and consent; on

his inquiring into all the church-members by name ; on his being the guardian of the poor widows ; and on his not overlooking the men-servants and maid-servants ;—all this appears to us totally inapplicable to any but the pastor of a single congregation—the bishop, not of a diocese, but of a *parish*. How can it be possible for the bishop of an extensive diocese, the different parishes of which he visits but at intervals, to acquire a personal knowledge, not only of the heads of families in each parish, however large, but, in addition, of each of their domestics ? to say nothing of requiring him to be present whenever a child is baptized, or the Lord's Supper administered ?

To Ignatius we may add Jerome. Jerome says explicitly that in the beginning of the Church, bishop and presbyter were the same ; *afterwards* one was chosen to preside over the rest, as a remedy for schism. " Let the bishops know," he adds, " that they are superior to presbyters rather by *custom* than by an *actual appointment of the Lord*."

Thus we see that it is not fear of the early writers of the church that makes us sparing in our references to them. When fairly interpreted, we have as good a right to claim them, as any one else. But why dwell on "*the Fathers*," when we have those to whom they themselves looked as fathers ? I mean the Apostles and the Evangelists. Why not resort at once to the Scriptures, which must ever be our last appeal ?

Besides, we object to the principle. We are told that we must trace back century after century till we reach the Apostles' days, and see if we can verify the succession with which we started. This is reversing the order of truth and fairness, and it makes no allowance for the changes which occur in the use of language. Hence some persons, whenever they see the word *bishop*, imagine a grand dignitary of Constantine's time, with mitre and crozier, seated on his lordly throne. If we must adopt as apostolic usage, every thing which we find in the second century, then we must receive trine baptisms, milk and honey in addition to the baptismal water, oblations for the dead, and the superstitious crossing of ourselves at every step we take. And beside all this, we must adopt the rule of celibacy, which very early crept in with its monstrous train of abuses. All these things are found, in germ or in efflorescence, before the close of the second century. " To

the law and the testimony ! If they speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in them."

V. It has been sometimes insinuated that the early Reformers would gladly have *retained* the order of Prelates, *could they have had them*, and that they adopted the Presbyterian system from *necessity*. It is an unworthy and an unfounded insinuation. There were some bishops both in France and Bohemia, who were favorable to the spread of evangelical principles ; though it is not to be denied they were the smallest number. So far from relinquishing episcopal government from necessity alone, or even courting the few prelates who were friendly to their views, the Reformers insisted that such as might be disposed to join their company, must first renounce their Popish ordination, as invalid and unlawful. Stalwart John Knox was offered a high bishopric by Edward VI., which he refused from conscientious motives ; and he was greatly displeased at the acceptance of the Tulchan bishops, who were appointed by the Scottish Regency to save the old ecclesiastical revenues. The Scottish Church could have had bishops repeatedly, but as pertinaciously rejected them ; and three, the bishops of Orkney, Galway, and Caithness, subsequently resigned their mitres, and took their seats in the General Assembly as simple presbyters.

But grant, *as to a great extent it must be granted*, that the Reformation would have been stifled, had it been left to Episcopal nursing ; and that in Scotland, in Germany, in Switzerland, in Sweden, in Denmark, the prelates resisted till they were driven from their rich sees. What a sad commentary is it on the tendency of the office ! Methinks, were I a prelatist, I would preserve a discreet silence as to an argument based on facts so disreputable to the order.

What ! when all Europe was waking up, and clergy and people demanded the unadulterated gospel and a free salvation, *the race of bishops* were the *chief opposers* of the glorious reformation ! Dissolved in luxury and voluptuousness ; addicted to joviality and pomp ; oppressing the people subjected to their rule, a rule frequently purchased by Simony ; squandering on their vices the funds which the piety of former ages had consecrated to the poor ; ignorant of all useful learning ; in nothing to be distinguished from secular nobles save by their titles ; resisting with desperate energy the restoration of the

pure word and worship of God ; and eager to put back the shadow ten degrees upon the dial of the world's salvation ;— were these the men to be honored as the *Successors of the Apostles* ? *Apostate* were they rather than *Apostolic*. Paul would have scouted them ; John would have frowned as indignantly on them as he did on the ambitious Diotrephes ; Peter would have rebuked them with withering invective, for lording it over God's heritage instead of being ensamples to the flock.

Is "*the Succession*" of such mystic value, that those noble spirits, whom God raised up to save his Church from extinction, must crouch at the feet of such wretches, nor stir till their consent and approbation could be obtained ? Must the Bride of Christ pine away of atrophy, while there are both balm and physicians in Gilead, because her customary advisers are "forgers of lies, physicians of no value ?" Away with such preposterous notions ! And away with the whole tribe from the face of the earth, if they place themselves in the attitude of hostility to Christ and his pure gospel !

"*Necessity*," indeed ! "The Reformers would gladly have retained bishops in the church *if they could have got them !*"— Why, the Reformers well knew that if they did retain them, they would prove a *curse* to the church, clogs on the chariot of salvation ; as they have proved in England, where they were retained entirely through monarchical jealousy, and in consequence of which the Church of England, as by law established, has never been but half reformed, and of late shows strong symptoms of nauseating even that. The Reformers knew too well the tendency of power lodged in the hands of an irresponsible individual, voluntarily to submit their necks again to the yoke of bondage ; and rather than do so, they would have preferred the bold alternative of renouncing the validity of all orders derived through the Church of Rome, and throwing themselves upon an extraordinary call to reorganize the church anew on evangelical principles.

VI. Should the advantages of a *Liturgy, &c.*, be dwelt upon, we have only to say that that touches not the question in hand ; for some Presbyterian Churches use forms of public worship, and all permit premeditated prayers ; while they reprobate presumptuous and crude effusions.

VII. If congeniality with *the spirit of republicanism* be mentioned, there we have a decided advantage. It was this that

drew down the ire of the Jameses and the Charleses, and gave rise to the famous royal exclamation, "*No Bishop, no King!*" That Prelacy and Monarchy, Parity and Republicanism, respectively harmonize and are congenial, is a fact too obvious to be denied, and it is accordingly admitted by most prelatists themselves. The relative positions of the bulk of the Episcopal Clergy, and of the entire Presbyterian Clergy, on the breaking out of the Revolution, furnish a striking comment on the remark.

VIII. If *Efficiency of Jurisdiction* be required, our system can bear comparison with any. As for Prelacy, *it is a grand failure*, in regard to all that its advocates claim for it in the way of conservative influence. It signally failed to prevent the schism of the Montanists in the second century; of the Donatists and Novatians in the third; of the Arians in the fourth; of the Nestorians in the fifth; of the Lollards, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Bohemians, only quelled at last by brute force and armed troops; of the Lutherans in Germany; of the Zuinglians in Switzerland; of the Independents and the Wesleyans in England. And the present condition of the Episcopal Church, both in England and America, shows, as a late writer has forcibly said, that there may be schism without separation, as truly as there may be separation without schism. Neither has the Episcopate exhibited greater virtue in restraining doctrinal errors: witness Romanism, Arianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Universalism, Pelagianism, Swedenborgianism, and Puseyism, fostered with impunity under the protecting shadow of Episcopal jurisdiction. Mr. Newman assures us, that in the Church of England exist at present differences as great as those which separate it from Greece or Rome; and that hardly ten or twenty neighboring clergymen can be found who agree together, not merely on the non-essentials of religion, but as to its elementary and necessary doctrines; or whether indeed there are any such doctrines at all, or any distinct and definite faith required for salvation!!!

If we inquire into the security of private rights against injustice and oppression, where will you find such an ample shield thrown over the rights of the humblest individual, as in our complete system of Appeals? If dissatisfied with the judgment of the Church Session, an appeal may be carried to the Presbytery, thence to the Synod, and finally to the highest

court of all, the General Assembly, in which, if any where, an impartial decision may be expected from the collected wisdom of the whole Church. Where is the arrogant dignitary among us, who can silence the humblest layman, and say to him as he would to a school boy, "*Sit down, sir ! not a word !*"—or with his regal *veto* nullify the recorded decisions of the whole ecclesiastical body ?

And where is there such a judicious support furnished to a *Pastor* in the discharge of his various duties, as is found in a bench of *Elders* to aid him in spiritual things, and a company of *Deacons* to distribute impartially the funds of the Church ? When a necessity arises for discipline, or some decided measure for the welfare of the Church, a minister in other sects stands alone ; he must venture all on his own responsibility. A man must have more than ordinary courage to step forward to the discharge of an unpleasant duty single handed ; and accordingly in such connexions discipline is undeniably relaxed. But happy is the Presbyterian Pastor, who in every emergency has a Session, composed of grave, judicious, and respectable men, chosen by the congregation themselves as their own representatives, who will advise him with their counsel, stand by him in difficulty, and share the responsibility of every act ! Happy, I repeat, is the Pastor, who feels himself supported by a wise, discreet, devoted, energetic *Eldership* ! And happy the Church, blessed with such an oversight ; saved equally from the extreme, on the one hand, of arbitrary oppression from the unchecked will of a *single* ruler, and on the other, from the turbulence and caprice of a *hundred*.

Enough has been said, to show that whatever position be taken, in the first place we have nothing to fear from the strictest scrutiny ; and in the second, that after all, the last appeal must be made to Scripture. *The Bible* contains the religion of Protestants.

DISCOURSE II.

ISALIAH, 8 : 20.

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

It is proposed, in this discourse, to exhibit the plain scriptural argument in support of the Presbyterian system of church order. In doing so, we will be under the necessity of maintaining a middle course between ecclesiastical monarchy on the one hand, and an unmixed ecclesiastical democracy on the other. We shall hold on our way without always stopping to point out which error is exposed by our proofs, and shall leave the appropriate reference to your own perspicacity, as we go along. Suffice it to say, such is our confidence in the goodness of our cause on scriptural ground, that we hope to satisfy you that we have ample warrant for our opinions.

I. The first class of texts to which your attention is directed, is that which so emphatically *discountenances* all the unhal-
lowed buddings of *ambition*, all *inequality of rank*, and all *domineering* among the Christian clergy.

You will easily recollect the repeated cautions which our Lord gave his disciples on this point. Observe how very explicit his language is. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you* ; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Again, when they were disputing "*who should be greatest*" in the

new administration, he rebuked them by pointing to the unambitious innocence of *a little child*. The apostle Peter thus writes: "The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder, "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.*" The Romish version reads it, "*domineering*" over God's heritage.

Again, the apostle Paul thus writes: "If a man *desire* the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work." The word literally expresses the *eager desire* of a famished person to obtain food. How inappropriate the apostle's language, unguarded by a single word of disapprobation, and how culpable the individual aspirant, if the eager longing to seize the reins of prelatical power were here intended! Every principle of piety and common sense revolts from such interpretations, and compels us to understand the restricted office of an evangelical pastor as meant.

We have, then, only to ask, if such be the spirit of Scripture and of Christ's kingdom, how little are the claims of prelacy in harmony with that spirit. The very *essence* of prelacy consists in imitating the princes of the Gentiles, and "lording it," or "domineering," over their brethren; yet, strange to say, some of its advocates, forgetting our Saviour's caution, pretend to fortify its pretensions by illustrations borrowed from the princes of the Gentiles, from military grades, and from the ranks of courtiers.

II. We point you to that class of texts in which the apostles speak of themselves as *equals among brethren*.

Peter assumes no superior rank, when he says, "The Elders which are among you I exhort, *who am also an Elder.*" Certainly, so far from claiming the primacy, as the Papists insist, he does not even assert a standing higher than that of a *Presbyter* or *Elder*. "I who also am an Elder, a Presbyter." This savors strongly of *Presbyterian parity*. So the apostle John: "The *Elder*, the *Presbyter*, unto the elect lady." James arrogates nothing, but simply styles himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and advises, in case of sickness, to send for "*the Elders*" or *Presbyters* of the church, improperly translated by the Romish version, "the priests."

Paul speaks of Timothy's ordination "by the hands of the *Presbytery*," though he, an apostle, was one of the number. He ordained then, not as an apostle, but as a *Presbyter*, or *Elder*. Have these statements more of a Presbyterian or Episcopal aspect?

Here, let it be observed once for all, that the words, *Presbyter* and *Elder*, in scripture, are always convertible terms. So are the words *Bishop* and *Overseer*. *Presbyter* simply means an *Elder*; *Bishop*, nothing more than an *Overseer* or *Superintendent*.

III. That class of texts deserves notice, which exhibit a plurality of *Bishops*, or *Superintendents*, in a single city or church.

We have several such instances. One is Philippi. The apostle writes, "To the saints which are at Philippi, with the *Bishops*, (in the plural number,) and *Deacons*." Here are three classes mentioned, the laity, the bishops, and the deacons. But it is obvious, that these were not Prelatical Bishops; for there would not be a plurality of them in a single city or diocese. In that case, too, the apostle would be guilty of incivility, to omit sending his greeting to the presbyters, while he passed by them to mention the deacons and the laity. But if by *Bishops* he meant the *Presbyters*, then where was the *Prelate*? Paul would not be so uncivil as to omit all mention of him, had there been a prelate there. To say that Epaphroditus was that prelate, because he is styled in the epistle, "your apostle," is a violation of New Testament usage. "An apostle of *Jesus Christ*," is the usual formula, and is perfectly intelligible; whereas, we can in no way conceive of an Apostle deriving his commission from a particular church, or appropriated by any particular church. In one sense, indeed, Epaphroditus was the apostle of the Philippian church, but that is a very humble sense. The word signifies "a messenger," one "sent," and the sacred writer leaves us in no doubt as to his mission. It was to convey to him, a prisoner at Rome, the alms and contributions of the generous Philippians, which Paul gratefully acknowledges. This was the errand of Epaphroditus, on which he was sent as their "messenger," as our translation correctly renders it.

Ephesus is another example. Paul convened the *Elders* of the church of Ephesus by a special message, and thus ad-

dressed them : " Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *Overseers*," i. e. " hath made you *Bishops*." Here we find a plurality of presbyters or elders in a single church, and that they were designated by the appropriate title of *Bishops*. They jointly exercised the *episcopate*, and it was necessarily a *Parochial* Episcopacy.

It has, indeed, been alleged, that Timothy was sole Bishop of Ephesus. But there is no foundation for the opinion. The subscription at the end of the epistle which styles him so, is no part of Scripture. It is an interpolation by some unknown hand. The Scriptures no where make the declaration. Timothy was not residing in Ephesus at the date of Paul's charge to the elders. They had no prelate at all then; nor was any intimation dropped that they ever would have one; nor were they charged how to behave towards one, *should he come*. The epistles to Timothy, like that to Titus, contain minute directions about pastors, and elders, and deacons, and their wives; about masters and servants; about the laity and the widows; nay, even about a cloak and parchments forgotten at Troas: but not a syllable is there about the duties of a prelate, or the conduct of the people towards him. It is a fair inference, therefore, that there was no such office in Ephesus.

When Timothy was *afterwards* left at Ephesus, it was not as a permanent officer, but as a travelling evangelist or missionary, to regulate some temporary disorders. The same office we find him discharging at Corinth; with which place, however, no one mentions his name in connection. That Timothy could not have been a permanent resident in Ephesus, is plain from his being with Paul in Macedonia, and in Rome, besides his visiting Corinth.

Of Titus we may also say, that, instead of being a permanent resident or Bishop in Crete, he appears to have been as great a traveller as his compeer; for we find him wandering at Nicopolis, Troas, Philippi, Corinth, and Dalmatia. His duty, too, was but temporary; it was "to set in order the things that were wanting."

That there was a plurality of elders or superintendents in other churches beside Philippi and Ephesus, we learn from the remainder of the text just cited, "and ordain *elders* in every city." And we learn that when "Paul and Barnabas had or

dained them *elders in every church*, they commended them to the Lord." Here is a *plurality of elders* mentioned as set apart *in each single church* by solemn ordination. This harmonizes with the directions, "Obey *them*," in the plural number, "that have the rule over you." To appreciate the full force of this argument, remember that elder and bishop are identical, as we have seen; and this plurality of bishops or superintendents in each individual church, can be explained only on Presbyterian principles.

IV. Consider that class of texts which describe *presbyters as exercising the functions exclusively claimed for prelates*.

Surely ordination, supervision and discipline, will be acknowledged to be prerogatives of prelacy, if it have any. But we find ordination practised by presbyters. Timothy was ordained "with the laying on of the hands of *the presbytery*." To evade this direct averment, some have resorted to the subterfuge of supposing that the word should be taken for the *office* of presbyter—the presbyterate, not the collection of presbyters. But the word is never used in any other passage of Scripture, except to denote *the body of elders*. Usage, therefore, sanctions our translation in this instance. Others have contended that the whole virtue of the ordination flowed from the hands of Paul, and the rest only signified their consent. But when Paul reminded Timothy of the imposition of his hands specially, we suppose he meant no more than any aged minister might do, who having participated in the ordination of a young and beloved son in the gospel, would naturally feel a deep interest in him, and dwell with emphasis on the fact that his hands had rested on his head.

Is *ruling* a prerogative of a prelate? "Obey *them* that have *the rule* over you," is the injunction. Observe, a plurality of rulers is intimated—"them." "Know *them* that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord;" a plurality again. "The *elders* that *rule well* are worthy of double honor." Here *ruling* is distinctly attributed to the presbyterial office.

In this last cited text you have a striking distinction between two classes of church officers, and a clear warrant for the office of the *ruling elder*. It is worthy of note that the phrases in the originals are participles, which may be rendered thus :

The *well-ruling elders* are to have double honor ;
 The *laborers in word and doctrine* especially :
 which gives us the two classes of

Ruling Elders; and
Teaching Elders.

Very different talents are required for ruling and for instructing. The first requires judgment, though learning be deficient. The latter demands acquaintance with books and study, *in addition*. The office of Preacher, therefore, is superior to that of Ruler, because the preacher, besides being himself a ruler, is also something more. But prelatists reverse the order, and exalt the ruler to a rank above the preacher.

Is *oversight* or *superintendence* the duty of a prelate ? We find St. Paul and St. Peter both giving it to the elders. "Feed the flock of God," says Paul to the Ephesian elders, "over which the Holy Ghost has made you *overseers*, i. e. *Bishops*," for so is the original. And St. Peter, "feed the flock of God, taking the *oversight* thereof, i. e. the *episcopate* thereof." Here are the *elders* exhorted to do the duty of *Bishops*, or Superintendents, to exercise the *Episcopal office*. It is objected that the word "feed" is employed, not the word "rule," and that this implies the duty of preaching alone. This is an argument for English readers only. It is enough to turn to Micah 7 : 14—"Feed thy people with thy rod," where the same word is used in the Septuagint version, and must denote ruling. Again, Rev. 2 : 27. "He shall *rule* them with a rod of iron." The original word is the same. But in truth, "*feed*" is an inadequate translation, and "*rule*" is not less so. The original phrase would be more fully expressed by the paraphrase, "*discharge all the duties of a shepherd*," whatever they are, feeding or ruling. This simple statement relieves the subject of all difficulty.

Is a *complaint* to be lodged ? "Tell it," not to a Prelate, neither to the whole brotherhood, minors included, "but to *the church*," i. e. to the *representatives* chosen by the church. Thus, in the 31st chapter of Deuteronomy, 29th verse, Moses says, "Gather unto me all the *elders* of your tribes, and your *officers*, that I may speak these words in their ears ;" while in the 30th verse it is stated, that "Moses spake in the ears of *all the congregation*, or *church*, of Israel." So, then, to address the elders or representatives assembled, is tantamount to addressing the whole church.

These officers were not designated by a Prelate, but by the church; for the Apostles, "when they had *ordained* them elders in every church, commended them to the Lord." The word translated "*ordained*," signifies taking the suffrages by uplifted hands, and means evidently, that when the people had chosen their own officers by vote, the Apostles added their solemn ratification. Ordination, strictly so called, was by the ministry, while election was in the hands of the people. We find a like example in the choice of the Seven Deacons.

It appears, then, that ordination, superintendence, and discipline, were entrusted, not to a single individual, nor to the whole company of believers, but to a plurality of officers in every church.

V. All that class of texts which describe the primitive ordinations, and in which there is not the slightest intimation of *official superiority on the part of the persons ordained*.

In vain will you look for such intimations, or for any official instructions in the ordination of the Seventy; or of the Twelve, though recorded by three Evangelists; nor in Christ's parting message to them; nor in the ordination of Mathias; nor in that of Paul; nor in that of Timothy. This silence presents a striking contrast with many *modern* charges, in which the superior dignity of the Prelate, and the distinction of the three orders, are not passed over quite so slightly. But if neither in the original instructions, nor in Christ's farewell discourse, nor in the account of separate ordinations, we find the least intimation of a distinction of rank, then may we well reject the pretension as a totally unwarranted figment.

VI. Notice that class of texts which describe the *office and duties of a Bishop*, and represent them as agreeing with the *office and duties of a Pastor*.

We have two specific charges, one to Timothy, another to Titus. In that to Titus, it is said, "I left thee in Crete, to ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless; for a *bishop* must be blameless." Is it a reason why an *elder* must have such and such qualifications, that they are requisite in a prelate? The argument is inconclusive. Suppose it were said in the Constitution, "A Representative must be thirty years of age, because the President must be of that age." Strange reasoning this would be deemed. But if it were stated that "A Representative must

be thirty years old, because a member of Congress cannot be qualified under that age," the incongruity would vanish. It is obvious that *bishop* and *presbyter* are here the same identical thing; the words are synonymous.

Once more: follow the description, and it is in every respect applicable, and only applicable, to a pastor. I desire particular attention may be paid to this point, for I intend presently to draw from it a very serious crimination.

In the charge to Timothy, *bishops* are mentioned, and the same applicability is observable. By these, Paul meant *elders* alone. Yet, strange omission! while he gives directions about the clergy, the deacons, and even the deacons' wives; laity and widows; to say nothing of a cloak and parchments; he maintains an ominous silence on the topic of the duties of a prelate, the reverence due to him, or the etiquette Timothy was to observe towards his brother prelates.

It is remarkable, indeed, that in the whole range of the New Testament, with its 27 books and 260 chapters, specific and minute as the directions often are, we cannot find a solitary chapter, or part of a chapter, suitable to be read as a charge to a prelate at his consecration. *It is a fact to which your special attention is invited, that prelatists are compelled to BORROW, on such occasions, passages which are in reality, by their own acknowledgment, appropriate only to the ordination of PRESBYTERS; such as Paul's charge to Timothy, and his charge to the elders of Ephesus.* To such a pitiable destitution are they reduced, as to be compelled to borrow from another service; and thus an IMPOSITION is practised upon the people every time a prelate is ordained, by reading for their warrant a selection from Scripture which is no warrant at all. We certainly have a right to expect that at such a time, if ever, they would bring forward their clearest and strongest warrant; and if they have nothing better to offer than this, we must regard it as a lamentable confession of inability.

But it is contended that the name "*Bishop*," came into use immediately after the apostolic age, up to which period the name "*Apostle*," had been appropriated to the prelate. "*Apostle*" was then the original and scriptural appellation for the supreme diocesan ruler, and "*Bishop*" was a less ancient and unscriptural title, superseding it. This looks very much like

surrendering the main point, and it is certainly abandoning Scripture ground. It is observable that the New Testament is totally silent in regard to any such anticipated change, and makes no provision to meet it.

We acknowledge that the scriptural meaning of the term "Bishop," did undergo a change after the Apostles' days, and was made to include a wider range of superintendence; in which we coincide with the admissions made by Bingham, the great English authority on the antiquities of the Church, and after him by the leading American writers, from Ravenscroft to Wainwright; but we ascribe the change to a cause altogether different. *That cause was the insidious entrance of corruption.* The leaven of ambition was beginning to work. The love of power and domination which once fired the bosoms even of the sons of Zebedee, prevailed and became universal. An office no greater at first than President, Chairman, or Standing moderator of the presbytery, grew by gradual usurpations to the claim of absolute predominance.

If we are told that the church, in those primitive times, was too pure to admit such a supposition, we reply, that it would be a great mistake indeed to imagine corruption then impossible. We must be careful not to be led away by sounds, and thence to infer the innocence of the primitive church. Without reminding you of the disorders rebuked by St. Paul among the Corinthians, or appealing to the testimony of the early Fathers, which is by no means flattering, we will content ourselves with reminding you of Diotrophes of Corinth, "who loved in all things to have the *preëminence*," disregarding even the letters of the Apostle John himself, and excommunicating individuals whom John deemed worthy to be called "brethren."

Nor does it relieve the difficulty to say that a usurpation of unscriptural authority could not have taken place silently. We answer that precisely such a change did occur, as must be admitted by all, in the case of Metropolitans, Archbishops, Archdeacons, Subdeacons, the date of whose precise origin is unknown, although indubitably subsequent to the apostolic era. The title of *Pope, Papa* or *Father*, now limited to the Bishop of Rome, was originally the common appellation of all bishops, and is to this day the familiar title of every priest in the Greek Church. It is ridiculous, therefore, to affirm that the change in question could not have taken place silently and

without resistance, when we find other changes of a similar character thus established. The price of liberty is incessant vigilance; and the early church paid the penalty of its easy neglect by its gradual subjugation beneath the yoke of prelacy. Of the possibility of such silent and gradual changes, moreover, we are furnished with a striking and lamentable example in New England. The Congregational churches were formerly provided each with one or more ruling elders, but in the course of time, the office has become almost wholly extinct.

But, still farther to strengthen our position, *we deny total silence on the subject*. The change did *not* take place wholly unnoticed. Jerome, in the fourth century, explicitly mentions it as a fact, and describes it as having "*gradually*" come in through pride and contention. He challenged the whole body of Bishops and Clergy to deny the fact, but conscious of its truth, not one of his contemporaries had the hardihood to do so; nay, St. Augustine, his correspondent, admitted the fact, and acknowledged that he owed his dignity to the custom of the Church. Now this is as strong an argument as we are in the habit of deducing for the truth of our Saviour's miracles, from the circumstance, that while the early infidels explained them by magic and other methods, not one of them ever denied the fact of their actual occurrence.

The formal suppression of the *Chorepiscopi*, or Bishops of country congregations, by the Council of Laodicea, in 360, and subjecting them to the complete control of the City Bishops, is another fact that speaks loudly on this subject. One privilege after another was gradually abridged, till in the ninth century we find them extinct through the direction of the Pope and on the ground that they were not truly Bishops.

The remarkable *diminution of the number of Bishops* in inverse proportion to the increase of the churches is another proof of a change having occurred restricting the title. In the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, which was designed for an ecumenical or general council, there were but forty bishops or prelates. Over all England, with her 10,000 parishes, there are but twenty-seven, including two archbishops. Over Spain, with her 146,696 clergy, there are but sixty-one, including the archbishops. Contrast with these small numbers, the fact of 600 bishops convened to try Paul of Antioch, about

the year 260 : more than 500 were present at the conference between Augustine and the Donatists, in a single province in Africa, about the year 410 ; and during the Vandalic persecution in Africa, in one single region, no less than 660 are reported as having fled, not counting the number murdered, imprisoned, and tolerated.

Among the 300 dioceses of Italy, some comprised a territory of but ten or twelve miles square, and others were within three miles of each other. Asia Minor, which was about 600 miles long by 300 broad, was covered by no less than 400 dioceses, giving, on an average, one bishop to a little over every twenty miles square, but in some instances we know the territory was less. In the small province of Caria, embracing a territory considerably less than that of New Jersey, over which there is but one " Lord Bishop" to claim jurisdiction, there were anciently no fewer than thirty-one dioceses, each from ten to fifteen miles in circuit.

Is it credible that all these were prelates in the modern sense, when the districts of country in which they resided were not larger than regions which a very few prelates are competent to manage in modern times? There is but one mode of explanation,—that the name " Bishop" did not lose but gradually its scriptural sense of *parochial* superintendence.

Surely this point is sufficiently clear ; and it must be conceded, on all hands, that that class of texts which describe the functions of a bishop, specify the functions, not of a Diocesan, but of a Parochial bishop.

VII. We proceed to that class of texts which make the distinction of the Apostolate, consist not in the sole power of Ordination and General Superintendence of the Churches, but in being *Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection*, and having their testimony accompanied with the *power of working miracles*, for credentials.

The Apostle Peter has stated the true object of the appointment. When the hundred and twenty disciples were all assembled after the suicide of Judas, Peter proposed to supply the vacancy in the apostolic college, in these words, " wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained *to be a witness of his resur-*

rection:" not, to share the onerous rule and government of churches which as yet had no existence, but to supply the place of an eye witness of all that had happened to the Redeemer. The principle of the selection is obvious. The cardinal fact of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, on which depends the whole verity of the Christian religion, must be attested by witnesses of unquestionable competency. It was not enough to be a disciple; the person called to this duty must have been qualified by such an acquaintance with Christ before and after his resurrection, as would enable him to identify his person. Therefore they chose one who had companied with Jesus during the term of his ministry, and whose testimony would be unimpeachable.

Paul himself refers to his being miraculously qualified for the office of an apostle by a *vision* of the glorified Redeemer. To those who disputed his authority, he adduced but two proofs on which he rested his claim,—first, *his having seen the Lord*: next, his ministerial success. "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* Are ye not my work in the Lord?" He seems to allude to it again, when he tells the Corinthians, "After that he was seen of James, then of *all the apostles*. And last of all, he was *seen of me also*, as of one [i. e. as of an apostle] born out of due time. For I am the *least* of the *apostles*, that am not meet to be called an *apostle*, because I have persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am." Cor. xv. 7—10. This was said in connexion with the propounding of the death, burial, and *resurrection* of Christ, which he had preached them, and of which he certified as a competent witness. It was said, moreover, in close connexion with the mention of the other apostles, as if this were an indispensable qualification.

Of their testimony miraculous gifts constituted the appropriate credentials. Paul reminded the Church of Corinth, "Truly the *signs of an apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, in *signs and wonders and mighty deeds*." There was the seal of God's approval visibly affixed to the apostolate. It might be well for our modern bishops, who claim to be successors of the apostles, and to have the sole legitimate claim to that title, (a title which nothing but the *characteristic modesty* of the order, as they would have us believe, has permitted to fall

into desuetude,) to ponder this remarkable intimation of St. Paul. They have derived many an argument from intimations not half as clear and striking as this. And it may not be an impertinent inquiry, which the people are authorized by these words of St. Paul to put, if the "*signs of an apostle*" consist in *miraculous gifts*, are we not entitled to expect like satisfactory credentials at their hands?

Functions like those before described, of course, ceased with the death of the Witnesses; and it is idle, therefore, to talk of Successors of the Apostles. *They left no successors behind them.* Their exercise of ecclesiastical authority and discipline proves nothing; for this they could do in their capacity of presbyters, evangelists, or special missionaries, such as Eusebius describes, regulating what was in an unformed state, and then leaving the Churches to govern themselves, and when it was necessary, aiding them with parental counsel.

VIII. That class of texts remains to be mentioned which authorizes us to believe that the Christian Church was modeled not after the *Temple Service*, but after the *Synagogue*.

Time will not allow us to do more than remind you of the evanescent duration of the Levitical economy. The Epistle to the Hebrews is filled with an elaborate argument to this purport. The Levitical economy was but a shadow of good things to come, and when those coming benefits arrived, was to be superseded by them and abolished. The apostle Paul alludes to the temporary nature of the Mosaic law and ritual again very plainly in 2 Cor. iii. 11, "For if that which is *done away* was glorious, much more that which *remaineth* is glorious." Here he describes the old economy as "*done away.*" But if it be done away, or superseded, if all its parts and services, its "worldly sanctuary," and its sacrifices, were but figurative and typical, and passed away as shadows over the harvest field, it is altogether unwarranted to single out the *officers* thereof as permanent when all else is abolished. Therefore no argument can be legitimately drawn from a triple order of gradation in the Temple service; a High Priest, Priests, and Levites, imagined to correspond to Prelate, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Christian Church.

This view of the subject derives additional force, when it is borne in mind that the term "priest" is not once applied to the Christian ministry in the whole New Testament. This pre-

latists themselves are forced to admit. The only solitary text that looks the least that way is Rom. 15: 16, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." This is a passage so evidently figurative, that weak indeed must be the cause that leans on it for its sole support. The whole church, or company of believers, are several times styled "priests;" they are addressed as "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;" they *all* are to "offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus." Nor have we any officer corresponding to the High Priest of the Jews, upon earth. Jesus is our only High Priest. "He is the apostle and High Priest of our profession, a high priest of good things to come, and by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Our High Priest is now in the Upper Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, performing the intercessional functions of his office.

If the temple service is to be our model, the Romish church is the only one that strictly adheres to it. They are the only consistent prelatists. They have Levites, or Deacons; Priests, or Presbyters; Heads of Courses and Chief Priests, or Bishops and Archbishops; and finally the apex of the pyramid is surmounted by a Pope, High Priest, or Supreme Pontiff.

We may observe here, in passing, the great importance of a single word. There are no priests properly in the Christian church. The very name is not once mentioned. It appears to be studiously avoided. Yet if men may slide in the little word "priest," as a corruption of the word "presbyter," you perceive the evils it introduces along with it. It opens the door for a comparison with the old Jewish priesthood, and its gradation of order, and thus slyly prepares the way for the entrance of prelacy, and not only of prelaey, but of transubstantiation; for a priest is nothing without his correlates, an altar and a sacrifice. The next step must therefore be to provide him with an altar, and furnish it with a sacrifice, the sacrifice of the mass. There can be no doubt that the gross and superstitious errors of the church of Romé originated in this way. Cyprian was not the only individual who loved to magnify the clerical office, and who hankered after the pomp of the Levitical priesthood. Thus the term "priest" being gradually fixed

in the church, the prelate, and the impious sacrifice of the mass, easily followed.

It is plain, from what has been said, that the gospel church is not framed after the model of the temple service. Let us examine its analogy with the model of the synagogue.

Is there a *presiding minister* in every Christian church or congregation? So was there in each synagogue. He was called the angel or messenger of the church, (a term which sheds light on the angels of the seven churches in Asia Minor, mentioned in the Apocalypse,) the overseer, superintendent, or bishop of the congregation. His duties corresponded with those of a Christian pastor.

Is there a *plurality of elders* in every church? So was there a bench of elders, three or more, who participated in the government of each synagogue. But elders were not recognized in the temple.

Are *deacons* necessary officers in each church? So were there deacons, who were not rulers in each synagogue. But the office was unknown in the temple.

Are the *public reading of the Scriptures*, and *preaching*, enjoined in the church? So they were every Sabbath day in the synagogue. But neither reading the Scriptures nor preaching were a part of the ritual of the temple. On the contrary, so far from assembling every Sabbath day for the purpose, the Jews were only required to appear in the temple three times a year, at particular festivals.

Is *discipline*, by excommunication and the like, found in the Christian church? So was it in the synagogue. Our Lord predicted that his followers would render themselves liable to be "put out of the synagogue," and the blind man whom he restored to sight, was actually thus "cast out," or excommunicated.

Is *ordination by imposition of hands* a rite of the church? So it was in the synagogue. But it was not in the temple. We might add, that neither were circumcision, nor the passover, corresponding to baptism and the Lord's Supper, temple rites.

Should provision be made for *the poor* by *weekly collections* in the Church? Such collections were weekly made by the deacons of the Synagogue; another item wherein the analogy with the Temple service fails.

And, to mention no more, is the *altar absent* in the Christian Church, and its place supplied by a *pulpit or desk* in a central position? Precisely so was it in the Synagogue. Indeed, so striking was the resemblance between the Jewish and Christian places of worship, that when the Jews were persecuted at Rome, the Christian Churches were broken into and violated because they were confounded with the Synagogues.

For all these reasons we conclude that the model of the Christian Church was not the Temple, but the Synagogue; and that as we find in each Synagogue, a *bishop* or presiding minister, a bench of *ruling elders*, and a company of *deacons* to attend to the poor, so we should constitute each individual Christian church with like officers.

In order to assist the memory, and to concentrate the light collected from so many quarters, let us now recapitulate the arguments that have been advanced.

Several preliminary topics were touched upon, for the purpose of clearing the way to the main defence on Scriptural ground. It was stated that however firmly we may advocate our favorite mode of church government, we can do so, and by our standards are bound to do so, in a *spirit of charity* to those who differ from us, nor do our principles compel us to *unchurch* other bodies of professing Christians.

As far as the necessity or use of a *Succession* are involved, we have a perfectly valid succession through the line of presbyters.

If *piety and good works* be made the test, while we would be far from boasting, we have no need to hang our heads.

An appeal to the *early fathers* results more favorably than otherwise to our claims, though we depend not on them.

We have the concurrent suffrage of the *Reformers* on our side, some of whom declined bishoprics on principle. And it was shown that the insinuation of necessity as the reason of dispensing with bishops is the last a prelatist should bring forward, since it would imply a state of things most disreputable to the order.

The question of *liturgies* and the like, we showed, was perfectly irrelevant, being only a subordinate question.

As far as congeniality with the *republican spirit* is required, Presbyterianism harmonizes admirably with Republican institutions. Prelacy, on the other hand, harmonizes as decidedly

with monarchy. Let prelacy but become the universal religion of the United States, and we may not unreasonably anticipate a diminished aversion to the introduction of monarchical principles into the State.

The last preliminary remark was, that in point of *efficiency, discipline, and order*, our system of church government yields to none.

But notwithstanding all these circumstances are in our favor, so strenuous are we for adherence to the word and will of God when clearly revealed, so stoutly do we hold to the sentiment that in the Bible is the religion of Protestants, that could it be plainly shown that we are destitute of Scripture warrant, we would yield the contest, and without a murmur embrace any system that is manifestly more Scriptural. This, we are of opinion, cannot be shown; but on the other hand, a diligent investigation of the Scriptures will furnish ample warrant for our practices. This was the result at the Reformation, when the Scriptures were explored, not to find arguments to vindicate some existing practice, but to extract and reconstruct thence the original and long forgotten system.

In stating the Scriptural argument, it may be remarked, that we have several classes of texts which give their cumulative weight against prelacy on the one hand, and independency on the other, and can be adapted to no other system but one of Presbyterian parity.

One class of texts discountenances *all ambition, domineering, and struggling for superior rank* among the clergy.

Another exhibits the apostles speaking of themselves as *equals among brethren*, in short, as simple *Presbyters*.

A third class shows a *plurality* of bishops or superintendents in a single city or congregation.

A fourth describes the *eldership* or *presbytery* doing what is claimed for *prelates*, ordaining, governing, and the like.

In that class of texts which describes the primitive ordinations, there is not the slightest intimation of the communicating of any *official superiority*.

A sixth class of texts, in describing the duties of a *bishop*, makes them coincide perfectly with those of a *pastor*—while there is a total omission of any like description of the functions of a prelate, or of any charge suitable to be read to a prelate at his consecration.

From a seventh class, we learn that the specific distinction of the apostolate consisted not in the sole power of government, but in *bearing witness of Christ's resurrection*, for which they were qualified by having seen and conversed with the Lord, while *miraculous gifts* constituted their credentials.

Finally, we directed attention to that class of texts which authorizes us to construct the Christian church not after the model of the *temple*, but of the *synagogue*, in which there was a *representative government*—by a session of *elders* chosen out of the male members, together with a *bishop* and *deacons*.

Such are some of the reasons which decide our ecclesiastical preferences. Many points have been omitted for the sake of brevity, as any one at all familiar with the topic will have noticed. It does not become us to dogmatize, or to usurp for ourselves an infallibility which we deny to others; we therefore do not affirm that we are exclusively and unqualifiedly right, and all others as absolutely and unqualifiedly wrong; but we think we are warranted in saying that when an array of arguments, to say the very least, so plausible, can be presented in favor of our views, those who differ from us ought to be more modest in their censures. We are not totally destitute of reason or of scripture.

Presbyterian ministers do not indeed often obtrude their sectarian tenets upon the public. They are not in the habit of introducing them into every sermon, nor of indulging in incessant laudations of their own church-peculiarities; but it is not because they are defenceless. Their silence is prompted by higher reasons. They look on these external matters as of second-rate importance; as the scaffold is useful to the construction of the temple, but is not itself the temple. That is built of "lively stones," of spiritual worshippers. Hence they are fonder of dwelling on the fundamental doctrines and practical duties of the gospel, what we are to believe concerning God, and what duties God requires of us. Let others make broad their phylacteries, and tithe the mint, anise, and cummin; and count every pin, and loop, and tassel, of the tabernacle; be our eye fixed on the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth. We hold to no superstitious amulets, or mystic rites, like the Prayer-Mills of the Tartars; we acknowledge no magic charm in the sacraments to sanctify or save; we preach repentance toward God, faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ, and the necessity of a complete and thorough regeneration of the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. These are the weapons of our warfare, not carnal, but spiritual, and, under God, mighty to the pulling down of Satan's strong-holds.

I remark in conclusion,

1. It appears that *the Head of the Church has not left the company of believers without a wholesome form of government.* There are constituted authorities in the church, who are to "rule," not capriciously, not arbitrarily, but according to fixed and definite principles easily collected from the Scriptures. The church is not a mere *voluntary association*, at liberty to adopt any form of government, or none, at pleasure. It is voluntary only in so far, that no one can be compelled to be or remain in it, against his will; but no farther. It is an *organization*, the schedule of which, in its main features, is prescribed by the authority of Christ.

Discipline is indispensable to the purity and efficiency of a church, as of any society. To entrust its administration to a single man, would be unwise; for if he were timid, he would be afraid to discipline at all; if he were intrepid, he might abuse his power to domineer. To entrust it to the whole congregation, would expose it to the caprice, rashness, or prejudice, which characterize, at times, all popular assemblies. A representative government is therefore the wisest; in which the democratic principle has sufficient scope in electing the officers, while self-interest will ordinarily make choice of the most capable. We readily find parallels in civil governments. We see it in the *Demogerontes* of the Greeks, or council of old men; in the *Senators* of Rome, or old men, (from *Senis*, an old man,) in the *Aldermen*, or *Elder-men*, of the Saxons; in the *Elders* of the Municipal Councils of the Hebrews. The qualification of age, implying wisdom and experience, has always been pre-eminently signified by the appellation.

A bench of Elders, a parochial Presbytery, a *little Senate*, in every congregation, chosen and picked out of the whole number by solemn vote; men who are past the levity of youth; grave and dignified in their manners; able to command respect; of good judgment and common sense; sustaining a reputable character; of solid talents and scriptural information; of undoubted piety and zeal; and of an active, leading,

practical turn ; such a bench of elders must be an acquisition to any church. They constitute a powerful check against the encroachments of clerical ambition, and the caprices of turbulent anarchy. They will form a noble corps of assistants to the pastor in spiritual affairs ; and the grand balance wheel of the ecclesiastical machine.

If God has cast your lines in such pleasant places, and given you so goodly a heritage, withhold not the gratitude that is due him for the privileges you enjoy. Prize them highly, and cling to them with conscientious tenacity. But above all, forget not, I implore you, that it will matter little to you, what sect is most scriptural in its order, or on whose register you stand enrolled, if your name be omitted from "the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven."

2. Since there are *regularly constituted rulers* in Christ's church by his appointment, it follows, *that deference, respect, and obedience, are legitimately due to them.* We would reiterate the entreaty of the apostle : " We beseech you, brethren, to recognize them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you : and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." These superintendents are of your own selection, and thence entitled to your confidence ; and their office is to watch and labor for your spiritual edification. Co-operate, therefore, with them ; facilitate their labors ; sustain their influence ; encourage their hearts. Repose in them the same confidence that the flock repose in their shepherd, the family in their father. "*And live,*" the apostle has added, "*live in peace with one another.*" How unlovely, how unattractive a spectacle does that church present, within whose bosom are seen contention, strife, jealousy, wrangling, insubordination, schism ! The house that is divided against itself, is near its fall. But when peace, harmony, and order prevail, " How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters !" Then the church looks forth lovely as the morning, with the clearness of the sun, tempered with the fairness of the moon, and terrible to her enemies " as an army with banners," well disciplined, well officered, and animated by one common spirit.

3. I cannot take leave of this subject, protracted as my re-

marks have been, without a moment's *affectionate expostulation* with a class of hearers, both numerous, and in many respects estimable, but who seem to think all their duty discharged by a decent respect for the institutions of the church, a regular attendance in the house of God, and a proportional contribution for the support and furtherance of the gospel. Allow me to urge upon you, my friends, to advance a step farther. Stand no longer in the outer court. Dismiss indifference and irresolution, and cast in your lot with ours. "Come with us, and we will show you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Will you, like the workmen of Noah, be content to assist in building an ark in which you yourselves decline taking refuge? Oh, that you would be persuaded, before the storm rises, and the billows swell with terrific roar, to accept the offered shelter! Then may you outride the storm, and land safely in the haven of perpetual peace. Ponder the solemn words of Christ, "If any man be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."