

Hugh M. ^{THE} *Swiston*
Ecclesiastical Catechism ;

BEING A *A. M. Swiston*

SERIES OF QUESTIONS,

RELATIVE TO

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

STATED AND ANSWERED,

WITH THE

SCRIPTURE PROOFS.

BY ALEXANDER M^cLEOD, A. M.

Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation in the City
of New-York.

“ Behold, this is the Law of the House.”—*Ezekiel.*

NEW-YORK :

Printed by HOPKINS & SEYMOUR, No. 118, Pearl-street.

1806.

164241

BX 318A
7116

PREFACE.

CHRIST JESUS has, in every age of the world, wisely adapted the external dispensations of religion to the state of his church. Religion itself, as an inward principle, is every where the same. Enoch and Abraham, Moses and Paul, were "all made to drink into one Spirit." But the forms of religious worship which these saints enjoyed, were exceedingly different. None, however, despised that dispensation under which divine love had placed him. Each of them submitted to it with reverence.

The New Testament dispensation, it must be confessed, exceeds in glory, and has a superior claim upon the attention of Christians. It is simple and appropriate, and it is to remain "until time shall be no longer." Ah! what disciple of Jesus shall despise it? All its ordinances are conducive to piety. Christianity, in its doctrines and institutions, is one connected system. No part can be altered,

without diminishing the beauty of the whole. Error in sentiment produces error in practice, and every deviation from truth tends to absolute apostacy. It is the duty of every disciple to know the law of the house of God. But there is a remarkable inattention, even among pious people, to this subject. Nor does the writer of these remarks expect to correct the evil. The subject on which he writes is unpopular, and the form in which he communicates his thoughts, places them beneath the notice of those who think themselves already sufficiently wise. He confidently hopes, however, that his labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

Christian Ministers are bound to the preservation of ecclesiastical order, as well as to the maintenance of evangelical doctrine. Success, in some measure, depends on the instruction which youth receives. Indeed, the religious education of the younger members of the church, is a principal part of the duty of a pastor.

The plan of instruction, in order to be complete, should embrace a view of the Church as a *visible society*. Christians are, in

general, shamefully ignorant of the constitution and order which the Redeemer hath established for his peculiar kingdom. The old cannot be easily taught, but the young may. And the form of question and answer is recommended, by experience, as the best for instructing the young disciple. But, although there are many excellent summaries of evangelical doctrine reduced to this form, and adapted to every capacity, there is none which illustrates the order and government of the Church.

The author of this Catechism felt this deficiency, and has endeavoured to supply it. He has for two years been making the experiment of the efficacy of this summary, upon the younger part of his own congregation, and the effect has been extremely pleasing. He hopes that it will be lasting—that sincere piety and Presbyterianism will grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength.

As the Catechism was composed for the benefit of his own congregation, so is it principally on their account published. He hopes also that it may be useful to

others, in directing their attention to this important subject ; and in confirming their attachment to what he believes to be the cause of truth and of Christ.

It is now committed to the providence of God, and commended to his blessing, accompanied with the earnest prayer of the author, that some more able presbyterian may be induced speedily to place the subject in a more luminous and interesting point of view.

QUESTIONS

RELATIVE TO

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. **FOR** what end did God appoint a Church in the world?

God appointed the Church, in order to display his own glory in the redemption of man ^a, and to prepare the redeemed for happiness ^b.

a Psalm 50. 2. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." b Eph. 4. 11, 12. "And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints."

2. What rule is the Church to observe, in endeavouring to glorify God, and lead the redeemed to the enjoyment of him?

The whole system of divine revelation is the only supreme rule ^a; and the scriptures of the New Testament more particularly define the constitution and order of the Christian Church ^b.

a 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect." b Gal. 5. 1. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

3. What is the use of human reason, in matters of religion?

Human reason, whether it be intended to signify the *faculty of reasoning*, or the *exercises of that faculty*, is, in no sense, the law of the Church ; but every man is bound to make use of all his powers of reasoning, in discovering and applying the will of the supreme Lawgiver.

2 Cor. 10. 5. " Casting down reasonings *, and bringing in-to captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

4. With what disposition is man to investigate Christ's law ?

Man should investigate the sacred writings, with a humble sense of his own imperfection ^a ; faithful dependence on God's spirit ^b ; diligent endeavours to discover truth, and sincere resolution to hold it fast ^c ; and with anxiety to have a saving interest in it ^d.

^a Ps. 119. 96. " I have seen an end of all perfection."

^b Ps. 51. 11. " Take not thy holy spirit from me." ^c 1

Thes. 5. 21. " Prove all things : Hold fast that which is good."

^d Phil. 3. 10. " That I may know him and the power of his resurrection."

5. What do the scriptures teach concerning the Church ?

The scriptures teach what CHRIST'S CHURCH IS : they describe the Fellowship, the Government, the Worship, and the Discipline, of the Church.

* Λογισμοί.

Questions relative to Church-Fellowship.

6. Is a knowledge of the nature of the Gospel Church necessary to salvation ?

Christ's perfect righteousness, and not our own knowledge, is the condition of our salvation ^a : but it is at our peril, if we continue wilfully ignorant of what God has revealed concerning the Church ^b.

a 2 Tim. 1. 9. " Who hath saved us—not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, in Christ Jesus."

b Mat. 5. 19. " Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven."

7. Wherein consists the sinfulness of inattention to the true nature of a Gospel Church ?

He, who is inattentive to the external form of the dispensation of grace, is guilty of despising the wisdom which orders it, the goodness which influences, and the authority which establishes it ; and is consequently exposed to the judgments of Jehovah.

Ezek. 44. 5—8. " And the Lord said unto me, Mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof. O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers ; and ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things,"

8. What is the Church of Christ?

The Church of Christ is a society separated from the rest of mankind by the dispensation of God's covenant.

Eph. 5. 24—26. "The Church is subject unto Christ.—Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it by the word."

9. Is there any propriety for the distinction, *visible* and *invisible* Church?

The distinction is necessary to the right understanding of the scriptures, which sometimes ascribe to the church what is true only of a visible church ^a, and at other times, what is not applicable to the body of visible professors ^b. The *visible* church comprehends all those who stand in an *external relation* to the Saviour; the *invisible* church, all those who being elected unto eternal life, are *savingly united* to Christ the head.

^a Jno. 15. 2. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." Rev. 2. 12—15. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam—also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." ^b Eph. 5. 27. "A glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—and without blemish."

10. Who are the members of the Church visible?

Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, and appear subject to his law, together with their children.

Acts, 2. 38, 39. 47. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ—for the promise

is unto you and to your children—and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

11. Are there more visible Churches than one?

The term **CHURCH** * is sometimes applied to a particular congregation ^a; sometimes to a particular ecclesiastical judicatory ^b; to several congregations united under one judicatory ^c: and by reason of the folly of man, there are distinct associations of professed Christians, more or less differing from one another ^d; and, with reference to these, it may be said there are more churches than one.

^a Acts 9. 31. “Then had the **CHURCHES** rest—and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” ^b Matt. 18. 17. “If

he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the **CHURCH**.”

^c Acts 8. 1. “There was a great persecution against the **CHURCH**, which was at Jerusalem.” ^d 1 Cor. 3. 3. “For

ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?”

12. Do the scriptures approve of the erection of distinct Churches?

The scriptures recommend, for the more convenient edification of the saints, the erection of distinct congregations, and of distinct judicatories ^a; but it is the sin and the loss of professed Christians to establish distinctions which destroy the unity of the visible church ^b; since, according to the institution of Christ, the **CHURCH** is **ONE** among all nations ^c.

^a Acts, 15. 41. “He went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.” ^b Jam. 3. 16. “Where envying

and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” ^c Eph.

* *Εκκλησία*. See Note A.

4. 3, 4. " Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

13. Seeing there are many distinct denominations of Christians, what is their duty toward one another?

To form one church of societies retaining their peculiar habits and prejudices, would only produce confusion, or substitute a base neutrality for christian zeal^a. It is the duty of every denomination to reform abuses, and endeavour, after conformity to the plan of church order appointed by Christ, that the Catholic Church may attain to the unity of the Spirit, and become visibly connected in the bond of peace^b.

a Rev. 2. 14, 15. " I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam—So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes." b Eph. 2. 21. " In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

14. What is the duty of an individual Christian toward the visible Church in her present divided state?

It is his duty to pray for every part of the Christian Church^a—to inquire what part adheres most closely to the holy scriptures; and without bias from interest or prejudice, join in that communion which is most pure, in which his edification may be best promoted, and in which he may prove most useful to the kingdom of Christ^b.

a Psalm 122. 6. " Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

b 1 Thess. 5. 21. " Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

15. Is there upon earth any Church perfectly pure?

The best men and the best societies on earth are imperfect. There may be churches, with the doctrine and order of which no positive evil is intermingled^b; but none can profess infallibility: No church can say, "We are deficient in nothing—we have given to every article, both in theory and practice, its true and relative importance."

a 1 Cor. 13. 12. "For now we see through a glass darkly."
b Rev. 3. 8. 11. "I know thy works—thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name—Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

16. Is every society calling itself a Church, to be considered as really a part of Christ's visible Church?

Associations founded upon principles opposite to the first principles of the oracles of God, are not churches, but synagogues of satan.

Rev. 2. 9. "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of satan."

17. Is it possible that all the Churches should so far degenerate, as to leave upon earth no visible Church of Christ?

There is no certainty that any one particular church in any particular part of the world, shall remain always pure^a; but a visible church of Christ shall be preserved, somewhere on earth, until the end of time^b.

a Rev. 3. 16. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."
b Matt. 16.

18. "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

18 What are the characteristics of the true Christian Church?

The characteristics of the true Church; are, sound doctrine ^a, a legitimate ministry ^b, and the proper use of the sacraments ^c.

^a Acts 2. 42. "And they continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

^b Acts 14. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

^c Matt. 28. 19. "Go ye therefore and disciple * all nations, baptizing them." Acts 20. 7. "The disciples came together to break bread."

19. Where have we the best system of Christian doctrine?

The whole word of God is the perfect and supreme standard of doctrine ^a. Many excellent summaries of revealed truth are exhibited in the Confessions and Articles of the Reformed Churches; but the Shorter Catechism, compiled by the Westminster assembly, is, in so small a compass, the most simple and comprehensive summary of the doctrines of the gospel ^b.

^a Matt. 28. 20. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

^b 2 Tim. 1. 13. "Hold fast the form of sound words."

20. What is a legitimate ministry?

When ecclesiastical officers are ordained according to Christ's appointment, and discharge the duties of their office agreeably to his direction, they are to be recognized as a lawful ministry.

1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

21. What is the proper use of the Sacraments?

The administration of them by an ordained minister of the gospel^a, in the true spirit of the institution^b, to the regularly received members of the church^c.

a Heb. 5. 4. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." b 1 Cor. 10. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" c 1 Cor. 12. 13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

22. Is saintship the criterion of membership in the Christian Church?

The church is a holy society, and unsanctified persons are very unfit members of it^a; nevertheless, in determining who shall be admitted to its privileges the visible church must judge, solely upon the evidence which the outward profession and conduct afford*.

a 1 Cor. 1. 2. "The church of God which is at Corinth,—sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." b Matt. 7. 20. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

23. Can it, in any case, be justifiable to receive an unregenerate man into church fellowship?

There is no excuse for those who receive into the church, or continue in it, any one who is known to live without practical godliness^a: it is not, however, the province of man to judge the heart^b; and

the purest church may have in its communion unregenerate men^c.

a 2 Tim. 3. 5. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." b Deut. 29. 29.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us." c Acts. 8. 13—

23. "Simon himself believed also, and—was baptized—but Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee—for thy heart is not right in the sight of God—for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

24. Can any person, who is not a saint, offer himself, with propriety, as a member of the visible Church?

He who does not love Jesus Christ, as offered in the gospel, in proposing to join the church, deceives himself, or acts the hypocrite^a; but it is the duty of all who hear the gospel to believe in Christ, and become members of the visible church^b.

a Tit. 1. 15. "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure." b Acts 2. 38. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

25. Is it lawful, on any account, to exclude a saint from Church Communion?

Saints may be left, in God's holy providence, to commit crimes worthy even of death, and scandalous to religion^a. We should exclude from church privileges those who live in the commission of scandalous transgressions, although it should appear probable that they are regenerate men^b.

a 2 Sam. 12. 7. "And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man." b 2 Thes. 3. 14, 15. "And if any man obey not

our word, by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

26. What are the necessary qualifications for church membership?

No adult person whatever is to be received into the Christian Church, or admitted to any of its privileges, unless he knowingly profess a belief of the doctrine of Christ^a; promise submission to all his institutions^b; evidence repentance of all his sins^c; and manifest no prevailing inclination to any kind of wickedness^d.

a Acts 8. 37. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

b Gal. 5. 22, 23. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

c Acts 26. 20. "And do works meet for repentance."

d Ps. 24. 3, 4. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity."

27. What is the end of church fellowship?

The end of church fellowship is to exhibit a system of sound principles^a; to maintain the ordinances of gospel worship pure and entire^b; to promote holiness in all manner of conversation^c; and to prepare the saints for glory^d.

a Col. 2. 2. "Being knit together in love—to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

b Rev. 2. 25. "That which ye have, hold fast till I come."

c Phil. 2. 15. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke."

d Col. 1. 12. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

28. Is the visible Church a voluntary society ?

Every man who hears the gospel, is bound, by the authority of the supreme Lawgiver, to enter into church fellowship ; and compliance with this law must be voluntary.

1 John 5. 3. " For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." Rom. 13. 10. " Love is the fulfilling of the law."

29. Do Christians, in a church state, commune upon the footing of any declared principles, to which each member must give his assent ?

Every society of rational beings, must be constituted upon the footing of some common principles, expressed or understood^a; the Church, as a society, requires some bond of union^b; it must also be explicit with the world^c; and it cannot answer the description of a scriptural Church, unless its members give their solemn assent to the terms upon which its privileges are conferred upon men^d.

a Amos 3. 3. " Can two walk together, except they be agreed ?" b Phil. 1. 27. " With one mind striving together, for the faith of the gospel."

c Jude, ver. 3. " Ye should earnestly contend for the faith." d Rev. 3. 10. " Thou hast kept the word of my patience."

30. What are those articles, which the visible Church should now adhere to, as terms of communion ?

It is not to be expected, that church members should think alike about every object of thought^a; but it is certain, they must be of one mind about

some articles^b. In forming ecclesiastical connexions, the articles upon which members unite, should EMBRACE nothing but what is *divine truth*^c, and should REJECT nothing for which the saints have already *faithfully contended*^d, the profession of which tends to promote order, knowledge, peace, and piety^e.

a 1 Tim. 1. 4. "Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying."

b Phil. 2. 2. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

c Mat. 15. 9. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

d Phil. 3. 16. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

e Rom. 14. 19. "Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

31. How is christian fellowship to be maintained?

Christian fellowship is to be maintained by a steadfast continuance in the faith and worship of the gospel^a; by a constant endeavouring to prevent all occasions of stumbling;^b and a conscientious fulfilling of all relative duties^c.

a Acts 2. 42. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine."

b Rom. 14. 13. "That no man put a stumbling block, or occasion to fall, in his brother's way."

c Phil. 2. 4. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Questions relative to Church Government.

32. Has the Christian Church any form of Government, distinct from the civil governments under which christians live ?

The Christian Church is a regular visible society, distinct from civil society ; it is ONE amidst all nations, although these nations differ widely in their constitutions of government ; and it has, for itself, a form of government independent of, and distinct from, the political order of any nation upon earth.

1 Cor. 12, 13. " For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

33. Is the form of Church Government left by the Divine Lawgiver, to be settled by christian prudence, in accommodation to the various circumstances in which church members may be placed ?

Infinite wisdom foresees all the circumstances with which the Church can, at any time, be affected ^a : The form of church government is wisely adapted to every state of the Church ^b : It is not alterable at the pleasure of men ^c ; but is settled by divine authority ^d.

^a Rev. 3. 13. " I know thy works, and where thou dwellest."

^b Rev. 1. 20. " The mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks, The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches ; and the

seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven Churches." c Heb. 8. 5. "See that thou make all things agreeable to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." d Is. 9. 6. "The government shall be upon his shoulders."

34. How does it appear that the form of church government is divinely appointed?

That there is some particular form of government established for the New Testament Church, may be shown from the *necessity* of it—*Prophecies* respecting it—Christ's *care* of the Church—and the actual *description* of the different parts of church government, in the New Testament.

35. What need has the Church of a form of government?

Reason teaches, that human society cannot exist without order; necessity compels every Church to establish some kind of government: The Jewish Church is universally admitted to have had a form of government of divine appointment; and, still the Church requires authority sufficient to preserve order, recover transgressors, encourage the pious, and censure the rebellious; and to which each member must yield conscientious submission.

Heb. 13. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account."

36. Do the prophecies of the Old Testament, afford evidence that the New Testament Church has some form of government which is of divine right?

The prophets looked forward to the coming of Christ, as in every respect an advantage to the

Church ; they do not intimate that the Church, already enjoying a government of divine appointment, should, then, be left without order or officers. The prophets were divinely authorized to teach, that Messiah would establish for his peculiar kingdom, a definite constitution of government, to be maintained until the end of time.

Is. 9. 6, 7. " His name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, —The Prince of peace—upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it, with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

37. What evidence does Christ's care over the Church afford for the appointment of an appropriate government for it, as a visible society ?

He who loves the Church, and purchased it, who is the only Lord and Lawgiver, who manages the whole world in subordination to the interest of the Church, seeing the necessity of some form of government, would not leave it to be fashioned according to the caprice of imperfect man.

Psalms 87. 3. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." Isai. 33. 20. 23. "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down—The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King ; he will save us."

38. Does it appear, from the New Testament, that there is a government actually established in the Christian Church ?

The Church is represented, in the New Testament, as consisting of two distinct orders—*Rulers* and *Ruled* ^a; the province of each is defined, and

the duty of each described and illustrated by appropriate examples ^b.

a Heb. 13. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." b Tit. 1. 5. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless."

39. How shall we ascertain what particular form of church government is of divine appointment?

Whatsoever is agreeable to *sound reasoning from established truths*—supported by *approved examples*—sanctioned by *divine approbation*—established by *divine acts*—or recommended by *directions from God*, is of divine right *; and that form of ecclesiastical government which has each part of divine right, and embraces whatsoever is divinely authorized, is, exclusively, of divine appointment, and the proper government of the Christian Church.

40. What different forms of government have professed Christians adopted for their respective Churches?

It would be an endless and useless task to describe all the forms, according to which Churches have been governed. There are, however, *three principal and distinct forms of ecclesiastical government*, to which all others, any way worthy of notice, may be referred, although the shades of difference are indefinite; these are, the *Presbyterian*, the *Episcopalian*, and the *Independent forms*.

41. Which of these forms of government is the most agreeable to the holy scriptures?

Episcopacy and Independency have each of them some points of coincidence with Presbytery, and are so far agreeable to the divine institution; but the *Presbyterian plan of church government is alone of divine right.*

42. Is it asserted in the New Testament, that the Presbyterian is the only lawful form of church government?

All the parts of Presbyterianism are authorized by the New Testament Scriptures. It is for the thing, not the name, we should contend; nevertheless, even the name is scriptural. The church officers are called Presbyters^a, and the judicatories, Presbyteries^b; so that both name and thing are warranted by the word of God.

a Acts 14. 23. "They had ordained them Presbyters*, Elders, in every church." b 1 Tim. 4. 4. "Laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

43. What are the principal parts of the Presbyterian form of church government?

In describing the form of ecclesiastical government, it is proper to keep in view, as necessary axioms, *the exclusive Headship of Jesus Christ—the unity of the Church—and that all the authority of church rulers is ministerial and subordinate.* The form of government will be understood by considering attentively the powers of *church officers*, and of the *courts of judicature.*

* Πρεσβυτερος. G Note D.

Of Church Officers.

44. What is a Church Ruler?

An officer or ruler in the Christian Church, is a person invested with authority by Jesus Christ, to act in his name, in the discharge of certain specified duties, for the maintenance of truth, the edification of the saints, and the glory of God.

2 Cor. 13. 10. "The power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction."

45. How many kinds of officers did Christ appoint in his Church?

Christ has appointed in his Church two kinds of officers; the one, *extraordinary*—and the other, *ordinary*.

46. What is an extraordinary officer?

An extraordinary officer is appointed by God, without the intervention of the stated and ordinary human agency, to answer an occasional important end, endowed with supernatural gifts, and attested by a miraculous power as the evidence of his appointment.

47. Were there any extraordinary officers appointed under the Old Testament dispensation of grace?

Under the Old Testament, the canon of scripture was not complete, and extraordinary revela-

tions were frequently necessary—The patriarchs generally, and Moses, and the subsequent prophets, as distinct from the stated ministers of religion in the Jewish Church, were *extraordinary* officers.

48. Was there an ordinary stated ministry authorized to officiate in the Jewish Church?

The management of religious institutions, connected at first with the tabernacle, and afterwards with the temple, was committed into the hands of a stated ministry, and the various synagogues were also governed by a regular class of officers.

49. What officers did the Head of the Church appoint to officiate in the temple service?

The ministry of the tabernacle and temple was conducted by the High Priest ^a, the Priests ^b, and Levites ^c.

a Lev. 21. 10. "The High Priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured." b Mal. 27. "For the Priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts." c Numb. 8. 14, 15. "Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

50. Is the social and public worship, conducted in the Jewish synagogue, to be considered as of divine appointment?

It is incredible, that there should be but one place of public social worship in the whole nation of Israel; the scriptures mention synagogues as of God's appointment ^a; the worship proper to the

synagogue is mentioned with approbation^b; Christ with his disciples attended the synagogues, as the places of ordinary social worship^c; and he even took a part in the public service^d.

^a Psalm 74. 8. "All the synagogues* of God in the land."

^b Nehem. 8. 4—6. "And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood—and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people—and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord."

^c Mark 1. 21. "And they went into Capernaum, and straightway, on the Sabbath-day, he entered into the synagogue."

^d Luke 4. 16. 21. "And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day—and there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias—and he began to say unto them, This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears."

51. What public officers ministered ordinarily in the Jewish Synagogue?

In the Jewish synagogue there were several officers; and these were authorized to conduct the public worship, preserve the order, and manage the finances of the congregation.

Mat. 1. 22. "Behold there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name."

52. Whether does the external order of the Church resemble more, that of the temple or of the synagogue?

The temple and the temple service were local and typical; and are, together with the priesthood, abolished in the death of Christ. The constitution and order of the synagogue being more simple, and adapted to the edification of the saints, not

in Judea only, but in every nation under heaven, the synagogue is the model upon which the Church, with some appropriate variations, is constituted; and in the apostolic age, the name Synagogue was applied to a Christian Church.

James, 2. 2. "For if there come unto your assembly—*synagogue*, * a man with a gold ring."

53. Is it intimated in the New Testament, that the government of the church is similar to that of the synagogue?

Intimation was early given, that all that was typical, and merely ceremonial in the order of the Jewish Church, must be given up^a; that the Christian mode of worship should be adapted to the situation of the Church in every nation, not by its undeterminateness, but by its unalterable simplicity^b; familiar and simple customs were selected, and positively appointed as the Christian sacraments^c; the disciples were habituated to the order and worship of the synagogue by Christ and his apostles^d; Jesus himself refers us to the forms of judgment in the synagogue for our imitation^e; and the very names of the Christian Church officers are taken from the ancient synagogue^f: all this could not have taken place, without a design to make the order of the Church similar to that of the synagogue.

a Gal. 5. 1. "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

b John 4. 21. 23. "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

and in truth." c Matt. 26. 26. "And as they were eating Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples."

d Luke 4. 16. "And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

e 1 Cor. 6. 2. "* Are ye unwilling to judge the smallest matters?"

f Acts 20. 17. "He sent to Ephesus and called the elders † of the church."

54. Are the transactions of Jewish synagogues to be considered as precedents obligatory on the Church?

It is an instance of both the wisdom and kindness of the Redeemer, to establish appropriate institutions, familiar to his disciples^a; and the history of the synagogue is useful to illustrate the principles of church government; but no further are its transactions obligatory precedents, than Christ himself refers us to them. Divine appointment alone constitutes a divine ordinance^b.

a Math. 11. 30. "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

b Isa. 8. 20. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

55. Did Christ ordain any officers with extraordinary authority, in the New Testament Church?

The change of external dispensation, required a series of miracles to attest its divine origin: Christ, upon his exaltation, did therefore appoint persons endowed with supernatural gifts, and extraordinary authority; such as apostles, evangelists, prophets,^a and interpreters of tongues, to settle the constitution of the church agreeably to his will^a, and to

* See Note F. † Πρεσβυτερος.

commit the administration of it unto the hands of the ordinary and permanent officers ^b.

a Eph. 4. 10—13. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ—till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." b Acts 14.

21—23. "They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith,—and when they had ordained them presbyters* in every church, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had believed."

56. Wherein did the office of an apostle differ from that of an ordinary christian minister?

The apostles often take the name, and act in the character, of ordinary ministers ^a; but the apostolic office was temporary and extraordinary. The apostle must have personally seen the Lord ^b; must have obtained, immediately from Christ, his commission ^c; must have the power of communicating miraculous powers to others ^d; and possess authority, not limited in its exercise to a particular parish or diocese, but extending equally over all the churches ^e.

a 1 Pet. 5. 1. "The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter †." b 1 Cor. 9. 1. Am I

not an apostle ‡? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?

c Gal. 1. 12. "I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." d Acts 19. 6.

e "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy

* Elders.

† Elder.

‡ Note G.

Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." e 1 Cor. 7. 17. " So ordain I in all churches."

57. What is the nature of the evangelists' office ?

The evangelists were commissioned to travel under the direction of the apostles among the infant churches, ordaining ministers and settling congregations according to all the parts of church order.

Acts 21. 8. We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist *. 2 Tim. 4. 5. " Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

58. Did the other extraordinary officers take an active part in the government of the Church ?

All those who had the power of working miracles conferred upon them, may have also been engaged in the ordinary duties of the ministry ; but so far as they acted with miraculous powers, they cannot be imitated, nor is their office any department of the stated and ordinary government of the church.

1 Cor. 12. 29. " Are all apostles ? are all prophets ?" Chap. 13. 8. " But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease."

59. What are the ordinary officers of the Christian Church ?

The ordinary and permanent officers of the church, are Presbyters and Deacons—and of the presbyters there are two distinct kinds : *teaching elders or pastors, and ruling elders.*

* Note H.

60. Is there any warrant in the New Testament for such an officer as the Pastor to continue in the Church?

While the church continues on earth, and Christians must be busied in worldly occupations, nothing is more *reasonable* than that there should be certain persons appointed to devote their time to the study and exposition of the holy scriptures, in order to conduct the public worship, reprove sinners, and edify the saints: It is also *scriptural*: such officers were in every organized church: the apostles and evangelists settled them as the stated ministry of every church^b: God hath appointed them^c: Christ gave them as a fruit of his exaltation^d; and the Holy Ghost made them bishops, to feed the church of God on earth^e.

a Acts 14. 23. "They had ordained them elders in every church."

b Tit. 1. 5. "And ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

c 1 Cor. 12. 28. "And God hath set some in the church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers."

d Eph. 4. 11. "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

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

61. What are the duties of the Pastor?

The teaching elder, or pastor, is authorized to explain the scriptures to the church assembled for public worship^a; to conduct the different parts of

* Επισκοπος. Note I.

public devotion^b; to dispense the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper^c; to administer church discipline^d; to inspect the religious state of persons and families^e; and so rule in the church according to Christ's law^f.

a 2 Tim. 4. 2. "Preach the word." b Acts 13. 15.

"And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

c 1 Cor. 10. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" d 1 Tim.

5. 20. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

e Acts 20. 28. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock."

f 1 Tim. 5. 17. "The elders that rule well."

62. Are the names by which christian ministers are designated in scripture, expressive of different grades of ecclesiastical authority?

The names pastor, presbyter, bishop, angel* of the church, and teacher, are descriptive of the various duties of the same office, and are indiscriminately applied, in the scriptures, to the same officers^a: Among the ministers of the gospel there is no superiority, except what influence age, and piety, and learning, and talents, and zeal, may give to one above another^b.

a Mat. 20. 26. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister."

b 1 Tim. 5. 17. "Let the elders that RULE WELL, be counted worthy of DOUBLE honour."

63. How is the pastor invested with authority?

The Head of the church did lodge in the hands

* Ἀγγελος της Εκκλησίας. Note K.

of his extraordinary messengers all ministerial authority to put the constitution of the church in full operation^a; and this having been done, the pastor, according to that constitution, is ordained to office by a presbytery acting in the name of Christ, and by his authority^b.

^a Mat. 16. 19. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." ^b 1 Tim. 4. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the LAYING on of the HANDS* of the presbytery."

64. Is the pastoral office a permanent institution?

The end of the institution—The conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, and the conviction of gainsayers, is not peculiar to any age^a: Christ has promised his presence with his ministers, continued to the end of the world by succession^b; the pastoral office is not a temporary expedient, but a permanent institution.

^a Acts 26. 18. "I send thee to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." ^b Mat. 28. 20. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

65. What qualifications are necessary in a candidate for the ministry?

An office of so much importance to the declarative glory of God, and to the salvation of immor-

tal souls, is not to be rashly committed into the hands of any man^a: No man may lawfully be ordained to the gospel ministry, without previously giving satisfactory evidence of soundness in the faith, good talents for public teaching, sincere piety, and a blameless walk and conversation^b.

a 1 Tim. 5. 22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

b 2 Tim. 2. 2. "And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Tit. 1. 7—9. "For an overseer*, a bishop, must be blameless as the steward of God—a lover of hospitality—sober, just, holy; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught."

66. What are the advantages of the presbyterian mode of ordination?

It is of divine appointment, and usually accompanied with God's blessing; besides, it is so reasonable, and even necessary to decency and order, that those who vehemently oppose it in argument, are obliged to adopt it in fact: All the churches which have any pretensions to christian order in supporting a standing ministry, are in the habit of ordaining men to preach the gospel, with laying on the hands of a plurality of ordained ministers.

67. Is he, who, without regular ordination, takes it upon himself to exercise the power of a gospel minister, to be recognized as an officer of Jesus Christ?

A person who is not ordained to office by a presbytery, has no right to be received as a minister of

Christ^a: His administration of ordinances is invalid^b: no divine blessing is promised upon his labours^c: it is rebellion against the Head of the church to support him in his pretensions^d: Christ has excluded him in his providence from admission through the ordinary door^e; and if he has no evidence of miraculous power to testify his extraordinary mission, he is an impostor^f.

a Rom. 10. 15. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" b Heb. 5. 4. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself." c Jer. 23. 32. "Yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore, they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." d 2 John ver. 11. "He that bid-
deth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." e Rev. 3. 7. "He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, shutteth, and no man openeth." f John 10. 1. "He that entereth not by the door, the same is a thief and a robber."

68. Is it necessary to consider all professed Christians, except those who are called presbyterians, as in no sense belonging to the christian church?

Mere names are of little real value^a: The gospel, in whatever manner made known, offers Christ as a Saviour^b: and he that believeth, is a member of Christ's church^c: presbyterial order is, indeed, divinely appointed for the perfecting of the saints, and all are bound to submit to it^d: but such is the imperfection of the virtuous, and the influence of carnal men even in church affairs, that many real Christians, to their own loss, and the injury of religion, are opposed to the true order of the visible

church ; and unsanctified men may call themselves presbyterians.

a Rom. 9. 6. " For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel," b Phil. 1. 18. " Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached ; and I therein do rejoice." c Mark 16. 16. " He that believeth—shall be saved." d Rev. 3. 22. " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

69. Are we to esteem, as valid, the administrations of episcopal and independent ministers ?

It is improper to countenance the usurpations of prelacy, or the irregularities of independency ; but since the bishop who *claims exclusively* the right of ordination, does, *in fact, relinquish it*, by associating other ministers with him in the imposition of hands ; and seeing independents also relinquish their claim of right of ordaining, each congregation its own pastor, by giving up the work into the hands of those who are ordained, the ordinances administered in the episcopal and independent churches are held valid : the ministry is essentially presbyterian, and upon this principle there is no necessity for re-ordaining or re-baptizing any who have had these ordinances in the communion of the independent or episcopal churches.

70. For what end is the office of the ruling elder instituted ?

As there existed in each synagogue a court composed of elders, after the manner of the sanhedrim, the supreme council of the Jews, so there are representatives of a christian congregation,

under the name of ruling elders or presbyters, associated with the pastor in the exercise of ecclesiastic authority, whose duty it is to watch over the flock, assist in the admission or exclusion of members, warn and censure the unruly, visit and comfort the afflicted.

71. Is it reasonable that such officers should be associated with the pastor, in the management of the affairs of a congregation ?

The pastor of a congregation must employ a great part of his time in studying the oracles of God—in composing sermons—in qualifying himself with various literature for the defence of the gospel—in attending to the general concerns of the church, and of the world, as far as it respects the church : he cannot be intimately acquainted with the disposition and behaviour of every member of a congregation : he may be young and unexperienced, or aged and infirm : nothing can be more reasonable, therefore, than that some of the most grave and judicious members be deputed by the church to co-operate with their pastor ; and this expedient is absolutely necessary to the proper exercise of discipline in any congregation.

72. How does it appear that ruling elders are of divine right ?

That which is really necessary Christ's care must have provided for his church, for he distributes different gifts to profit withal^a : Christian assemblies have courts similar to those Jewish ones,

which had the power of excommunication^b: the primitive churches had, under divine inspiration, several presbyters settled in them, and the zeal and faithfulness of that period forbid the idea of their having many inactive preachers for every congregation^c; and the scriptures manifestly distinguish those presbyters who *only rule*, from those who also labour in word and doctrine^d.

a Rom. 12. 6. 8. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us—He that ruleth, (*let him do it*) with diligence." 1 Cor. 12. 7. "The manifestation of the spirit is given to every one, to profit withal." b Exod. 18. 21. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men; and place such over them to be rulers." Acts 13. 15. "The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them." Mat. 18. 15—17. "If thy brother trespass against thee—and if he neglect to hear—tell it to the church." c Acts 14. 23. "They had ordained them elders in every church." 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. "I charge thee, therefore, before God—preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." d 1 Tim. 5. 17. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially, they who labour in the word and doctrine."

73. What are the qualifications necessary for the ruling elder?

The qualifications for the office of ruler, are sincere piety^a; sound principles^b; a capacity for judging^c; prudence; zeal; and an unblemished reputation.

a 2 Tim. 2. 21. "A vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use." b 1 Chr. 12. 32. "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." c 1 Tim. 3. 4—7. "One that ruleth well his own house,—for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?—Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without,"

74. How is the ruling elder invested with authority?

The ruling elder is *called* to his office by the church, *inclined* to accept of it by the holy spirit, and solemnly *set apart* for it, with prayer, by a court regularly constituted in the name of the Head of the church.

Acts 14. 23. "And when they had ordained—with lifting up of hands had chosen them * elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

75. What is the object of the deacon's office?

The sole design of appointing deacons in the church, is to remove the burden of attention to its temporal concerns from the ministers and elders, when it becomes embarrassing to them: deacons are appointed to manage the funds, inspect the state, and serve the tables of the poor.

Acts 6. 2, 3. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables—look ye out men; whom we may appoint over this business."

76. What need has the church for such an office?

Christian congregations should maintain such persons as are incapable of providing for themselves the necessities of life; discreet officers are, of course, necessary to manage the funds which may be raised for that purpose.

77. Is there any scripture warrant for this office?

The scriptures declare the need of the church for such officers^a; their qualifications^b; the manner of appointing them^c; and the *fact* of their existence in organized churches^d.

a Acts 6. 1. "When the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring—because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." b 1 Tim. 3. 8. "Likewise must the deacons * be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." c Acts 6. 5. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen," &c. d Phil. 1. 1. "To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

78. What are the qualifications necessary for a christian deacon?

The necessary qualifications are piety, integrity, diligence, and respectability.

1 Tim. 3. 8—12. "Not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience—being found blameless—ruling their children and their own houses well."

79. Has the deacon any power to exercise church discipline?

The deacon has no authority to preach the word, or exercise church discipline: as a deacon, his official duty entirely respects temporal affairs.

Rom. 12. 8. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity."

80. Is the sole right of managing the pecuniary affairs of the congregation, lodged in the deacon's hands?

The apostles were the primary depositaries of power, and after them, teaching elders are compe-

* Note N.

tent to the management of all ecclesiastical concerns; ruling elders are their helps; and the deacons the help of both: the apostles and elders had in trust the collections made for the poor.

Acts 11. 30. "And sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

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

Some power is necessarily implied in every office; and distinct officers must be accompanied with distinct powers.

82. Of what kind is the power of ecclesiastical officers?

There is no physical compulsion connected with the exercise of ecclesiastical authority: although it respects persons in this world, it is not concerned about their principles, their conversation, their conduct, or their property, any further than is necessary for the spiritual welfare of the church; the power of church officers is entirely spiritual, and addressed to the consciences of those who are subject to it.

Heb. 13. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account."

Of Church Courts.

83. Is it lawful for the rulers of the Christian Church to meet in council for the exercise of church government ?

It is necessary, for the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, that church rulers meet in organized courts ; and of these courts there are three kinds : *Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods.*

84. What is meant by the Session ?

The Session is a court of judicature, composed of all the teaching and ruling elders of a particular congregation of professed Christians.

85. What use has a Christian Church for congregational Sessions ?

It is reasonable that cases of smaller importance should be decided by inferior judicatories ; that every distinct church should have a distinct court for deciding its own proper concerns ; and it is essentially necessary to the punctual administration of just discipline, and the preservation of regular order.

1 Cor. 14. 33. " For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

86. Is there any scripture warrant for congregational Sessions ?

A plurality of elders are ordained, by divine appointment, in every congregation, and these, in or-

der to act as one, must assemble in judicature ^a : Christ refers cases for decision to this representative church ^b ; and the existence of such tribunals is a matter of fact, evident from New Testament history ^c.

a Acts 14. 23. " They had ordained them elders in every church."

b Mat. 18. 15—20. " If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone—If he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more—and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen—whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven :—For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

c Tit. 1. 5. " For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city."

87. How should the members of the church conduct themselves towards the Session of the congregation ?

Every member of the church should respect the persons, and honour the characters, of all the members of session, although they are like himself imperfect men ^a : he should strengthen the hands of the session by sincere prayer for it ^b ; and yield a conscientious submission to its decrees, in every thing which does not violate the divine law ^c.

a Acts 14. 15. " We also are men of like passions with you."

b 1 Thes. 5. 13. " Esteem them very highly, in love for their works' sake."

c Heb. 13. 17. " Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

88. What is a Presbytery ?

The Presbytery is an ecclesiastical court of *Pres-*

byters, exercising jurisdiction over several distinct congregations, and providing for them the means of edification."

Acts 20. 17. 28. "He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God." 1 Tim. 4. 14. "Laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

89. How is the Presbytery formed?

A plurality of gospel ministers have authority, at any time, in an unsettled state of the church, to meet with ruling elders in a presbyterial capacity, for the promotion of religion; but in a regular state of the church, the Presbytery consists of all the ministers of the congregations under its jurisdiction, and of a ruling elder regularly ~~delegated~~ to represent in council the session to which he belongs.

Acts 15. 2. "They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders."

90. What necessity is there for presbyterial courts in the Christian Church?

Congregational elderships stand in need of mutual consultation and advice: there may occur ecclesiastical decisions which are of common concern to several churches; business may often arise of such a nature as cannot be settled by a session; and neighbouring congregations being parts of one church, require some bond of visible union, and a government, to which, as congregations, they owe submission.

91. Is there any scripture warrant for holding presbyteries?

The New Testament contains the pattern of a church regularly presbyterated: It holds forth *several distinct worshipping assemblies*, as **ONE CHURCH**—having **ONE COMMON GOVERNMENT**; and as a *pattern* to the whole christian church until the end of time.

92. What instances do the scriptures give of several worshipping assemblies, or distinct congregations, being but one church?

The churches in Jerusalem^a, Antioch^b, Ephesus^c, and Corinth^d, are every one of them held up to our view, in scripture, as **ONE CHURCH**, and yet, in each of these cities, there were several distinct worshipping assemblies.

a Acts 2. 42. and 21. 20. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers—Thou seest, brother, how many tens of thousands* of Jews there are which believe." b Acts 13. 1.

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen." c Acts

19. 6, 7. 20. "They spake with tongues and prophesied—and all the men were about twelve—So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." d 1 Cor. 1. 2. and 14. 34. "Unto

the church of God which is at Corinth—Let your women keep silence in the churches."

93. Were these churches in each of those cities united under one common government, or quite independent of one another?

* Ποσαι μυριαδες. Note O.

In those churches, there were rulers, who met together for the exercise of authority :— These rulers met in Presbytery, directed the use to which the funds of the church should be applied ^a ; ordained ministers ^b ; excommunicated notorious offenders ^c ; and restored the penitent to the privileges of the church ^d.

^a Acts 11. 29, 30. " Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea : which also they did, and sent it to the Elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." ^b Acts 13. 3. " And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." ^c 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. " In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together—to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh." ^d 2 Cor. 2. 6. " Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many."

94. Is the primitive church a pattern, agreeably to which all modern churches should be modelled?

The apostles were appointed to settle the church, with a constitution of government divinely authorized : the primitive order exhibits that constitution in all its parts ; and all the churches are bound to conform to the primitive order, except in those instances of extraordinary and miraculous power, which were granted in order to establish the constitution.

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

95. To what objects does the power of presbyteries extend ?

Presbyteries have authority to decide upon all questions of doctrine and order which are brought regularly before them ; to inspect and regulate congregations ; to provide suitable persons for the gospel ministry ; to ordain them to office ; to direct, settle, and remove them, as may best promote the interest of religion : these courts deriving their power from the Head of the church, are limited in its exercise only by his law.

2 Cor. 13. 10. " According to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction."

96. Do congregations and individuals owe submission to the decrees of their presbyteries ?

The decrees of presbyteries are held valid by Jesus Christ, in all cases which are consistent with his statutes ^a ; and whosoever resists them, despises the authority of Christ in this divine ordinance ^b.

^a Is. 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."

^b Mat. 16. 19. " And I will give unto thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven."

97. Does the christian system admit of any ecclesiastical courts superior to presbyteries ?

In order to maintain the visible unity of the church ; to settle differences which may arise in presbyteries ; and to arrange the common concerns of the whole church, **SYNODS**, having authority over presbyteries, are evidently necessary, according to the christian system.

98. How are the superior ecclesiastical courts formed ?

Synods, which are of three kinds, differing principally in the extent of their jurisdiction, **PROVINCIAL SYNODS, NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES, and GENERAL COUNCILS**, are formed by presbyters delegated from the subordinate judicatories of the church.

99. Is the Synod a scriptural institution?

According to the scriptures, the church is one society, and must have a government over the whole^a: Christ refers with approbation to the forms of procedure in the Jewish courts, in which synagogues were subordinate to the sanhedrim^b; and at Jerusalem, a synod, composed of the rulers from the several churches, met, disputed, and determined, a point of controversy in the church^c.

a Eph. 4. 11—16. "And he gave some—for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ—from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." b Mat. 18.—Compare with Deut. 17. 8—12.

c Acts 15, chapter throughout*.

100. What power does the synod possess over the subordinate branches of the Christian Church?

The power of the synod is not destructive of the power of subordinate courts: It is not accompanied with force, like the power of civil courts: It is not merely advisory; but a ministerial display of Christ's own authority, unto which Christians are bound to submit in the Lord.

Acts 15. 28. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and

* Note P.

to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."

101. In whom is the power of calling synods or councils invested ?

The civil authority, desirous to serve the interest of Christ's kingdom, may convene, on urgent occasions, the ministers of religion ; but the right of calling and dissolving all ecclesiastical courts, as such, is, by the Head of the church exclusively, invested in church officers.

2 Chr. 19. 8. " Moreover, in Jerusalem, did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the Lord." Mat. 16. 19. " And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Of Religious Worship.

102. Wherein does Religious Worship consist ?

Religious worship consists in the *exercise* or *expression* of a suitable disposition toward the Divine Being.

Ps. 95. 6. " O Come, let us worship and bow down ; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."

103. Are there more objects of religious worship than one ?

The objects of false worship, or idolatry, are innumerable ; but the ONE LIVING and TRUE GOD, is alone the object of worship.

Luke 4. 8. " It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

104. Is it lawful to offer an inferior kind of religious worship, to highly exalted creatures?

It is proper to exercise suitable sentiments toward all God's creatures—to esteem, such as we know, according to their character; but, to ascribe divine attributes to any creature, however highly exalted, or to exercise the affections, suitable to divine perfection, toward a being inferior to God, is idolatry. No kind of religious worship can lawfully be offered to angels or saints, or any other creature.

Rev. 19. 10. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus: Worship God."

105. Is it proper to worship each person of the God-HEAD?

We cannot worship God in truth, unless, in our worship, we distinctly contemplate three persons in the God-head, and offer equal glory to these persons: care is to be taken that we do not multiply objects of worship, by separating the *personality*, from the *divinity*, of the person: The uniform object of worship is God, in each person of the glorious Trinity.

John 4. 24. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth." Mat. 28. 19. "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

106. Is the Lord Jesus Christ entitled to religious worship?

Christ Jesus is worshipped by angels ^a, by saints on earth ^b, and by glorified saints in heaven ^c; and God hath required of his creatures to worship the Redeemer, both in his estate of humiliation ^d and exaltation ^e.

^a Heb. 1. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him."

^b John 20. 28. "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

^c Rev. 5. 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

^d Heb. 1. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

^e Phil. 2. 10. "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."

107. Is Jesus Christ, in the character of Mediator, the object of Christian worship?

The Christian has *one only object of worship*; and that object is God, in each person, and in every character, and in every relation to us, which each person sustains ^a: Humanity, however highly exalted, is not entitled to worship; and Divinity, however condescending, can never cease to be worthy of adoration ^b: Christ Jesus, by his mediation, procures for us access to the throne of grace, upon which he himself sits ^c: Divinity is, really, as excellent and amiable, in the character of Mediator and Sanctifier, as in that of Creator ^d: God, even, *as manifest in the flesh, and in the character, and office of Mediator*, is the object of worship ^e.

^a Is. 54. 5. "Thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."

^b Mark 10. 18. "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou

me good? there is none good but one, that is God.”
 c Ps. 19. 14. “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” d 2 Cor. 13. 14. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”
 e John 6. 68. “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

108. Are mere external acts of worship acceptable unto God?

External acts of worship, unaccompanied with pious affections, are expressions of a disposition which does not exist,—are consequently false, and cannot be acceptable to God.

1 Tim. 4. 8. “For bodily exercise profiteth little.”

109. By what obligations are Christians bound to perform external acts of worship?

Although living faith and sincere piety are, chiefly, pleasing to God in our acts of worship^a, yet he also accepts the imperfect services which proceed from an inward principle of virtue^b: The support of vital piety^c,—the complex constitution of man^d, and the law of God, require that we should punctually observe all the ordinances of religious worship^e.

a Heb. 11. 6. “Without faith, it is impossible to please him.” b Rom. 12. 1. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” c Deut. 32. 47. “For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” d 1 Cor. 6. 20. “Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” e Lev. 18. 4. “Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God.”

110. By what rule is religious worship regulated?

The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the supreme and the perfect *directory* for the worship of God.

Rev. 3. 22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

111. Are all modes of worship equally valuable?

The best services of imperfect man cannot profit the Almighty ^a; nevertheless, he hath bound us, for our good and his glory, to ordinances of his own appointment ^b: infinite goodness hath adapted the christian worship to the state of the church ^c: no man can reverence God, and trifle with his institutions ^d: the value of any mode of worship depends entirely upon his approbation, and he disapproves man's inventions ^e; every false mode of worship is, therefore, useless and pernicious ^f.

^a Job 22. 2. "Can a man be profitable unto God?"

^b Mat. 11. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me."

^c Mat. 11. 30. "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

^d 1 John 2. 4. "He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

^e Mat. 15. 9. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." ^f 1 Sam. 12. 21.

"And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain."

112. Has every man a right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience?

Every man is bound to worship God conscientiously; but none possesses a right to break the

least of God's commandments: the dictates of a mistaken conscience cannot justify an act of false worship.

John 16. 2. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." Is. 1. 12. "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"

113. Wherein does liberty of conscience consist?

Licentiousness is often mistaken for liberty^a, and the slave of vice boasts that his conscience is free^b; but christian liberty is defined by the divine law^c: *Power to serve God, in all his ordinances, with a tender conscience, uninfluenced by the fear of man, is LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE*^d.

a Ps. 12. 4. "Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" b 2 Pet. 2. 19. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption." c Jam. 2. 12. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." d Acts 24. 16. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

114. Is it proper for nations, in their constitutions of civil government, to prescribe the forms of public worship?

God has, independently of civil rulers, ordained the forms of religious worship^a; no man, or body of men, has a right to countenance or authorize any form contrary thereunto^b; but it is the duty of man, in an individual and collective capacity, to countenance and support all the ordinances of God^c.

a Jam. 4. 12. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." b Acts 4. 19. "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." c Ps. 72. 11. "Yea, all Kings shall fall down before him : all nations shall serve him."

115. Does the word of God prescribe all the acts of religious worship, in which we are to serve our God?

Divine revelation defines the method in which God commands us to worship him^a; and no new ordinance or form of worship is, at any time, to be appointed by man^b,

a Ps. 19. 7. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." b Mark 7. 7. "Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

116. Are all circumstances necessarily connected with the observance of ordinances, as well as the ordinances themselves, defined in the holy scriptures?

Had all the circumstances of mental exercises, of time, of place, of dress, word, and gesture, of every person, in every age, in every part of the world, in every act of religious worship, been expressly described by a divine revelation, the world could not contain the books that must have been written : Christians are divinely authorized to regulate the order in which the various parts of instituted worship are to be performed—the *time* of performance—and all other *necessary arrangements*, in agreeableness to the true spirit of each institution, and the other parts of divine revelation,

1 Cor. 11. 2. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in 'all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"—Verse 13. "Judge in yourselves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"—ver. 14. "Doth not even nature itself teach you?"—ver. 16. "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God"—ver. 34. "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home—and the rest will I set in order when I come."

117. Is it proper to appoint significant ceremonies, to give additional solemnity to the divine institutions?

It is dangerous to admit, under any pretence, innovations into the scriptural forms of worship^a: it is presumption to expect that Christ's institutions may be rendered more solemn or significant, by the addition of human inventions^b: the ceremonies of the Jewish church were appointed by God, and are abolished in the death of Christ^c; it is, therefore, criminal to establish or countenance any ceremony of man's invention, as a part of christian worship^d.

a 1 Cor. 11. 16. "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

b Deut. 12. 32. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

c Col. 2. 17. "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

d Col. 2. 20. 22. "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

118. What evils follow the use of human inventions, as parts of religious worship?

Human inventions have no promise of God's

blessing^a; being more congenial to the depraved heart, they attract the attention of the worshipper from those parts which are of divine appointment^b; they encourage a spurious kind of devotion^c; they debase the soul^d; and, instead of assisting our attention to divine ordinances, they remove it to themselves^e, and gradually lead to absolute superstition^f *.

a 1 Sam. 12. 21. "For then should ye go after vain things, which could not profit." b Col. 2. 23. "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship." c Is. 50. 11. "Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled, this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." d Rom. 1. 22. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." e Mat. 15. 6. "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect, by your tradition." f Is. 66. 3, 4, "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations, I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them."

119. What is the scripture rule for regulating circumstances, not expressly specified in divine revelation, but necessary in performing acts of religious worship?

A proper method of performing any duty, is of importance, as it has much influence upon our sentiments and character, and as conducive to the due performance of duty: The christian church, in order to guard against the extremes of fanaticism and superstition, and preserve the true spirit of every divine institution, is commanded to make

arrangements for the performance of every part of appointed worship, in that method which is the *most appropriate, and the most simple.*

1 Cor. 14. 26. 40. "Let all things be done unto edifying. Let all things be done decently, and in order."

120. Wherein does fanaticism consist?

Fanaticism, or enthusiasm, consists in a heated imagination about divine things; which, although it may render a person more active and ingenious than he otherwise would have been, diminishes the strength of the understanding, and perverts the judgment.

Rom. 10. 2. "They have a zeal * of God, but not according to knowledge."

121. "What are the characteristics of an enthusiast in religious concerns?"

Enthusiasm prompts a man to reject, as the rule of life, the *scriptures in their obvious meaning*, and to regulate his conduct by an extravagant imagination, under the name of *reason, love, or inward light*: It produces contempt for ecclesiastical order, under pretensions to high degrees of spirituality: it renounces the obligation of the divine law, under pretence of enjoying divine favour: it disposes a man to proclaim what he feels, rather than do what he ought: it persuades one to think that saving faith consists, not in the *appropriation* of Christ for salvation, but in an assurance that

* Ζηλον, much heat, of ΖΕΩ & λα, to be hot very much.

Christ is *already* our's : whosoever discovers a tendency to any such extravagancy, is so far a fanatic or enthusiast.

Is. 50. 11. " Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks ; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

122. Wherein does superstition consist ?

Superstition consists in an attachment to pompous ceremonies^a ; the veneration of any appointed mean of grace, to the neglect of the end of its institution^b ; and the admission of human inventions to a place among divine ordinances^c.

a Col. 2. 8. " Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men."

b Gal. 1. 14. " Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

c Mat. 15. 3. " Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

123. What are the ordinances in which God commands us to worship him ?

The appointed means of worship are of two kinds : the ordinances of *secret worship*, and the ordinances of *social worship*.

124. Which are the ordinances of secret worship ?

For the maintenance of personal religion, God hath appointed, as ordinances of secret worship, perusing the scriptures, meditation, self-examination, prayer, singing psalms, covenanting, fasting, and thanksgiving.

125. How are the scriptures to be perused in private devotion ?

It is the duty of every individual to order his heart and life by the word of God : he should peruse it with solemnity ; impress its doctrines upon his mind ; make himself familiar with its expressions ; and convert it into petitions, by offering which unto God, devotion is animated—attention to the scriptures quickened—the memory improved—and faith strengthened to work by love, and purify the heart.

John 5. 39. " Search the scriptures." Ps. 119. 105. " Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." .

126. Wherein does religious meditation consist ?

Religious meditation is a solemn exercise of the soul, considering a passage or doctrine of scripture in its connexion with the system of grace, with God, with Providence, and with man, in order to excite suitable emotions, and direct our conversation.

Ps. 1. 2. " And in his law doth he meditate day and night." Ps. 104. 34. " My meditation of him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord."

127. What is self-examination ?

Self-examination is an ordinance of God, in which we endeavour to ascertain, by the light of revelation, whether we have grace, and in what measure grace and corruption exist in us ; judging ourselves by God's word, to the end, that knowing our religious state, we may reap the advantages attending other ordinances.

2 Cor. 13. 5. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

128. Which are the proper seasons for secret prayer?

Prayer to God should accompany all our religious services; a praying frame of mind should be assiduously cultivated, and fervent petitions may on all occasions be secretly presented to the throne of grace: besides these instances of secret prayer, every person should devote to the punctual performance of this duty, a part of every morning and of every evening of his life.

1 Thes. 5. 17. "Pray without ceasing."

129. How shall singing psalms be attended to as a part of secret worship?

The book of Psalms being a picture of the human heart in the exercises of true religion, drawn with infallible accuracy, must be interesting to every Christian: the person who enjoys in his retirement for secret devotion, an opportunity of reading or singing a psalm, should piously embrace it, making melody in his heart to the Lord.

Ps. 92. 1, 2. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

130. What is included in the duty of personal covenanting?

A religious vow, or covenant, is an ordinance of divine worship, whereby we engage to God, to

take him as our God, and, in the strength of promised grace, to serve him for ever ; and, in which, as need may be, in order to promote sanctification, we promise to perform something which it is not unlawful to perform, or to abstain from something, from which it is not criminal to abstain.

Is. 44. 5. " One shall say, I am the Lord's." Ps. 76. 11. " Vow, and pray unto the Lord your God."

131. Wherein consists personal fasting ?

Religious fasting, as a part of secret worship, is an ordinance, in which a person privately devotes a certain portion of his time to humiliation, confession of sin, and pleading for mercy, accompanied with *abstinence* from food, work, and recreations.

Mat. 6. 17, 18. " When thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

132. What is personal thanksgiving ?

As the spared monuments of divine goodness, we should at all times be thankful ; and upon the reception of signal favours, we should devote a certain portion of our time to solemn prayer, praise, and thanksgiving : and when this is performed secretly by an individual, it is personal thanksgiving.

Ps. 116. 17. " I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord."

133. Are the ordinances of secret worship to be observed only by those who know themselves to be born again ?

Such as have received grace to make their calling and election sure, can discharge religious duties with the greatest comfort^a; and without being renewed in the spirit of our minds, our services are not accepted of God^b: nevertheless, all men are bound to worship God, according to his appointment, in all his ordinances: The want of grace cannot justify disobedience; but neglect of these ordinances increases the guilt of the unregenerate^c.

a Ps. 19. 8. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."

b Heb. 11. 6. "But without faith, it is impossible to please him."

c Mat. 11. 17. 22. "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented—But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

134. Is the time, in which these ordinances are to be observed, defined in scripture?

It is not determined in the scriptures, at what precise period of time every individual should begin and end each of those exercises: Christian discernment will regulate these and other necessary circumstances^a; but no person can be guiltless, and live in the total neglect, or careless performance, of all or any of these ordinances^b.

a Heb. 5. 14. "Those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

b Mat. 7. 26. "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand."

135. Which are the ordinances of social worship?

The ordinances of social worship, divinely appointed for the diffusion of religious principle into every department of social life, include the exercises of God's worship, in *domestic society, private Christian associations, Ecclesiastical judicatories, and public Congregations.*

136. Wherein does family-worship consist ?

The head of every family should take care that the whole family regularly attend to the exercises of family worship^a: these exercises consist in singing psalms, reading the holy scriptures, and prayer, every night and day^b; sanctifying the Lord's day^c; observing fasts and thanksgivings, as the occasion requires^d; and the religious education of servants and children^e.

a Gen. 18. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." b Ps. 118. 15. and Jer. 10. 25. "The

voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous—Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name."

c Exod. 20. 8. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

d Zech. 12. 12. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart."

e Eph. 6. 4. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

137. Wherein consist the exercises of religious worship proper to private christian societies?

Praying societies are a divine ordinance, in observing which, Christians meet in private fellowship^a: this ordinance is not intended for those who are without, but for those who are within, the church^b: the proper exercises of religious wor-

ship, in fellowship meetings, are, singing psalms, reading the scriptures, prayer, pious conference, watching over one another, and mutual exhortation to faithfulness in the christian profession^c.

a Heb. 10. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another."

b Mal. 3. 16. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard."

c Col. 3. 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

138. Wherein consists the exercises of social worship in church judicatories?

Ecclesiastical judicatories are worshipping societies, and those who attend them should maintain a suitable frame of mind: church rulers, in their official character, worship God, constituting the judicatory by prayer; deliberating and expressing their sentiments upon the subjects discussed; forming decisions; and concluding with prayer; all which exercises are to be performed solemnly in the name of Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Mat. 18. 17—20. "Tell it unto the church—whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven—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—for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

139. Has God appointed in his word any particular time for congregations to meet for public worship?

We are divinely authorized to appropriate the necessary portions of time to all divine ordinances, secret or social ^a; and besides, God hath, by positive institution, set apart one whole day in every seven, or week, for religious exercises ^b, especially for public worship in the congregation ^c; which day, since the resurrection of Christ, is the first of the week ^d, and is to be wholly occupied in the exercises of divine worship, except so much as may be taken up in works of necessity and mercy ^e.

a Ps. 31. 15. "My times are in thy hand." b Exod. 20. 10. "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work." c Acts 15. 21. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." d Acts 20. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." e Mat. 12. 12. "Wherefore, it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days."

140. At what period of the twenty-four hours does the Lord's day or sabbath commence?

Our Lord arose from the dead on the morning of the first day of the week ^a: it is more conducive to solemnity to observe one whole day, than parts of two labouring days ^b: the fourth commandment requires not a part of two days, but one whole day ^c; and the evening after Christ's resurrection, upon which he appeared in the midst of his worshipping disciples, is called, in scripture, the evening of the same day ^d: the christian sabbath comprehends twenty-four hours, from midnight to midnight.

a John 20. 1. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark—and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

b Deut. 5. 14. "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord—in it thou shalt not do any work."

c Exod. 20. 8. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

d John 20. 19. "Then the *same day at evening*, being the first day of the week—came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

141. Are none, except Christians, under obligation to keep the sabbath?

All men are commanded to observe the Lord's day^a: the fourth commandment is especially directed to persons in authority—ministers—magistrates—and heads of families^b: compulsory measures are never to be used to make men religious^c; but open insults to the ordinances of true religion, especially to the *rest* of the Lord's day, are to be repressed by civil authority^d.

a Lev. 19. 30. "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord."

b Exod. 20. 10. "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

c 2 Cor. 10. 4. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

d Rom. 13. 4. "He beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

142. Is there any day under the New Testament dispensation holy, except the Lord's day?

The Old Testament church had fasts and festivals of divine appointment, which days were observed as sabbaths^a, and these are all done away in Christ^b; when Providence calls for fasting or thanksgiving, the *duty* requires *time* sufficient for

the discharge of it^c; but there is no day holy, in its periodical returns, except the Lord's day^d.

a Lev. 23. 4. "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."
 b Col. 2. 16, 17. "Let no man therefore judge you—in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ."
 c Joel 2. 15. "Sanctify a fast."
 d Exod. 20. 9. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work."

143. Is there any advantage to be derived from the observance of holy days of ecclesiastical institution?

Observing festivals of human institution, under pretence of piety, is strong delusion: it is not acceptable to God^a: it diminishes respect for the Lord's day^b: it has an immoral tendency^c: it reflects upon the wisdom of God^d: it is a direct violation of the moral law^e; and is one of the principal branches of antichristian superstition^f: the knowledge and experience of true religion disappear from any church, in proportion as zeal for the observation of festivals manifests itself*.

a Mat. 15. 9. "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."
 b Mark 7. 9. "Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
 c Ezek. 43. 8. "In their setting of their thresholds is by my thresholds, and their posts by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name, by their abominations that they have committed."
 d Col. 2. 23. "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship and humility, and neglecting of the body."
 Exod. 20. 9. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy

work." f Dan. 7. 25. "And he shall speak great words against the most High—and think to change times and laws."

144. By whom is the public worship of the congregation to be conducted?

In private societies, the members have a parity of power, and each of them may be called upon, in his turn, to conduct the social worship^a: in the public congregation, this order is impossible; there are two distinct classes,¹ rulers and ruled: Christ has appointed public ministers for his church, and to them he hath given authority to conduct the public worship^b: no man, however intelligent or eloquent, may, without the authority of a competent church judicatory, call together a congregation, or take any share in conducting the public worship^c.

a Col. 3. 16. "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs." b Eph. 4. 11, 12.

"And he gave some—pastors and teachers—for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." c Rom. 10. 15. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?"

145. Which are the ordinances of public worship?

The ordinances of religious worship appointed for public congregations, are of two kinds: such as have respect to the whole assembly, whether saints or sinners, and such as respect persons as church members; the former may be called *common*, and the latter *special* ordinances.

146. In what exercises of public worship does the whole congregation join?

It is the duty of all men to assemble for the public worship of God, and being assembled, to join in it: the ordinances *common* to the whole congregation, whether within or without the church, whether saints or sinners, are included in the *stated* worship of the Lord's day—Prayer, Singing psalms, the word Preached, Collection for pious purposes, and the Blessing the congregation.

Heb. 10. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

147. How is the whole congregation to join in prayer to God?

The christian minister, as the mouth of the congregation, is to offer unto God, through Christ, prayers, agreeable to the scriptures, for mercies suitable to the state of the congregation^a; and every one present should bestow close attention upon what is spoken, accompanying it with suitable and fervent ejaculations, offered in so secret a manner as not to attract the notice of others^b.

^a Acts 2. 42. "And they continued steadfastly in—prayers."

^b Chr. 16. 36. "And all the people said, Amen." 1 Cor. 14. 26. "Let all things be done to edifying."

148. Are the prayers offered to God in the public congregation limited to written forms?

Written forms of prayer, whether read or repeated, are not authorized in the scriptures^a, are not calculated to exercise the mind in the graces of the Holy Spirit^b, are not adapted to the varieties of the state of the church and its members^c, and

are not to be used in approaching the throne of grace.

a Mat. 6. 7. "But when ye pray, use not *vain repetitions* *, as the heathen do." b 1 Cor. 14. 12. "Even so ye, for as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." c Heb. 4. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

149. How is the public psalmody of the church to be conducted?

The pastor who officiates in the worship of God, is to select a suitable psalm for the congregation, which being distinctly read, and (if conducive to edification) expounded ^a; the whole congregation is to unite in singing it unto the praise of God ^b.

a 1 Cor. 14. 15. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." b Ps. 95. 1. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."

150. Are the praises of God to be sung in the congregation, in the use of a set form of psalms?

Necessity compels to the use of a liturgy of psalms: the Lord does not distribute gifts for inditing extempore psalms ^a; He hath given us *spiritual songs*, of divine inspiration ^b: *hymns*, from the book of *Psalms*, were used in social worship, by the Head of the church ^c: doctrinal and experimental religion are with infallible accuracy blended together in the *Psalms* ^d: they are wisely adapted to the state of the church, and of each indivi-

* Note S.

dual in all possible circumstances^e—the pious Jews sung them^f—the disciples used them in Christ's own presence^g—they were used in the apostolic churches^h: God has remarkably blessed the use of the book of Psalms, for the support of vital godliness in every succeeding periodⁱ: it is to be used in public and private worship, until the end of time.

a 1 Cor. 12. 1. "Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." b Acts 1. 20. "It is written in the book of Psalms." c Mat. 26. 30. "And when they had sung an hymn*, they went out into the mount of olives." d 2 Sam. 23. 1, 2. "The sweet psalmist of Israel said, The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." e Ps. 105. 2. "Sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." f 2 Chr. 29. 30. "Sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer, and they sang praises with gladness." g Mark 14. 26. "And when they had sung an hymn." h James 5. 13. "Is any merry, let him sing psalms." i Eph. 5. 19. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

151. What is the preaching of the gospel?

Preaching the gospel is an *official exhibition*, (by an authorized minister reading, expounding, and applying the holy scriptures) of the **SYSTEM** of GRACE, in all its connexions and parts, *offering Christ Jesus for salvation to sinners, as such*, authoritatively inviting, exhorting, and commanding every hearer, even the most guilty, to appropriate the offered salvation, with assurance that

* ὕμνον ἁγίον.

he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not, shall perish.

Mark 16. 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." 2 Cor. 5. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 1 Tim. 1. 15. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Rev. 22. 17. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

152. How do we worship God, in making collection for the saints?

Collection is to be made for the support of those church members, who are in providence incapacitated to make provision for themselves, and for other pious purposes: Christians, in so doing, worship God by a public act, which testifies their dependence on Christ for worldly property, and their willingness to use it in his service, contributing on the Lord's day, according to the need of the church, in proportion to their weekly prosperity.

1 Cor. 16. 2. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

153. What is included in blessing the congregation?

Pronouncing the blessing is a *ministerial declaration*, to which the whole congregation should attend with faith and solemnity, not of the wishes of the minister, but *of the purpose of God, Father,*

Son, and Holy Ghost, to sanctify, protect, and save, all who worship him in spirit and in truth.

Num. 6. 23—27. "Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, on this wise, ye shall bless the children of Israel—and I will bless them." 2 Cor. 13. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. AMEN."

154. How much of the Lord's day is to be devoted to the public worship of God, in the congregation?

God hath honoured public worship, as the principal mean of promoting true religion in the world^a: so much of every Lord's day is to be employed in it, as may consist with the due performance of secret and family worship^b: and when extraordinary circumstances occur, attention to public worship may supersede the ordinary private services^c.

a Ps. 87. 2. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." b Heb. 10. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." c Acts 20. 7. "And, upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them—and continued his speech until midnight."

155. Do the scriptures specify the order in which all the parts of the public worship are to be performed?

The arrangement of the several parts of public worship, and the apportioning of the time to each part, is left by the Head of the church to the management of church rulers^a: provided no ordinance is neglected, nor any superstitious rite add-

ed, we may expect the divine blessing upon any order which is authorized by the church, for the sake of uniformity, in worshipping assemblies ^b.

^a Mat. 16. 19. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." ^b Mat. 18. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

156. Which are the special ordinances of public worship?

Christ has appointed certain ordinances to be publicly administered to church members ^a, as *badges* of their distinction from the world—*bonds of union* among themselves; and, in which, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied, to believers ^b: these,—*baptism*, and the *Lord's supper*, are the *special* ordinances.

^a Acts 2. 41, 42. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them, about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." ^b 1 Cor. 12, 13. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit."

157. How is baptism to be administered?

The application of water, by an ordained minister of the gospel, to the face of a recognized member of the visible church ^a, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the presence of the church, is the proper mode of administering this *special* ordinance ^b.

a Acts 10. 47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized *, which have received the Holy Ghost."

b Mat. 28. "Go ye, therefore, and teach (*disciple* †) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

158. Do the scriptures determine how often the Lord's supper is to be administered in each christian congregation?

Baptism seals our admission into the church of Christ, and is not to be repeated; but the Lord's supper is frequently to be administered^a: it is not a part of ordinary sabbath sanctification^b: the session of each congregation is to regulate the times of administration, as may best tend to edification^c.

a Luke 22. 19. "This do in remembrance of me."

b 1 Cor. 11. 26. "For as often † as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup"—verse 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat."

c Acts 2. 42. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

159. When are we called upon in Divine Providence, to sanctify a day for public fasting?

The scriptures authorize congregations, churches, and nations, to observe fast days, when we are in God's providence threatened with judgments^a: when we would sympathize with those who are in distress^b: when unusual cases occur, which require special application for divine direction^c: when the body of sin requires extraordinary mor-

* Note T.
state, Acts 14. 21,

† Μαθητεύσατε, render into a church
‡ Ορασεις. Note U.

tification^d: when we would recover a sense of peace with God^e: and when we seek for more intimate communion with him^f.

a Joel 1. 14, 15. "Sanctify ye a fast—and cry unto the Lord, Alas! for the day—as a destruction from the Almighty, shall it come,"

b Neh. 1. 3, 4. "And they said unto me, the remnant that are left—are in great affliction and reproach—and it came to pass, when I heard these words, that—I fasted."

c Ezra 8. 21. "Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."

d Mark 9. 29. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

e Acts 10. 30. "And Cornelius said, four days ago I was fasting—and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing—verse 31. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard."

f Mat. 6. 18. "And thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

160. What is the season for public thanksgiving?

When God dispenses his favours in any *sudden*, *great*, or *distinguished manner*, to a people, they are commanded to sanctify some time for solemn thanksgiving.

Nehem. 11. 17. "And Mattaniah—was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer." Ch. 12. 43. "Also, that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced."

161. Are there any public ordinances which do not properly belong to the worship of God in the congregation?

Oaths, covenants, ministerial visitation of families, catechising, the organization of congregations, and the exercise of church discipline, are ordinances of God's worship distinct from the stated

exercises of religious worship, every Lord's day in the congregation.

162. What is an oath ?

An oath is an ordinance of God ^a; in which we call him to witness the truth of an assertion, or promise, made in the obvious meaning of the words used ^b, and is to be taken, and administered, with reverence for the divine perfections ^c.

a Heb. 6. 16. "For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

b 2 Cor. 1. 23. "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth." c Deut. 6.

13. "Thou shalt fear the Lord—and shalt swear by his name."

163. What is a religious covenant ?

A covenant is an obligation sanctioned by God, as constituted by that power of self government which he hath delegated to man; hereby, individuals engage to God, or to one another, and societies, civil and ecclesiastic, bind themselves to such present duty as Providence may point out to them: public covenanting is an ordinance of God ^a; calculated to excite and strengthen virtuous principle ^b: it has been signally useful to the church ^c; and the covenant obligation permanently remains, until the whole design of it is accomplished ^d.

a Is. 19. 21. "They shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." b Ps. 56. 12. "Thy vows are upon me, O God."

c Lev. 26. 45. "But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors." d Jer. 11. 10. "The house of Israel, and the house of Judah, have broken my covenant, which

I made with their Fathers."

164. What is family visitation ?

The ministerial visitation of families is ordained, that the pastor may discover the state of his flock, and that he may thereby be enabled to give suitable exhortations in private, and rightly divide the word of truth in the public ministrations.

Tit. 2. 15. "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority." 2 Tim. 4. 2. "Be instant in season, out of season."

165. Wherein does catechising consist ?

Catechising is a familiar way of conveying instruction to old and young: by proposing questions, according to the different capacities, and giving answers, the religious knowledge of the catechumens is ascertained and improved.

1 Pet. 3. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

166. How is God publicly worshipped in the organization of congregations ?

The organization of churches is a required duty, and in the election and ordination of presbyters, to rule and to teach in the church, thus regularly organized, God is worshipped by the saints.

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

Of Church Discipline.

167. What is Church Discipline ?

Church discipline is the exercise of ecclesiastical power, for the prevention and correction of offences in the visible church.

2 Cor. 10. 8. " Our authority which the Lord hath given us for edification."

168. What do the scriptures teach us respecting church discipline ?

The scriptures declare the *necessity* for discipline in the church—the *authority* by which it is administered—the *offences* which it is intended to remedy—and the *acts* by which offences are to be removed.

169. What necessity is there for the exercise of discipline in the visible church ?

Offences must frequently arise in the visible church, from the ungodliness of unregenerate professors, and from the remaining corruptions of those who are truly pious^a: to prevent the unhappy effects of such offences, Christ hath instituted church discipline^b; and no church can, without the faithful exercise of it, hope for God's blessing^c.

a Mat. 18. 7. " For it must needs be that offences come."

b Rev. 2. 14. " But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of

Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." c Rev. 3. 16. "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

170. In whom hath Christ lodged authority for administering church discipline?

Every society of rational creatures must exercise authority to correct offences against its own laws: private Christians, associated for religious exercises, have a right to manage, by common consent, in agreeableness to the divine law, all their social concerns: but the Head of the church has lodged in the hands of ecclesiastical rulers, exclusively, the power of exercising discipline in the church of Christ.

Mat. 28. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them." Acts 14. 23. "They had ordained them elders in every church." Mat. 16. 19. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

171. Who are the proper subjects of church discipline?

Sinners without the church may justly be re-proved with faithfulness and prudence by private Christians, and by the ministers of the gospel^a: but the proper subjects of the ordinance of church discipline, are *church members*, including children^b.

^a Acts 3. 14. 19. "But ye denied the Holy ONE, and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you,—Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Eph. 5. 11. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

^b Tit. 2. 12. "Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Mat. 11. 50. "For my yoke is easy." 1 Cor. 5. 12. "Do not ye judge them that are within?"

172. Is a person who hath lived a scandalous life before he joins himself to the christian church, a subject of discipline on account of crimes committed before his admission?

Heathens who evidence repentance, are not to be censured; after having joined the church, for crimes committed before their conversion^a; but those who have been baptized, and have received a christian education, and come afterwards into scandal, are not to be received into church fellowship, without adequate censure: such persons, when they profess submission to church order, are proper subjects of discipline, and this is the first church privilege to which they are admissible^b.

a Eph. 5. 8. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
b 1 Thes. 5. 14. "Warn them that are unruly." Mat. 11. 29. "Take my yoke upon you."

173. Does every transgression subject a member of the church to be tried and censured?

Imperfection is attached to all men while in this life^a: it is not every thing which is sinful and displeasing that constitutes scandal; but *something* which may tempt others to sin^b, expose the church to just reproach^c, or mar the edification of the saints^d.

a Rom. 7. 21. "When I would do good, evil is present with me."
b Luke 17. 1. "It is impossible but that offences,

*scandals**, will come; but wo unto him through whom they come." c Rev. 2. 14. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block, *scandal**, before the children of Israel." c Rom. 14. 13. "Judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, *scandal**, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way."

174. How many kinds of censurable offences are there?

The scandalous offences are of three kinds: *heresy*, which consists in maintaining errors contrary to the subordinate standards of the church, and to the holy scriptures^a—*Immorality*^b—and *contempt of church order*, which consists in untenderness to brethren, neglect of ordinances, disrespect to the ministry, and resistance to the authority of the church^c.

a Rom. 16. 17. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Tit. 3. 10. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject." b 1 Cor. 5. 11. "If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no no to eat." c 2 Thes. 3. 6. "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

175. What remedy has Christ provided for his church, in case of offences?

Christ has appointed adequate censures to be administered to transgressors, by those who have the rule over them.

Heb. 13. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

176. Are censures to be indiscriminately inflicted upon offenders?

The candid and faithful exercise of church discipline requires a distinct view of the *ends* of censure—of the *degrees* of censure—and of the *proper forms of process* in bringing the offenders under discipline.

177. What is the immediate end for which censures are inflicted?

Subordinate to the glory of God, in maintaining the purity of his church, the immediate end of censures is the reformation of the offender himself ^a, and the preservation of others from similar transgressions ^b.

^a 2 Thes. 3. 14. "Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." ^b 1 Tim. 5. 20. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

178. What are the different censures which the church inflicts upon offenders?

Offences are to be carefully and impartially considered, with all the circumstances which aggravate or diminish the scandal, and in determining the suitable degree of censure, the end, whether the reformation of the offender, or the prevention of others, is to be kept in view: the various degrees of censure are, *admonition*, and *rebuke*, administered with more or less degrees of publicity, as the case may require—*suspension* from special privileges—and *excommunication*.

179. By what rule is the degree of publicity with which rebukes are administered, to be ascertained?

The offences of church members are not unnecessarily to be made public^a; the publicity of the censure is to bear a proportion to the magnitude and the publicity of the scandal: admonitions and rebukes may, according to this rule, prudently applied, be administered to the offender *secretly*, in the *family*, before the *session* of the congregation, and *publicly* before the whole church^b.

a 1 Pet. 4. 8. "And, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

b Tit. 1. 13. "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." 1 Tim. 5. 20. "Them that sin, rebuke before all."

180. In what cases does it become proper to suspend a member of the church from special ordinances?

It may be proper, in very flagrant cases of scandal, if they cannot be brought speedily to trial, to suspend the accused from sealing ordinances until the trial comes on, or while it is pending; and when a person is found guilty of an offence, he may be suspended from the privileges of the church, until he give evidence of a proper sense of his fault, and of reformation.

1 Cor. 14. 40. "Let all things be done decently, and in order." Lev. 13. 4. "Then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague, seven days." 2 Thes. 3. 14. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him."

181. Wherein does the sentence of excommunication consist?

Excommunication is the highest censure which the church can inflict: the ground of it is either some highly aggravated immorality^a, or obstinate perseverance in some scandalous practice subversive of the doctrine or the order of the church^b: it consists in solemnly excluding from the fellowship of the church, and delivering over to the world, the kingdom of Satan, the impenitent offender^c.

a 1 Cor. 5. 13. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." b Gal. 5. 12. "I would they were even cut off which trouble you—and Gal. 1. 7. But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." c 1 Cor. 5. 5. "To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh."

182. Wherein consists the awfulness of the sentence of excommunication?

The sentence of excommunication, pronounced according to God's law, is ratified in heaven^a; Satan receives power over the excommunicated person^b; he is given up to terrors of conscience, or to what is still more alarming, blindness of mind and hardness of heart^c; church members cease from communion with him; for, although the discharge of natural duties is not suspended, Christians are to avoid all familiar fellowship with the excommunicated sinner^d.

a John 20. 23. "Whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." b 1 Cor. 5. 5. "Deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh." Eph. 2. 2. "The spirit that

now worketh in the children of disobedience." e 2 Cor. 2. 6—11. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment—lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow—lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." Eph. 4. 18. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." d Mat. 18. 17. "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." 2 Thes. 3. 14. "Note that man, and have no company with him."

183. Seeing the sentence of excommunication is so dreadful, is it not more safe to permit transgressors to leave the church of their own accord, than to inflict it?

Faithfulness to Christ demands a punctual administration to his ordinances^a; and anxiety for the good of the offender does not admit that he should escape, as a fugitive from discipline^b: Christ himself gives no liberty to any person to leave his kingdom with impunity^c; and those who watch for souls in the visible church, are accountable to the Lord for every church member, young or old^d: There are only three ways in which the pastor's responsibility for any member of his church can be removed: dissolving the connexion by *death*; *removal* by Providence into another part of the church; and *excommunication*, according to order.

a Rev. 2. 25. "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." b 1 Cor. 5. 5. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." c Heb. 10. 38. "But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

8 Heb. 13. 17. "They watch for your souls as they that must give account." Ezek. 34. 10. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand."

184. Are church officers subject to the same censures with the other members of the church?

Church officers are subject to *Christ's yoke* of discipline, and are liable to similar censures with private members: ^a there are other censures peculiar to official characters—*suspension* from the exercise of any official authority—and *deposition* from office, as the nature of the scandal may require ^b.

^a Mat. 11. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." ^b Gal. 1. 9. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

185. By what means are offenders convicted, in order to be censured?

The process for censuring offenders includes the regular *entry* of a case before the competent Judiciary, the patient *examination of testimony*, impartial *judgment* on the case, and the faithful *execution* of it, in administering the decreed censure.

186. In what manner is an offence to be introduced before the church for judicial examination?

For private offences, private means of redress are first to be used ^a; when private expostulation proves ineffectual, or when it is, from the nature of the offence, inadequate to remove the grievance, a *libel* must be presented to the competent court ^b: when the scandal is notorious, the ecclesiastical Judiciary may call the offender to account, upon a

charge of *fama clamosa*^c: the Presbytery, in case of ministers, and the Session, in every other case, is the competent authority to commence and finish the process, unless a reference or an appeal be made to the superior Judicatory^d.

a Mat. 18. 15. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." b Verse

17. "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church."

1 Cor. 5. 9. 12. "I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators—Do not ye judge them that are within? but them that are without, God judgeth." c Rev. 2. 20.

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." d Acts 15. 2. "When,

therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, they determined, that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question."

187. In what manner is testimony examined by an ecclesiastical court, in respect to cases of scandal?

The confession of the accused sets aside the necessity of other testimony^a: no witness is at any time to be esteemed valid, if he be evidently incapable of understanding whereof he affirms, or under the influence of malice toward the accused^b: the testimony must bear a proportion in weight, and in clearness, to the improbability, the magnitude, and the consequences, of the scandal^c: the defendant has liberty to use every lawful mean to

invalidate the testimony which appears against him ^d.

a Jam. 5. 16. "Confess your faults one to another."

b Prov. 14. 7. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." Prov. 19. 28. "An ungodly witness scorneth judgment." c 1 Tim.

5. 19. 21. 24. "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses—observe these things, without preferring one before another—Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment." d Acts 25. 16.

"That he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."

188. How is the decision formed in a case of scandal?

No trial is to be unduly hurried to a decision, or unnecessarily delayed ^a: the conduct of the court should be candid ^b, regular ^c, mild ^d, and impartial ^e: malicious accusers are to be judged criminal in proportion to the scandal of the accusation preferred against the innocent ^f; and, upon conviction of the offender, the sentence is to be pronounced with suitable solemnity ^g.

a Deut. 16. 18. "And they shall judge the people with just judgment." b Prov. 18. 13. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

c 1 Cor. 14. 40. "Let all things be done decently, and in order." d Phil. 4. 5. "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

e Jam. 2. 12. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." f Deut.

19. 18, 19. "And behold, if the witness be a false witness—then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother." g 1 Pet. 4. 11. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

189. Is an excommunicated person ever after to be restored to church fellowship ?

An excommunicated person is not to be restored, without evident marks of humiliation, repentance, and reformation, for a sufficient length of time to satisfy the church that his habits of virtue are confirmed.

2 Cor. 2. 6—10. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment—Comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow—To whom ye forgive any thing I forgive also."

190. Is it lawful to restore to office a minister, or ruling elder, who may have justly been deposed ?

It is improper to give any person a hope at the time of his deposition, that he shall be restored to his office ; but if his piety be exemplary, a sufficient time of trial have intervened, and circumstances have happily united, in divine providence, which afford a prospect that he shall be useful in the church, he may be restored to his former office.

Tit. 2. 15. "And rebuke with all authority." 1 Tim. 3. 7. "He must have a good report of them which are without."—Ver. 10. "And let these also first be proved." 1 Cor. 14. 26. "Let all things be done unto edifying."

191. What is the duty of Christians toward their rulers in the exercise of church discipline ?

The disciples of Christ should submit with cheerfulness to the yoke of discipline^a ; they should learn how to walk in agreeableness to the order of the church^b ; they should be thankful for

the power which he has lodged in the hands of rulers^c; they should esteem and admire the reasonableness and the excellency of the presbyterian constitution of church government^d; they should pray for a faithful administration of it, and for the approach of that period, when the whole earth shall be happy under its universal establishment^e.

a Mat. 11. 30. "For my yoke is easy, *profitable* *."

b 1 Tim. 3. 15. "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church."

c Ps. 122. 5. "For there are set thrones of judgment."

d Ezek. 43. 12. "The whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, *This is the law of the house* †."

e Rev. 11. 1. & 15. "Rise, and measure the temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein.—The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

* *Xενησος.*

† Note W.

NOTES EXPLANATORY, &c.

NOTE A. Referred to from Question 11.

THE word Church is of Greek derivation. *Κυριακον* is used by ancient authors for the place of public worship. The old word *Kyroke*, contracted into *Kirk*, and softened into *church*, is a compound of *Κυρια* *αίχης*. It is of very extensive signification. Church is used generally in our version of the New Testament, for the Greek *Εκκλησια*. It is of some importance to ascertain the scriptural use of this word. It will assist in discovering the nature and form of a scriptural Church. We cannot explain doctrines, if we are ignorant of the words in which the doctrines are contained. And the generic meaning of every important word which is used in a variety of acceptations, must be carefully sought for by the critic. Philology is essential to sound criticism.

The words *Εκκλησια* in the New, and *הקלל* in the Old Testament, are synonymous. They both proceed from the same root *הקלל*, the voice. The meaning of each is assembly—any number of persons met, by previous appointment. The verb, in each language, from which the noun immediately proceeds, is, to call out, to call together, and the noun is that which is so called.

It is, of course, no abuse of language to apply the word to any assembly, great or small, which meets for social or judiciary purposes. The character of the assembly is known from the connexion in which the

word is used, and not from the word itself. In this latitude of application, the inspired writers of both Testaments made use of the words *ἐκκλησία* and *Εκκλησία*.

In the Old Testament, the former of these words is applied to a number of idolatrous women—bands of soldiers—the commonwealth of Israel—distinct worshipping congregations—a representative assembly—a council, and, I may add, to other assemblies of every description.

1. The word *ἐκκλησία* is used in Jer. 44. 15. It is applied to a great number of idolatrous women, who, together with their husbands, persisted in their opposition to the command of God by the prophet Jeremiah. It is worthy of being remarked, that the Septuagint, in this instance, renders the word by *Συναγωγή*. Our translation renders it multitude.

2. It signifies bands of soldiers. Ezek. 26. 7. These marched against Tyrus, under the direction of the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The Septuagint renders it, as above, (*synagogues*,) and the English translators, companies.

3. The word (which, for the sake of the English reader, I shall write KEL,) is used for the whole commonwealth of Israel. That people, called by God, were bound together by a sacred ritual, and all were commanded to keep the passover. Exod. 12. 6. Our translation renders it the whole assembly, and in the Septuagint it is *Πάντα τὰ πλῆθος*.

4. It signifies distinct worshipping societies. Ps. 26. 12. In this verse, the Psalmist professes his resolution to honour the institutions of social worship. He had rather accompany the saints to the congregation, than sit in the society of the wicked, verse 5. In

both cases the same Hebrew word is used ; the Septuagint use *Εκκλησια*, and the English translators, congregation. KEL, and Ecclesia, are, with equal propriety, applied to the hateful clubs of the wicked, and to the worshipping assemblies of the saints.

5. The word is also applied to a representative assembly.

The principle of representation pervades all the social concerns of men. Without acting upon it, society never could exist beyond the limits of a family. The intercourse of nations, the government of every society, the agent in commercial transactions, the temporary chairman of an occasional meeting, all proceed upon this principle, so natural to man. The principle is, moreover, fully recognized in all the dispensations of God. The covenant of innocency, and the system of grace, alike proceed upon it. It was perfectly familiar to the Jews. God's merciful transactions with Noah, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, are all founded upon the principle of representation. Upon this principle the venerable Jacob acted, when he blessed the two sons of Joseph, and when shortly thereafter he gathered his own sons around him, prophesying what should befall them in time to come. Moses is directed also to act upon it. Upon his entrance into Egypt, as the deliverer of the Hebrew tribes from bondage, he is ordered to assemble the elders of Israel. Exod. 3. 16. He is ordered to address the elders, as if they were the whole assembly of the Israelites, and they are to accompany him to the presence of Pharaoh, and in the name of all the seed of Jacob, ask for liberty. After the regular organization of the Israelitish commonwealth, although Moses

transacted all public business with the chiefs, he is uniformly represented as speaking unto all Israel. This form of speech was not to be misunderstood by the Jews. They had not yet learned to deny that principle upon which the represented identify with the representative. Deut. 29. 14, 15, 25. When Moses was about to give his last advice to the Hebrews, he summoned the KEL before him. Deut. 31. 30. In this instance, the word unquestionably signifies a representative body. My reasons for considering it so, are,

1. The obvious meaning of the passage. Ver. 29. "Gather unto me all the *elders* of your tribes—that I may speak these words in *their* ears"—ver. 30. "And Moses spake in the ears of all the *קִהָּל*—the words of this song." The KEL of Israel are the elders and officers met together.

2. It is impossible it can be otherwise. Moses could not speak in the ears of all Israel, except by representation. No human voice can extend over two millions of men.

3. Upon the principle of representation Moses uniformly acted. He instructed the elders, and the elders commanded the people. Deut. 27. 1. "*And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people.*" Without multiplying texts, I refer the reader to Exod. 12. 3. "Speak unto all the *congregation* of Israel"—verse 21. "Then Moses called for all the *elders* of Israel." Even in the most solemn acts of religion, the elders represented the whole congregation. Their hands were placed upon the head of the bullock which was offered to make atonement for the whole congregation. Lev. 4. 16. And that the reader may not be without an instance of the use of the word KEL, in the most abstract form which can exist upon the repre-

sentative principle itself, I refer him to Gen. 28. 3. Here it is applied to a single individual. Higher than this, representation cannot be carried. Ver. 1. "Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him"—ver. 3. "That thou mayest be a KEL." Jacob was a KEL, as the representative of a very numerous posterity.

6. The word is used to signify a council—an assembly for deliberation and judgment. Gen. 49. 6. The patriarch speaks of Simeon and Levi, these two are a KEL. It is, indeed, a representative one. Verse 7. "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This could have been said of the two sons of Jacob, only as including their posterity.

This KEL was however a council. They consulted and determined to destroy the Schechemites. The assembly was a conspiracy. The Septuagint renders the word by *Συζασις*.

The KEL in which Job cried for redress, could not have been the church of Israel, but a court of Judicature. Job 30. 28.

Solomon, acquainted with the laws of Israel, must have referred to the power of Judicatories, in detecting crimes, when he spoke of the KEL, in Prov. 26. 26. and 5. 14.

The KEL; to which Ezekiel refers, 16. 40. and 23. 45—47. cannot be mistaken. The prophet himself expressly says this KEL would sit in judgment, try and decide, and execute the sentence, upon those who came before them. In these verses, the Septuagint renders the word by *Οχλος*, and our translation of it is company.

By the law of God, regular courts of jurisprudence were established among the Israelites. In no instance

was the whole body of the people to be judges. Deut. 16. 18. The rulers in each city, the officers of justice, are uniformly called elders, and unto these elders met in council, is every case referred. He must be, indeed, little acquainted with the law given by Moses, who is ignorant of this fact. See Deut. 21, 22, and 25 chapters.

These elders met in council. To them the name *Presbytery* was applied in latter times. Moses and the prophets use the names KEL and OD-EH. These words are used indiscriminately in the Old Testament. It is to be observed, that they are translated in the Septuagint, generally by *ecclesia* and *synagoga*. This phraseology is adopted in the New Testament. The New Testament writers use the Septuagint translation of the scriptures in their quotations from the Old Testament.

Nehemiah summoned before the council the nobles and rulers who transgressed the law. Neh. 5. 7. They exacted usury for their money, and are to be tried by the competent authorities. The word *בֵּרֵךְ*, in this verse, we translate assembly, and the Septuagint reads *Εκκλησία*. Compare Numb. 35: 24, with Deut. 19. 12, and it will appear, that the congregation which judicially tried the man-slayer, is the *Ecclesia* of elders. See also Josh. 20. 4. "He shall declare his cause in the ears of the *elders*"—ver. 6. "And stand before the *congregation* for judgment."

The word *Εκκλησία*, in the New Testament, is not, any more than its correspondents in the Old, confined in its application to a popular assembly. It signifies a tumultuous mob, Acts 19. 32, and the city council, Acts 19. 39. This sense of the word is justified

by the best Greek authors. Consult Passor, who quotes Demosthenes and Suidas, in defence of this application. Hence, the verb *ἐπικαλῶ* is, in the middle and passive voices, to appeal from an inferior to a superior Judicatory. "Plutarch," says Parkhurst, "several times applies the verb in the same view. Acts 25. 11, 12, 21, 25. See also Chap. 26. 32. and 28. 19.

In the application of Ecclesia to the christian church, which is the most common use of it in the New Testament, it signifies the whole church militant—all the elect of God—private societies of believers—single organized congregations—several congregations united under a Presbytery—and church rulers met in Judicatory.

1. The church militant is an Ecclesia. Mat. 16. 18. and Acts 2. 47. "The Lord added to the church daily."

2. The whole body of elect and redeemed sinners. Eph. 5. 25. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"—ver. 27. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church."

3. Two or three private Christians, met for prayer and conference, or living together in a family, are an *ἐκκλησία*. Acts 14. 23. "They had ordained them elders in every church." The Ecclesia, or Church, existed prior to its organization, by the election and ordination of rulers. It existed, in this sense, even in private houses. Rom. 16. 5. and Col. 4. 15.

4. The word signifies an organized congregation. Acts 14. 23. The Ecclesia did not cease to be one, when presbyters were ordained to teach and to rule in the congregation.

5. The word is applied to several congregations re-

gularly presbyterated. There is nothing to render this application improper. It is no abuse, in any language, of a generic term, to apply it to any collection of the individuals belonging to that genus, in a connexion which manifests the restriction. The church of Christ in Philadelphia, is all Christians] in that city, although there should be one hundred congregations in it. The church in Corinth, is as intelligible a phrase as the church in the house of Nymphas—The church on earth, or, the church in glory. This application is not only just, but scriptural. The saints in Corinth were one Ecclesia. 1 Cor. 1. 2. But in Corinth were several congregations. There were more Ecclesias than one, 14. 34. Corinth was a city of great extent, wealth, and population. In it were several heathen temples, dedicated to different pagan divinities. There were upwards of a thousand prostitutes attending at the temple of Venus. In this city, Paul met with uncommon success in preaching the gospel. Here he abode nearly two years. Considering the rapidity with which the gospel was then spreading, attended with miraculous power, is it reasonable, that in Corinth there was yet but one congregation of professed Christians? In the present day, without any supernatural, or even uncommon success, it is not singular for a preacher, in a large city, to collect in a few years a congregation of religious professors. At the first sermon of Paul, numbers were converted. After this, the Lord informs him, he has “much people in this city.” Here were several pastors—public officers with a diversity of tongues, suited to the wants of the church; yet, when Paul wrote his epistle, all the congregations, although differing about the merits

of their respective founders, are called one Ecclesia. In a similar sense is the word applied to the church at Ephesus, at Antioch, and Jerusalem.

6. *Εκκλησιαι* is applied to an *assembly* of elders. Mat. 18. 17. The constitution of the Jewish courts is known. Each synagogue had its elders and officers. The inferior courts were subordinate to the Sanhedrim. Never were cases decided by the populace. Our Redeemer spoke in the common language of Judea. He referred to the synagogue court. When translated into Greek, what other name should be given to this Judicatory, than the one given, Ecclesia? There is no misunderstanding of this text, by one who impartially considers the connexion. There are in the church authorized *rulers*, distinct from the *ruled*. The rulers, and not the ruled, must ultimately determine controversies. To officers, was committed the power of the keys—the power of binding and loosing; and this *Ecclesia*, ver. 17, has the power of *binding and loosing*, ver. 18.—and it may consist even of two or three persons, ver. 20. The whole passage is a directory for the application of ecclesiastic power conferred upon church officers. Ch. 16. 19. I shall close this note, by a quotation from the lectures of Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen. It must appear extraordinary from the pen of such a scholar. “But in any intermediate sense between a single congregation and the whole community of Christians, not one instance can be brought of the application of the word *Εκκλησιαι*, in sacred writ. If any impartial hearer is not satisfied on this point, let him examine every passage in the New Testament, wherein the word we render church is to be found; let him canvas in the writings of the Old

Testament every sentence wherein the correspondent word occurs, and if he find a *single passage*, wherein it clearly means either the priesthood, or the rulers of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church representative, let him fairly admit the distinction as scriptural and proper." Camp. Lec. Vol. I. Pages 204—326.

After all that has been said by the superficial editor of these lectures, they must sink the reputation of Dr. Campbell. That an illiterate independent should write in this manner, would not at all be surprising : but that the author of the philosophy of rhetoric should scribble so inadvertently, I shall not say, ignorantly, about so very important a subject, is indeed astonishing. He did humble at his feet the apostle of infidelity, by his dissertation on miracles ; but it was presumption, even after such a victory, to attempt, with a dash of his pen, to demolish the fabric of Presbyterianism, founded upon the scriptures, and erected by the learning of our fathers.

NOTE B.

The officers of the visible church must act according to law. They sit in judgment, not upon the state of a person in the sight of God, but upon his profession, and his character, in the sight of men. The pastor should, privately and publicly, deal faithfully and plainly with men's consciences. He should endeavour to discover their religious state, and their progress, in order to divide rightly the word of truth. But when, in common with his elders, he sits in judgment upon the admission of an applicant to church privileges, or upon the exclusion of a member from the

fellowship of the visible church, he acts not upon private suspicions, but upon the evidence of *overt acts*. We are not to receive a man to communion, merely *because he is regenerate*, nor are we to reject him, merely *because he is unregenerate*.

1. We are not officers of the invisible church. Saintship is, in it, the criterion of membership.

2. It is *impossible* that regeneration is the criterion of membership in the visible church : no mere man can judge the heart. Upon this principle, we *never* could associate in the church with confidence. We cannot be *certain* of one another's regeneration.

3. It is *presumption* to say that saintship is the criterion of visible membership. It condemns the conduct of Christ, and of the apostles. Christ admitted as a member, and ordained as a minister, Judas, whom he knew to be unregenerate. Simon the sorcerer was a baptized church member, while in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Here is our example, that private suspicions, yea, certain knowledge, unless founded upon some *overt acts* capable of proof, is not the rule of judgment.

4. By a divine constitution, the church of the Jews included some unregenerate men. The holiness of God is the same at all times. "Holiness becometh his house for ever."

5. The christian visible church, according to Christ's account of it, embraces some unregenerate men.

Is it a vine ? It has barren branches. Is it a field of growing corn ? The tares must grow with the wheat until the harvest. These tares are the children of the wicked one. This is not to be denied. It is the devil

that brings hypocrites and self-deceivers to make application for church membership. But the vigilance of Christ's servants cannot keep them always without. We warn all of danger. We deal plainly with their consciences. If they deceive us by a false profession, their blood be upon their own heads. But no general law, by which the tares should be rooted up, could preserve the wheat unhurt.

6. The principle, that regeneration is the criterion of membership, is pregnant with mischief. 1. It encourages ignorance in ministers. Why should they labour to understand the constitution, laws, and history, of the visible church, seeing they have only to judge whether such a man have grace or not, in forming a church? 2. It is an engine of tyranny. There is no rule to be prescribed for him who erects his metaphysical apparatus to judge of my heart. 3. It encourages spiritual pride. "Stand by," says this discern-er of spirits, "I am holier than thou." 4. It is destructive to piety. The church, upon my admission, has pronounced me regenerate. I have no need of self-examination. My joy, instead of a thirst for holiness, will hereafter be fed by repetitions of experience. 5. It encourages licentiousness. If a saint is not to be excommunicated, he may indulge in scandals, even in murder and adultery, with impunity. 6. It is a certain method of banishing saints from the church, and of receiving hypocrites. The sincere Christian is more inclined to *do* what he *ought*, than to *proclaim* what he *feels*. The libertine, who lived without God, having, some how, believed the doctrines of grace, and immediately conceived himself a remarkable monument of divine grace, while he is in heart a

libertine still, is the most suitable member for such a communion. Under pretence of being strict, such terms of communion are in fact the most latitudinarian.

Let none be induced by these remarks, to consider as a church member any person, merely because he is respectable in the world, is partial to a certain system, or holds a pew in a place of worship. The qualifications for church membership are expressed in answer to Question 26.

NOTE C.

No external form of church policy is inseparably connected with the conversion of the soul to God. There may be hypocrites in the best regulated churches. And there may be Christians who have never seen any officer of the visible church. Family education—yea, the Bible has been the mean of conversion, even where there is no organized church. The doctrines of grace, in whatever method exhibited, are the means of conquering the enemies of God, and reducing them into the obedience of Christ. Church government is the mean of maintaining and improving the conquest. This is also appointed by Christ, and is, of course, of *divine right*.

When the extraordinary ministers of the New Testament church, like a conquering army, made any acquisitions to the Redeemer's kingdom, they provided for their new converts a regular government. The disciples at first associated in private fellowship, for prayer and conference. These societies were visited, with public ordinances, as convenience admitted, by the apostles and evangelists. When their numbers increased, they were, with all convenient speed, regular-

ly organized; and presbyters were ordained over them. Acts 14. 23. That certain external model of government, which was originally adopted for the preservation of the evangelical doctrines and institutions, and for the careful transmission of them to after ages, is of divine authority. *A jus divinum* is supported by any one of the five articles mentioned in the answer to Question 39.

NOTE D.

Πρεσβυτερ is a term of official authority. The Jewish קריים are rendered by the Septuagint Πρεσβυτεροι. These words, our translation renders by elders. They might be rendered Eldermen, or Aldermen. See Parkhurst's Lexicon. Such officers were appointed in every city of Israel. Ezra 10. 14. The magistracy of Egypt, as well as the rulers of Israel, bore this name. Gen. 50. 7. In the language of the New Testament, the Jewish rulers are presbyters, and the council of rulers a presbytery. Luke 22. 66. All Christian ecclesiastical rulers are presbyters. The name points out, from its Old Testament usage, that the person who bears it, is a governor, and may sit in a representative KEL, or ecclesiastical Judicatory. All who bear any spiritual authority, are comprehended under this term. Deacons bear no such power. Their office is to serve the tables of the poor. The apostles, in the exercise of ordinary power, are no more than elders. 1 Pet. 5. 1. All the presbyters are ordained to office by a presbytery—by a plurality of elders. Acts 14. 23. Every organized church has several elders to govern it. The office is honourable, and is entitled to the respectful obedience of Christians. Some of the elders

rule only. Others rule, and also labour in word and doctrine. 1 Tim. 5. 17. The teaching presbyter is the same with the pastor. And all these presbyters are bishops of divine right. According to the infallible decision of the Holy Ghost, the *presbyters* are *bishops*, and they *feed a particular flock* committed to their charge. Acts 20. 28.

NOTE E.

Public social worship is as old as religious society. Jehovah, as mediator, familiarly conversed with men, since the fall. God received sacrifices from them. The sabbath must have been sanctified by prayer and conference. Men *must* speak about what is interesting to them, and *pious* men *must* pray.

When divine revelation began to be read, and written, a change must have been introduced in the forms of public worship.

Reading and applying the scriptures would then become a part of public devotion. When literature began to extend, and copies of the scriptures to multiply, the Jewish *Proseucha* is converted into a synagogue. After the time of Ezra, the synagogues became common. Congregations were regularly formed, and appropriate officers appointed to conduct the devotion, and inspect the morals of the church. As, in the earliest times, the name KEL was common to the congregation and its rulers, so, in the later times of the Jews, the term ODEH was used to designate those who worshipped in the synagogues, the place of worship, or the officers of religion who ruled in the congregation.

In each synagogue there were ten officers. במלנין.

One was the *minister*, known also by the names *angel*, or *bishop* of the church. He conducted the public devotion. With him were associated, in government, three rulers, who had the management of the finances of the church, and judged in all cases of offence among the members. Three were deacons, who had special care of the poor. The eighth was an interpreter of the Hebrew into the language commonly spoken. The ninth and tenth were sacred critics, who were appointed for the study of the scriptures, in order to assist the interpreter. A very useful institution, when there were no translations or commentaries to be had.

The BATELNIM were the *synagogue representative*. Some learned men have mistaken them as constituting the whole congregation, because they are sometimes called *the synagogue*. Take away from this institution what was peculiar to the state of the Jews, and you have the christian consistory, or congregational session. From the decisions of the elders of the synagogue an appeal might be made to the Sanhedrim, the supreme council of presbyters. See Maimon. in Synhed. Lightfoot de Synag. and compare Num. 25. 24, 25, with Deut. 19. 12, and Josh. 20. 4, in the Septuagint.

NOTE F.

The Jews had five kinds of courts. 1. The great sanhedrim. 2. The inferior sanhedrim. It consisted of 23 presbyters, and sat in the principal cities. 3. The session of the synagogue. 4. The *authorized session*, appointed occasionally by the sanhedrim, to try special causes. 5. The *unauthorized session*. This

court was composed of arbitrators chosen by the contending parties. The Jews enjoyed their own laws throughout the Roman empire. Christians had the same liberty, until Nero became a persecutor. Until this time, the Romans made no difference between the church and the synagogue. Acts 18. 15.

The apostle Paul reproves the Corinthians for going to law before heathen magistrates. Taking for granted that the church has its authorized courts, superior and subordinate, to judge in spiritual concerns, he orders them to imitate the Jews, in referring disputes about temporalities to *unauthorized* courts.

The *Τρις ἐξεθνημενους* are the session of voluntary arbitrators appointed by the parties. Let these judge of the *Βιωλικά*. 1 Cor. 6. 4. Maimon. in Synhed.

NOTE G.

The *Αποστολος* is an extraordinary ambassador of Christ. He was commissioned for extraordinary purposes. Like the generals of a victorious army, the apostles exercised, in the name of their King, authority throughout all parts of the vanquished empire, until the regular magistracy was organized and fully settled. They have no successors in this respect. The presbyter is fully competent to all ordinary administrations. In relation to such cases, the apostles themselves are no more than presbyters. 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Church government is subordinate to evangelic doctrine. The power given to the apostles, was intended solely for subserviency to their preaching. 2 Cor. 13. 8. *Teaching* is the *highest dignity* in the church, because it is the most useful and laborious service. Preaching was the principal work of the apostles

The ambition of prelates has inverted this divine order. Preaching is the meanest service in the popish and episcopal churches. It is merely subservient to the government of bishops and of popes. The bishops exalt the mean above the end. Government is, with them, the principal part of religion. To be in power is more dignified than to edify.

Apostolic authority was founded upon apostolic gifts. God was the author of both, and both were subservient to teaching. None can pretend to a succession of apostolic power, without a succession of the gifts which qualified for it; and ambition could alone make dignity consist more in bearing rule than in teaching. The scripture says, "Let the presbyters who *rule well*, be counted worthy of double honour; *especially*, they who labour in word and doctrine." Episcopalians say, let the preacher be honoured, but especially the bishop who rules over him. This is not the only instance in which they pervert the words of truth. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

NOTE H.

The evangelists were extraordinary ministers. As ordained presbyters, they exercised the ordinary power of the pastor. 1 Tim. 4. 14. Their principal work was teaching, and organizing churches, by apostolic direction. The ordinary ministers stood in need of this assistance. They had not, as yet, the New Testament revelation in writing. The evangelists, in part, supplied this defect. Timothy would have been, to the churches which he visited, what the epistles sent to him by Paul, are to us—a directory upon which we may depend. The evangelists have been transformed

into prelates, by the churches of Rome and England. These churches can canonize saints, and consecrate bishops, at pleasure. It is remarkable, that they are always for increasing the power ; but never for appreciating the labour of the teacher.

NOTE I.

Επισκοπος is a name of office. It is borrowed from the synagogue הַיָּהוּדָה. Maimonides de Sanhed. Cap. 4. describes him, as “the presbyter who labours in word and doctrine.” Bishop and presbyter, or, as our translation sometimes reads, overseers and elders, are different names of the same officer. Acts 20. 17—28. Presbyter is expressive of the authority, and episcopos, of the duty, of the pastor. Is it ignorance that has transposed these expressive titles ? or how is it come to pass, that the bishop should be a superior ruler, when presbyter is the word really expressive of ecclesiastical power ! The presbyter is appointed a bishop by the Holy Ghost. Acts 20. 28. The *diocesan bishop* is consecrated by man. He is, in fact, no creature of God.

NOTE K.

The angel of the church is analogous to the SELIH-JEBUR of the synagogue. The שְׁלִיחַ צְבָר was the minister whose office it was publicly to read and explain the law and the prophets. The duties of the christian minister may be known, by the names given to him in the scriptures. The names which are divinely given to men, are always expressive of some important article of their conduct and character. *Presbyter* is a term of power, and points out the ruler ;

pastor points out a public *surveyor* of spiritual provisions for the church ; *bishop*, the spiritual *inspector* of the state of the congregation ; *teacher*, the public *instructor* of the congregation ; and *angel*, the *messenger* of God to men. All these characters unite in the minister of the gospel. By each of these names is he known in the scriptures.

Sometimes the scriptures make use of a definite number for an indefinite, and even of an individual for all who belong to the same genus. This mode of speech is common in every language. It is a picture of the mind in the exercise of abstraction. Deut. 32. 30. and 1 Tim. 3. 2. The number seven is often used in an indefinite sense, or rather to express perfection. Rev. 1. 4. And although the seven candlesticks have immediate respect to the churches of Asia, the expression represents all christian congregations, verse 13. Christ is present in all his churches. The seven stars which he held in his right hand, 16, represent all his ministers. These are called angels, verse 20. And although immediately applied to the ministers of the seven churches of Asia, the name belongs to all ministers, as well as the epistles to all churches. The angel of the church of Ephesus has undergone many transformations. Rev. 2. 1. The church of Rome and the church of England have consecrated him a *diocesan*. The independents are unwilling to find in Ephesus any more than one congregation of Christians ; and the angel is only the *gifted brother* who exhorts the church—something of a lay-preacher. Dr. Campbell invents another hypothesis. He confesses, indeed, that it is an invention. Vol. I. Page 168. This learned writer takes very often the liberty of in-

venting articles of ecclesiastical history. Every congregation had, in primitive times, Dr. Campbell conjectures, a college of pastors. This college had a constant president. This president is the angel of the church*. Dr. Campbell himself was principal of a college. With the independents, he considers Ephesus as containing only one congregation; and with the episcopalians, he considers the angel a superior minister. Both these opinions are without foundation.

1. Ephesus had several congregations of professed christians, 30 years before the date of the epistle directed to the *Αγγελος*. Rev. 2. 1. The city of Ephesus was one of the most famous of Asia Minor. The population was very great. The temple of Diana is an evidence of this. It was upwards of 400 feet in length, and 220 in breadth. In this city, the "word of God grew mightily and prevailed." "Multitudes heard it." The name of "Jesus was magnified." Acts 19. 8. 10. "A great and effectual door was opened." Multitudes confessed their sinful deeds. Many others "burnt their books to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver." Encouraged by such a rich harvest, the apostle Paul remained in Ephesus above two years.

Is it possible, then, that these converts, who, together with their families, were received into the church, would form but one congregation? If so, they who serve the modern tabernacle, have been more successful than the apostles. Upon this principle, small indeed must have been the success of the gospel during the first century.

* This is the amount of Lecture V. Article, Angel of the Church.

2. In Ephesus, at a very early period, twelve extraordinary ministers—prophets, having the miraculous gifts of tongues, were employed. Unless they had many congregations, the gifts of tongues would not have been necessary for so many. And some years thereafter, there were in Ephesus, not a number of priests, and one bishop—not a college of pastors, and one president—but several church officers, each one of whom was a *presbyter*, to rule, a *bishop*, to inspect, and a *pastor*, to feed his own congregation—his special charge. Acts 19. 17—20. and Chap. 20. 17—28.

In every organized church there were indeed several presbyters—rulers. Acts 14. 23. Were all these rulers pastors? No.—The primitive preachers were not indolent. They did not remain inactive. One was sufficient to conduct the public worship of the Lord's day. Each pastor had a flock, over which the Holy Ghost made him overseer. The pastoral connexion is formed by the blessed Spirit. Acts 20. 28. For what other purposes then were elders ordained in every congregation? As helps for government. The church has several rulers—some of these labour in word and doctrine. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Others only rule.

But in the city of Ephesus there were many congregations regularly organized, each having its pastor and its elders. These several congregations were nevertheless, *one* church. They were presbyterated. Each pastor is an angel. In Ephesus, of course, there were many angels. Why then is the angel of the church of Ephesus addressed in the singular number? To maintain correctness of figure and of thought. As many churches are one church, many angels are *one* angel. The letter, Rev. 2. 1—7,

is, in fact, addressed to the *ministry* of the Ephesian church. I have not found in the New Testament, an instance of several ministers in one congregation. The congregations were small. They had no houses in which a large body could assemble. To erect small congregations, having each its proper pastor, is a better plan for edification, than to establish large collegiate churches.

NOTE L.

The hand is the instrument of power. *Χειρ* is used in scripture for ministerial action. Acts 14. 3. Luke 4. 11.

Hence, imposition of hands is a communication of power. This significant action was known to the patriarchs. Gen. 48. 14.

The presbyters of the synagogue were ordained by the laying on of hands. In its scriptural usage, this action is universally expressive of some communication from him who lays on the hand, to him upon whom it is laid. In any other sense, it is a common, and not a religious action.

1. It is a mean of communicating bodily vigour. Mark 6. 5.

2. It is a communication of special blessing. Gen. 48. 14. Mark 10. 16.

3. It is a mean of imparting the power of miracles—the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts 8. 17.

4. And it is a communication of ministerial authority. Numb. 27. 18. 23. Deut. 34. 9. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Physical strength, special blessing, miraculous power, and moral authority, have, according to divine appointment, been communicated by the laying on of

hands. These things have also been otherwise communicated. God selects means adequate to the end.

All the communications mentioned in scripture as made by the imposition of hands, are of an extraordinary kind, except one—that of authority. This is alone capable of being regulated by ordinary agency.

Episcopalians have mistaken the use of laying on of hands,

1. In what they call *confirmation*. The bishop pretends to give the Holy Ghost. Has he that Spirit really to bestow? No. Extraordinary gifts are not communicable by man, without extraordinary power. Miracles are ceased.

2. Presbyters lay on their hands along with the bishops, in ordinations to the ministry. They intend no more by this, than to signify assent. This is a profanation of a divine ordinance. There is not an instance in the whole Bible, of imposition of hands, as a token of assent. The whole congregation might lay on hands, in this sense of the phrase, or deed. Episcopalians are, however, in the *right*, even against their *will*, in this instance. The ordination would otherwise be void. They oppose presbyterianism: but necessity compels them to adopt, in practice, presbyterial measures. This, by the providence of God, rescues his visible church from much confusion. Episcopal ordination is valid.

The apostles, as extraordinary ministers, communicated the Holy Spirit both to officers and private Christians. They, in this sense, laid their hands upon the deacons. Acts 6. 6. As ordinary church rulers, they, in common with others, communicated ecclesiastic authority, ordaining to the christian ministry. 1 Tim. 4.

14. and 2 Tim. 1. 6. No one can communicate that which he does not himself possess from God.

The prelates of England, during the reign of Henry, and of Elizabeth, were obliged to defend the hierarchy. They had learning, and from the ancient fathers they selected mutilated passages in defence of prelacy. These same passages have been quoted from writer to writer, among them, few recurring to the original authorities. Is it this practice that has deceived Mr. Hobart, a minister of Trinity church? It is hoped, a little more learning and experience will correct the extravagance of a vigorous mind. This gentleman, if consistent with himself, doctrinally, excludes from the hope of happiness hereafter, all who are not episcopalians; and even all episcopalians, who do not receive the Lord's supper. His words are, "The devout participation of the holy Eucharist will appear *indispensably necessary* to our salvation." Companion for the Altar, Page 182. "None can possess authority to administer the sacraments but those who received a commission from the *bishops* of the church. It must be *essential*, therefore, to the *efficacy* of the Lord's supper—that it be administered by those who have received *lawful* authority." Page 200.

These sentiments were committed to writing, in the beginning of the 19th century, by an American. What system can have produced such infatuation in such a country, and in such a period? No soul to be saved, that has not participated of the Eucharist. No benefit in sacraments, except those administered by persons who have received episcopal ordination.

"Laying on the hands of the presbytery," is to Mr. Hobart of no value. I shall quote the words of a ce-

lebrated prelate. Let episcopalians determine which authority is greater, that of a presbyter of Trinity church, or that of the archbishop of Canterbury. The quotation is from a licence granted to the Rev. John Morison, a presbyterian minister. It is dated 6th April, 1582. "You were admitted and ordained to sacred orders, and the holy ministry, by the *imposition of hands*, according to the laudable form and rite of the Reformed Church of Scotland: We, therefore, as much as lies in us, and as by *right* we may, *approving and ratifying the form of your ordination*, grant unto you a licence—that in such orders by you taken, you may, and *have power*, in any convenient places, in and throughout the whole province of Canterbury, to celebrate divine offices, and to *minister the sacraments*."

The doctrine of ministerial parity is not altogether unsupported by the authority of dignified clergymen. It has higher authority. It is the institution of Christ. Mark 10. 42—44.

NOTE M.

Χειροτονειν signifies, to hold out the hand. It is compounded of *Χειρ*, the hand, and *Τεινω*, to extend. The action, holding out the hand, is expressive of choice and resolution. It marks a *decision of the will*, whether intimated or executed.

The word is used to signify divine appointment. Acts 10. 41. Human choice, however expressed. 2 Cor. 8. 19. And 3dly, it signifies to elect to office, by holding up the right hand. "At Athens, some of the magistrates were called *Χειροτονητοι*, because they were elected by the people in this manner." Parkhurst.

The *right of choosing* spiritual rulers, is in the chris-

tian people ; the *power of ordination*, in those who are already ordained. *Χειροτονιας*, Acts 14. 23, embraces election and consequent ordination of elders in the church.

The *mode* of election, provided the congregation do in fact elect, is a matter of expediency. It should be done with judgment and decorum. The nomination of a candidate must begin somewhere. In a popular assembly some one must preside. The session and the congregation are equally interested in the ordination of a ruler.

The session is, moreover, the *authorized representation* of the whole church. It is proper, therefore, that when rulers are to be chosen, the members of session, or the senior members of the church, should consult together, and *nominate* candidates.

The power of election, and even of a *counter nomination*, is in the adult members of the church. Females should observe delicacy in the exercise of this right. They should not be forward, or unconcerned. They who are not represented by parent, or husband, should appear and give their suffrages.

NOTE N.

Διακονος, and its parent Greek verb, are derived from the Hebrew *מָדָן*, to minister. *Diaconos*, is *one who renders a service*. It is applied, in the New Testament, to the Redeemer himself. Rom. 15. 8.—To any religious worshipper. John 12. 26.—To women useful in religious concerns. Rom. 16. 1.—To civil rulers. Rom. 13. 4.—To all ministers of religion, whether extraordinary as apostles, or ordinary pastors. 1 Cor. 3. 5. Acts 1. 14. Col. 1. 7.

Every person, public or private, male or female, who renders any service to another, is a *deacon*. But, besides this general use of the word, it is a *term of office*, in the church. The name is given emphatically to him, who is ordained to serve officially the tables of the poor. Deacons are not necessary to the regular organization of a christian church. They are founded upon the circumstance of a class of paupers belonging to the church. When the concerns of the poor demand particular managers, the ordination of deacons for that office, is a matter of divine right. *Ordained deaconesses* are not known in the church. Every female, who renders any service to a christian minister, or member of a congregation, is a deacon in the general sense of the word. The first deacons, Acts 6. 1—6, were not officers of a particular congregation. At Jerusalem, there could not, at the time of their election, be less than twelve thousand Christians. There could not, by any means, be more than one deacon for a congregation. These deacons were, in fact, officers for managing the temporalities of the whole presbytery of Jerusalem. All collections were delivered into the hands of the apostles and elders, *the presbytery*. Acts 11. 30.* The deacons were the official distributors of the sums collected. Although the twelve apostles, besides other ministers, were yet at Jerusalem, so great was the number of congregations, and so much business of a more important nature had they to transact, that they could not attend to the temporalities of the church. Had there really been but a single congregation at Jerusalem, twelve inspired apostles might have managed all its affairs.

The Διακονος is not, any more than the Πρεσβυτερις

who rules *only*, ordained by the imposition of hands. The ministry of the word and sacraments is not committed to them. They are set apart, by prayer, to their office. Upon the first deacons, after their ordination, the apostles laid their hands, in order to communicate the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts 6. 6. Ruling elders are the constitutional assistants of the ministry, in government, and deacons the assistants of both ministers and elders, in managing the affairs of the poor.

NOTE O.

The success of the gospel, in the first century, was remarkably rapid. Thousands were converted, at single sermons. Nothing has equalled it since the creation of the world. The commencement of the millenium will alone afford such another rapid diffusion of light and life. Jerusalem was the principal theatre upon which these wonders were displayed. And yet, even at Jerusalem, some christian divines inform us, there was, during the apostolic age, only one single congregation of Christians. These writers are certainly beside themselves. Prejudice and inadvertence are not sufficient to account for such misrepresentations. Professor Campbell is more inexcusable than those who *serve the tabernacle*. When an error is connected with the interest, the pride, and the ministerial standing of a person, we are not surprised, if he appears to cherish that error. This is the case, in relation to the independents, but not in relation to Dr. Campbell.

Εκκλησια, in the singular number, is repeatedly applied to all Christians in Jerusalem. Acts 8. 1, and 11.

22, and 15. 4. "But in *any intermediate sense*, between a *single congregation* and the *whole community* of Christians, *not one instance* can be brought of the application of the word in sacred writ. The plural number is *invariably* used, when more congregations than one are spoken of, unless the subject be of the *whole commonwealth* of Christ." Camp. Lec. Vol. I. 204. There is, of course, at Jerusalem, during the apostolic age, no more than one single congregation. This argument is the corner stone of independency. Remove it, and the tabernacle tumbles.

There were at Jerusalem several congregations in one church.

1. The apostles, prophets, and elders, would not have remained at Jerusalem, to preach to one congregation.

2. Diversity of languages did then as well as now require different places of worship. Miracles were performed, to confer on ministers the gift of tongues. There must have been different congregations, that the ordinary worship of the sabbath might be intelligibly conducted.

3. They had not in Jerusalem large places of worship, in which very large congregations could meet on the Lord's day, for the stated worship. They usually assembled in private houses, *chambers*, and *upper rooms*.

4. There were in Jerusalem at least fifty thousand Christians.

Jerusalem was a city of vast extent. Its population exceeded a million of inhabitants. When besieged and destroyed by the Roman army, it contained upwards of two millions. The Jews were then assem-

bled to keep the passover. The ordinary worship of the Jews was conducted in the synagogues. These were their parish churches. There were nearly 500 of them in the capital of Judea.

In this great city did the Lord begin his great work. *Three thousand*, on one day, *five thousand*, upon another, and, after this, *multitudes*, men and women, were repeatedly added to the church. Acts 2, 3, 4 chapters. Still the number of disciples at Jerusalem *greatly* increased. Even after this, *vast multitudes* were added to the Lord, and they remained in peace at Jerusalem, until the persecution commenced. Acts 8. Ch. Again, however, "the churches had rest throughout all Judea." The word of the Lord *increased* and *multiplied*. There were in Jerusalem several *myriads*. Acts 21. 20. *Πεντε μυριάδας* is translated in Acts 19. 19, fifty thousand. A myriad is, without dispute, ten thousand. At the time alluded to in this verse, there is every reason to believe, that there were in Jerusalem no less than twenty organized congregations belonging to that presbytery. He who carefully consults the sacred history will find the absurdity of limiting the number of Christians in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth, to a single congregation in each place. These very large cities, however, appear to the principal of Marischal college, as villages, quite inferior to Aberdeen. During the triumphs of the gospel, they contained but a single *Εκκλησία* in each of them,

NOTE P.

The XV. chapter of Acts has been tortured by ecclesiastical disputants. The Roman imagines that it establishes the papal power of Peter. It is, to the

episcopalian, a demonstration of the diocesan authority of James, as bishop of Jerusalem. The independents see nothing more in it, than a meeting of all Christians to consult and advise.

There are also some commentators, who conceive that this part of divine revelation makes nothing for any particular form of government. They say it merely announces a decision of the apostles, acting in their extraordinary character, as inspired men.

I propose to show in this note, that we have in this chapter, an *authoritative decree, enacted by a representative assembly, exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction over churches and presbyteries.*

1. It is an authoritative decree. Δογμαῖα κεκριμένα. The word *dogma* never conveys the idea of *advice*. It is uniformly expressive of a *decree*, which must be obeyed. It is used in the New Testament only in four places, besides its application to the decree of the meeting at Jerusalem. In two of these, it is applied to the decrees of the Roman emperor. Acts 17. 7. Luke 2. 1. The decrees of Cæsar are not a simple advice. He compelled his subjects to pay tribute. In the other two places, the word is applied to the positive ordinances of God. Col. 2. 14. Eph. 2. 15. The dogmas of the Lord are not an advice, but statutes which bind the conscience. The Septuagint uses the word for laws and decrees. Dan. 2. 13, and 3. 10, and 4. 3, and 6. 8. It is a *burden*—a *necessary thing*—not a simple advice. Acts 15. 28. It is a *decree ordained*—not a mere recommendation. Acts 16. 4.

2. It was enacted by a representative assembly—*church*—Εκκλησία. This will appear, if we consider the subject with impartiality.

1. The apostles did not determine the question as inspired extraordinary teachers and rulers. When inspired, they "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This excludes disputation. 2 Pet. 1. 21. But about this question there was much disputation. Acts 15. 7. As *inspired*, any one apostle might have decided the question. It must have been the design of God, in not ordering *one* to do so, to set us an example of ordinary ecclesiastical proceedings. Besides, the apostles were not alone in forming the decision. The elders, verse 6, the whole church, verse 22, the brethren, verse 23, were associated with the apostles, in the discussion, framing, and execution, of this decree.

2. The whole church, literally, was not the enacting authority. The whole church, literally speaking, includes all the disciples of Christ then on earth, man, woman, and child. These were not at Jerusalem. If it is said, that the whole church means only believers at Jerusalem, this use of the term, whole church, ὅλη ἡ ἐκκλησία, is contrary to the whole system of independency itself. What right had the congregation at Jerusalem to enact a decree to bind the churches of Syria? Popery itself is not more despotic than this kind of independency. But where would the whole body of Christians in Jerusalem, amounting to the number of several thousands, nay, myriads, meet? How could they discuss and determine? Supposing that they were present, how long must it have taken them to express their opinions? or is it probable, there would have been no dissenting voice, considering they were so zealous of the law, and long after this, attached to its forms? What instrument

did they use to speak with, so that a body of fifty thousand men could hear the arguments? Enough, however, has been said, to show that the body of christian people was not the enacting authority in the present case. The hypothesis is absurd. Dr. Campbell, in a work which does him much more honour than his lectures on ecclesiastical history, the philosophy of rhetoric, has a very able discussion, which I would recommend to the careful perusal of all who read his lectures, and are partial to the independent plan of church government. Phil. of Rhet. Book II. Chap. VII. The title of the chapter is, "What is the cause that nonsense so often escapes being detected, both by the writer and by the reader?" This chapter contains very judicious reflections. But I return to my subject.

If the reader is satisfied that the decree was not enacted by the apostles, as apostles, nor by the whole church, literally speaking, he must embrace the opinion, that a representative assembly was the enacting authority. There is no alternative. Upon this principle, and upon this alone, the whole chapter is consistent and intelligible. Every textual difficulty vanishes.

The assembly is composed of *presbyters*. The apostles are expressly mentioned, not because they acted in superiority to the elders, in this instance, but in order to secure the whole confidence of the church, in the decision of a question so very interesting to every Christian. The confidence of the church, even in this way, in a decree of its courts, is increased, upon hearing that the most intelligent and faithful men in the church were present, and gave their assent to the measure. The apostolic name, although acting in an

ordinary capacity, was justly influential. In this first council, it is therefore expressly mentioned. Verse 6. This assembly is called all the multitude, *παν το πληθος*. Verse 12. This was not the whole mass of Christians. Let the historian Luke explain his own phrase. The *παν το πληθος*, whole multitude, led Jesus to Pilate. Luke 23. 1. Matthew tells us, Chap. 27. 1, 2, that this whole multitude was the chief priests and the elders of the people—that is, the Jewish sanhedrim, the supreme council of Judea. Nay, Mark, chap. 15. 1, expressly says it was the sanhedrim, the whole council, *ολοι το συνιδριον*. Since, consequently, this name *παν το πληθος*, was given to the supreme council of the Jews, it is not difficult to ascertain its meaning, in relation to a christian representative assembly. The christian *παν το πληθος*, is the general synod—the *ολη η εκκλησια*, verse 22. There is not a class of persons distinct from the apostles and elders, held up to our view in this verse. It only informs us, that the apostles and elders acted in a collective capacity, and that the enacting assembly was a proper representation of the whole church. Indeed, the whole church could not possibly, otherwise than by representation, be present at Jerusalem. A similar phraseology occurs, Mark 15. 1. No one, however, supposes that the sanhedrim was quite distinct from the priests, the scribes, and the elders who composed it. It pleased the apostles and elders with the unanimous voice of the whole church representative, to send commissioners from this court to Antioch, along with Paul and Barnabas. See verse 22. The commissioners are sent to the brethren in the ministry. The decree of the synod is inscribed to the subordinate judicatories of the church. The breth-

ren, *αδελφοί*, verses 22 and 23, are not distinct from the church officers met in the synod. They are ministers. They are also members of the assembly—all the delegates from the churches which were not of Judea. These are distinctly mentioned, in order to show to the churches more immediately interested in this decision, that their own delegates consented to the measure. These *Αδελφοί* cannot have been laymen; Barsabas and Silas were the leading men among them. They were "*Ἄνδρες πνευμαῖς*." But Barsabas and Silas were ministers. Their brethren were so also. They were also members of the enacting assembly. The commissioners were selected from among the brethren who enacted the law, verse 22.

3. This assembly exercised jurisdiction over different presbyteries.

1. The decision respects all the churches. 2. The question is referred from the presbytery of Antioch. This presbytery consisted of probably twelve ministers and congregations. We can reckon eight with certainty. There were *men* of Cyprus, and *men* of Cyrene, preaching at Antioch. Acts 11. 20. These could not have been less, in all, than four. Paul, and *other teachers*, verses 27, 28, must be at least three added to the four. To these seven we may add Barnabas, verses 22—24.

In the assembly of ministers at Antioch, the dispute about the law of Moses became so serious, that it is referred for decision to the highest authority of the church. And 3dly, all the churches cheerfully submitted to the decree. Acts 15. 31, 41, and 16. 4, 5. It must have, therefore, been enacted by a competent authority.

NOTE Q.

This theory is supported by experience. Those who do not "like to retain God in their knowledge," are given over to "strong delusions." Such also as *invent* forms of worship, not satisfied with the simplicity of the scripture modes, are often by the judgments of a just God given over to their own idols. Let any man of piety consider the state of religion in the popish and episcopal churches—Let a man of spiritual discernment inquire into the state of vital godliness in them, and he will find that little of it is left. They groan under a load of superstition which has been accumulating for ages. Let *their* experience warn others to abstain from every act of *will worship*.

NOTE R.

An appeal to matter of fact is in this case necessary. It has always been the national character of every country in which the observance of holy days prevailed, that they do not strictly observe the sabbath. Those countries, upon the contrary, in which holy days were abolished at the reformation, have been exemplary for sabbath sanctification. The very same remark will apply to churches. I appeal to the observation of every reader. Let him judge for himself.

Are not those churches who observe no holy days, the most attentive to the duties of the christian sabbath?

NOTE S.

The heathens used certain forms of prayers before their idols. The Jews were beginning to conform to their superstitious practice. As the *spirit* of prayer

departs from men, the *practice* of prayer will be relinquished, or *mere forms* adopted. The disciples of Christ were in danger from the prevailing practice. *Μη βαττολογησῆτε*, "use not vain repetitions," was, therefore, the admonition of Christ to his followers.

The 18 prayers, which Maimonides says were used in the synagogue, and upon which the churches of Rome and England build their liturgies, are no more than vain repetitions. Whoever takes the trouble of reading the translation which Dr. Prideaux, *Con.* Vol. II. page 126, gives of these prayers, will acquiesce in this remark.

The Lord's prayer lays no foundation for episcopal liturgies. If it is a *form* from which we are not to deviate, it effectually excludes all other forms. If it is a *model*, it is our duty to use it as such. We do so in extempore prayer. The saints, in the Old and New Testaments, have left us many valuable instances of their prayers to God, but not the smallest evidence of their having been repeating or reading the words of *any certain form* composed by some other person.

The superstition of Rome, and the tyranny of Henry the eighth, is the true foundation of the episcopal liturgy. Obligated to conform to the measure, attempts have been made to justify it. Arguments which at first tended to palliate an evil which the bishops had not power to remedy, are at last thought sufficient to establish a divine right. Such are the gradations of human folly.

NOTE T.

Βαπτίζω signifies, to wash. A thing may be washed, by dipping it in water, by pouring water upon it, or by

rubbing it effectually, with some wet substance? Without rubbing, nothing can be washed, even by dipping. It is absurd to think of, literally, washing a man with his clothes on.

The christian ordinance of baptism, is the *symbol* of a spiritual washing. It never was intended to cleanse the substance to which the water is applied. It is not intended to wash the body. All disputes about the quantity of water to be applied would cease, were men to recollect this fact.

It is necessary that there be a *sensible representation* of an inward spiritual application. There is nothing else necessary. A few drops are as effectual a symbol as the whole ocean. Alas, how fond men are to sensualize religion! The Hudson is not more effectual for *spiritual washing*, than a bason. The Redeemer knows this. He has at no time determined the quantity of water with which a disciple is to be baptized.

Some episcopalians consider baptism as synonymous with regeneration. This is more absurd than the anabaptist conceit. There are, however, masters in Israel, who know as little about the *new birth* as Nicodemus did. John 3. 1—6.

To be baptized by a priest who has received episcopalian ordination, is to be born again. Miserable episcopalians, if this be all your regeneration! But I reject the ungenerous, the infamous thought. No. I would not believe it upon the authority of one of your own bishops. This is not the only regeneration of your articles, and your homilies, of your Herveys, your Romaines, your Newtons, and your Scots.

NOTE U.

Ogans occurs three times in the New Testament. 1

Cor. 11. 25 and 26, and Rev. 11. 6. It is translated by "as often as." It is compounded of *ὡς*, how many, and the numeral termination *τις*, times. It simply signifies, how many times—whenever. The use of the adverb whenever in speech, or in writing, does not convey the idea of great frequency. It affords no warrant for a weekly celebration of the Lord's supper. The Redeemer has not specified the number of times on which we should commemorate his death. There is no evidence that he intended that his church should "do this," every sabbath day. It is left to be regulated by circumstances. And the nature and use of this solemn ordinance, as a mean of grace, and the most distinguishing part of our external profession of being in covenant with God, if duly considered in connexion with the state of the congregation, will enable the faithful pastor to determine how often this sacrament is to be administered.

NOTE W.

The radical principles of presbyterianism are essential to society. In this system of divine appointment, *representation* is so managed, as effectually to secure the liberty of the subject, and the energy of the government. No system can preserve order in any society, civil or ecclesiastic, except so far as it proceeds upon the principles of presbyterianism. The reason is obvious, these are the principles which the author of human nature hath rendered essential to human society. No tyrant can govern without assistance: no community can govern themselves but by representatives. The associations, the consultations, and the committees, of independents, are imitations of presby-

terianism, which its enemies are *compelled* to adopt ; and the *convocations* and *conventions* of the episcopals, are no more than *very disorderly presbyterian synods*.

The convention of the episcopal church, in the United States, is their supreme court. It admits of lay delegates as members. They must have a *mock* ruling elder, and a *mock* synod ; and yet, it is this very inconsistent imitation of a presbyterian representative judicatory, that preserves their unity and order. To crown the absurdity, this convention, the *visible head* of their church, (for they have in America no king or pope,) is not an affair of divine right : but a human contrivance more fit for the purpose of governing the church, than the ordinance of God. In this convention, the "*successors of the apostles*," share their power with unauthorized lay-men. Let presbyterians rejoice. Every thing testifies the divine authority of their religion. Both the *committee* and the *vestry* testify that every other system is both inadequate and impossible. The boast of episcopacy—the number of her sons—is proof of her own connexion with Antichrist. "All the world wondered after the beast." Rev. 13. 3. The universal prevalence of consistent Presbyterianism, can alone render *Jerusalem a quiet habitation, her officers peace, and her exactors righteousness*.

