

nouncing pure those whom He had cleansed, and to offer to Him the sacrifices and oblations which He had appointed for their purification. We see also that this Priesthood was to be *perpetual*, to continue while the dispensation itself should last, for it is declared that "their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." (Ex. xl. 15).

And this Priesthood we find to be composed of three grades or orders, not a parity of ministers—that the Jewish Church was governed by a *Hierarchy* of High Priest, Priests and Levites—not by a body of presbyters of equal authority "met in session, Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly." The High Priest was distinguished by the peculiarity and richness of his *holy garments*, and also by the fact that there were certain sacred rites and services which he alone could fulfil. He alone possessed the authority to enter once a year into the Holy of Holies on the great day of Atonement, to sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering on the Mercy seat, to make an atonement for himself and all the congregation of Israel. Other matters, not necessary here to enumerate, were also peculiar to the High Priest. (Vide Lev. xxi. 10, &c.) The priests also had their peculiar duties of sacrifice and oblation, holding a lower position than the High Priest, yet higher than that occupied by the Levites. The distinction between these three orders is thus shown in the words of Holy Writ: "And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the Sanctuary, and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee; but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of Witness, and they shall keep thy charge and the charge of all the Tabernacle; only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they nor ye die." (Numbers xviii. 1-3).

From this we learn that they were *all* appointed Ministers of the Sanctuary, yet each in his proper place and order, and each having their appropriate spheres of duty.

This priesthood was also sacred—it was holy to the Lord, and it was also *exclusive*, for no man dare take this honour to himself save he to whom it pertained, or who was called of God as was Aaron. That some did seek to usurp the priesthood and to burn incense before the Lord we learn from the inspired record. The office of the High Priest, Aaron, was the glittering prize coveted by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Not content with the position to which they had been appointed in the congregation they sought to exalt themselves unto the priesthood, also crying to Moses and Aaron: "Ye take too much upon you ye sons of Levi, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is among them." But signally and terribly did Almighty God vindicate the sacred character and exclusive authority of the hierarchy He had appointed. While the "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly famous in the congregation, men of renown," were in the very act of their sacrilegious and rebellious offering, "there came out a fire from the Lord and he consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." Even such of the people as upheld them in their enterprise were not permitted to escape, for they and all that pertained to them went down alive into the pit, the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them, and so they perished from among the congregation. (Vide Numb. xvi.)

Thus did God vindicate the authority of His own appointed priesthood and condemn the madness of those who would take upon themselves to minister in holy things without Divine sanction. Aaron alone had authority to perform the office of the high priest, and his successors after him, and the males of the house of Levi alone were authorized to perform the inferior ministerial duties.

It is not necessary here to refer to the numerous instances in which God visited in judgment the sin of those who assumed to themselves the functions of the sacerdotal office without being "called of God as was Aaron." Saul, Jeroboam, and Uzziah all learned with bitterness of spirit and in anguish of heart that "to obey was better

than to sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Seeing then that the Jewish Church and priesthood was a type of the Christian Church and priesthood, as St. Paul used the exclusive and sacred character of the former to prove the same of the latter in the words, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron;" (Heb. v. 4.) And as the Jewish Church was governed by a priesthood of three Orders—high priest, priests and Levites—we may therefore reasonably expect that *three Orders* would constitute the Christian priesthood. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that in prophecies concerning the Christian Church and of the reception of the Gentiles into that Church God declares that He "will take of them for priests and for Levites," (Isaiah lxvi. 21.) a term continually used to designate the whole Jewish priesthood.

Against this it may be urged that as the priesthood was *changed* from the Aaronic to the Melchisedecian in the person of our Lord who "is a priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec;" therefore we have no right to conclude that because we find three Orders in the ministry of the tabernacle and temple there must necessarily be the same number of Orders in the Christian Church.

To this I would reply: That of the priesthood under the patriarchal dispensation we can know but little, yet even the little we do know leads us to believe that there were gradations of order there also. The first-born is acknowledged to have been a priest in each family, and where the father was a priest, as in the case of Abraham and Isaac, we must naturally suppose that as Isaac was subject to his father in all things so he would be also in his priestly character. That both Abraham and Isaac offered sacrifices, builded altars, and called upon the name of the Lord; that is, they exercised the priestly office, we learn from Holy Writ. (Vide Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 4, and xvi. 25.) Here then we find two priests and one superior to the other, and in the person of Melchisedec, King of Salem, we find another "priest of the Most High God" still higher in authority and recognized as such by Abraham himself, for he paid him tithes. (Gen. xiv. 19, and Heb. vii. 4.) So that even in the patriarchal dispensation we find grades of Order in the priesthood as well as in the Mosaic. And notwithstanding the *change* of the priesthood we have seen above that throughout the whole New Testament the Jewish Church and priesthood are continually referred to as types and shadows of the Christian Church and priesthood; and we have also seen that Isaiah in prophecying of the Christian ministry calls them by the very names applied to the Jewish hierarchy. We are therefore fully justified not only in applying the term *priesthood* to the Christian ministry, but also in expecting to find that ministry of three Orders answering to the high priest, priests and Levites of the Jewish Church.

As to the propriety of applying the term "priesthood" to the Christian ministry I know you will agree with me, as I find that the Presbyterian Confession of Faith and form of Government maintains the same thing where it says, "That the ministers of the gospel have as ample a charge and commission to dispense the word as well as other ordinances as the priests and Levites had under the law proved, Isa. lxvi. 21, and St. Matt. xxiii. 34, where our Saviour entitleth the officers of the New Testament whom He will send forth by the same names as the teachers of the old," and again, "where under the names PRIESTS and LEVITES to be continued under the Gospel are meant evangelical pastors, who therefore are by office to bless the people." (Presbyn. form Govt. Glasgow, 1848, article "Pastor," p. 350.)

But here it may be asserted that the Christian Church and priesthood is not organized after the model of the Jewish temple service and priesthood but after that of the synagogue.

This assertion, though often made, and indeed so often that it is begun to be believed by some, I purpose to examine in passing.

The assertion that the Christian Church is organized after the model of the synagogue is simply an assertion, and not founded on fact, for the following reasons:

(1.) Because in not a single instance is the

*Synagogue or its service referred to by any of the inspired writers of the New Testament as in the least degree typifying the Christian Church or Ministry.* The Temple, the Priesthood, the Sacrifices, and even the whole Jewish nation, are spoken of as types *repeatedly*. Not being infallible, I may have overlooked something, but if so I am open to correction.

(2.) Because the Jewish Synagogue had no rites or ceremonies of a mystical or sacramental character. The Jewish Church had, and the Christian Church also has. Circumcision constituted the initiatory rite of the Jewish Church, and Baptism occupies the same place in the Christian. The Passover in the Jewish Church commemorated the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and also pointed forward to that pure "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world"; and in the Christian Church the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is a commemoration of a far more glorious deliverance which He who is our true paschal Lamb has wrought out for us from a far more fearful bondage. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast," (1 Cor. v. 7), "For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26.) The Synagogue, as such, possessed nothing of the kind.

(3.) Because the Synagogue was not a Church at all, but a mere voluntary association—a *purely human institution*—yet for a good and pious purpose. A Church is a Divinely instituted Society called out of the world, and with its members united together by federal rights to its Divine Founder, and possessing duly authorized agents, ambassadors, or representatives, having the commission of their Divine Master to perform the ceremonies and to administer the seals of the covenant according to His appointment. Until the Church is thus called out of the world by God it can have no existence, for the Church can no more call itself into being than a man can call himself into the world; and those who were thus called out of the world were brought into the Church as completely independent of themselves, as in their natural birth. The Greek word *ekklesia* is applied to the Church because it means to call or summon out, and the Hebrew word *qahal* is used in the Old Testament because it means the same thing: (Vide Gesenius on *Qahal*.) In this sense the Jewish Church was called out from among the nations of the earth to be God's peculiar people, and were bound together by the federal rites, the Temple service and the Priesthood of Divine appointment. So also the Christian Church is called out of the world into the Kingdom of Grace, and the members are bound together by the Church services, the Sacraments, and the Priesthood, which are also of God's appointment. The Synagogue, however, possessed nothing of the kind; it had none of these marks, nor was it called out as they were. The terms *ekklesia* and *qahal* are never applied to it either in Old or New Testaments, if referred to at all in the latter, but *synagoge* and *moghed*, each signifying to come together, to assemble, and used metonymically for the place of meeting being what we know now-a-days as "a meeting house." The Synagogue and its service seems to be an outgrowth of the practice introduced by Ezra, after the return from the captivity, of reading the Law in the ears of the people: (Vide Neh. viii.) Afterwards, they associated themselves in companies or assemblies, to meet together at stated times to hear one of their number read and expound the Law and the prophets. As they could not always meet in the open air for this purpose, a building was necessary, and thus they progressed until they were completely organized, with building rules and officers, as we find them when the New Testament story opens. Yet this service, while it was intended for, and did fulfil a pious purpose, was not of Divine appointment, nor was attendance upon it obligatory. It was merely a voluntary association of pious men met together for mutual improvement in the study of God's Law. The Synagogue, therefore, was no more a "Church" of Divine appointment than a Sunday School of the present day is such. How unlikely then, how improbable that "the Church of the Living God, which is the pillar and ground of the