

T H E

COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE. Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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From the British Magazine.

SONNETS.

Granting to us in this world knowledge of Thy truth,
and in the world to come life everlasting."
Oh! that these spirit-stirring sounds to me
Revealed their depth of meaning!—Wo the hour
Recurring oft, wherein their hidden power
Has slumbered, cased in dull formality;
And so I listed not in earthly trance
Thy words, old saint of golden utterance.
I listed not—and so Truth passed me by,
Light broke not in on my captivity.
Eternal life it is the truth to learn—
Those words have reached me now, but prayer and tears
May not fill up the void of wasted years—
Yet, surely, now my heart would fain discern
All thy dear teaching, late and weak I kneel
Duly to seek what thy high words reveal.

"Lighten our Darkness."

Lighten our darkness—such the word of cheer
(Even as a gleam in a November sky
From out its dim clouds break forth suddenly)
That night by night our mother lids us hear,
Whenever our toil-worn frames and hearts, forespent,
With pains unpaid and love disowned, are bent
To the earth, and dimmed with doubt and fear,
Lie down as night brings on the bright day's bier.
Lighten our darkness—and there shall be light
At evening tide, from weary day to day,
For those who, toiling in the narrow way,
Let rest them on the Church's word of night.
She shall prevail who hath 'to' Eternal Son,
Though yet the fight be fierce, the goal unwon.

From the Church.

THE MINISTRY.

Recapitulation of Evidence in behalf of Episcopacy.—
Collateral testimony from modern discoveries.—Con-
clusion.

My former Essays—designed to represent to
Churchmen one of the strongest bulwarks of our
faith—were employed in advancing proofs that the
three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as
maintained in the Church of England, possessed in
their favour the testimony of Scripture and of all ec-
clesiastical History. It was shewn that even in our
Saviour's time, a presidency similar in spirit and pur-
port to that which the Episcopal system includes, exist-
ed over his Church, and that even then three orders
of the ministry of that Church were to be discern-
ed. It was proved that, immediately or certain-
ly very soon after our blessed Lord's ascension, three
orders undeniably existed in the Church; and further
it was shewn,—incontroversibly we may boldly as-
sert,—that no instance can be adduced from Scrip-
ture which affords the slightest countenance to the
position sometimes attempted to be maintained, that
the offices of Bishops and Presbyter were, in the
primitive Church, the same; or that the grade of
Presbyters, strictly so called, ever exercised what
constitutes the distinctive function of Episcopacy,
the power of ordination. It was also clearly shewn,
from a few but most convincing testimonies, that all
the primitive Fathers unequivocally bear witness to
the same form of ecclesiastical government; and that
no instance of dissent from that mode of govern-
ment is to be found in the Church History of the first

and purest ages:—moreover, that many eminent and
learned Christians who, from peculiarity of circum-
stances, were in a manner compelled to adopt the
Presbyterian form of government, stated it unquivo-
cally as their conviction that Episcopacy was the
apostolical and primitive constitution of the Chris-
tian Church. A mass of testimony this which, as
has been again and again observed, must lead to this
conclusion;—either that Episcopacy was the original
constitution of Church government, or that some sud-
den and universal revolution, occurring at a time un-
known and unnoticed, even by the slightest allusion,
by any contemporary writer, must have arisen which
transformed Presbyterianism into Episcopacy;—that,
should any such mysterious revolution have taken
place, the whole body of Presbyters must have been
simple, credulous and yielding beyond belief to have
submitted to an unlawful and unscriptural presidency
such as the Episcopate would imply, and that such a
revolution being credible, it argued a disposition
equally strange and unaccountable on the part of the
Bishops who, in seeking for unlawful advancement,
necessarily exposed themselves, like a city on a hill,
more conspicuously than ever to the assaults and per-
secutions of their adversaries:—that, Episcopacy be-
ing an usurpation, all the records of ancient ecclesi-
astical History must be false, and consequently, as no
credit would be given them for any thing else, we
must remain in utter uncertainty, even as to the gen-
uineness of our Scriptural canon, and doubt whether
the Bible be the Book which prophets and Apostles
wrote!

Now, if none of these positions, resulting from the
supposed falsity of the Episcopal claims, be tenable,
the arguments in its behalf must stand forth in all the
majesty of unadulterated truth. But we have more
to say, in defence of this bulwark of our Zion:—we
have a testimony to add, in support of our system,
which must seal the lips of every adversary, and es-
tablish every advocate more firmly than ever in the
soundness and justice of his cause.

"Waving," says an eloquent writer,* "for the
present, the testimony of the fathers; let us imagine
it possible to resort to some other tribunal, with the
view of determining our conflicting opinions. Let us
imagine that, preserved by some inscrutable provi-
dence of God, a Christian church could be found in
some sequestered corner of the globe, which from re-
motest time had enjoyed no intercourse whatever
with their brethren professing the same faith. We
know that the twelve were despatched on their er-
rands of mercy into far distant lands, and of most
of them, that no authentic memorials have been
transmitted to us. Imagine, then, that a church of
their planting could be found. Would not the charac-
ter of the ministry it possessed be considered a safe
guide, in enabling us to decide upon that, which was
instituted by the Apostles, whose labours are known,
although we contrive to interpret them differently?
If, for example, presbyters alone were to be discov-
ered in such a Church, would it not furnish our
friends of that exclusive order with abundant cause
of congratulation and triumph? If bishops, with pres-
byters and deacons in reverent subjection to them,
would it not be equally the source of joy and exulta-
tion with us? Upon such a statement, it would
be next to impossible to avoid either conclusion, or
to object to the providential character of the discov-
ery itself, provided it could be effected."

Now we have the satisfaction of declaring that
this very testimony has been afforded:—churches
were discovered in India, in the year 1503, by the
celebrated navigator, Vasco de Gama, answering
precisely to the description required for substantiat-
ing our argument. "When the Portuguese arrived,"

says Dr. Claudius Buchanan, in his Christian Re-
searches, "they were agreeably surprised to find
upwards of a hundred christian churches on the
coast of Malabar. But when they became acquaint-
ed with the purity and simplicity of their worship,
they were offended. These churches, said the Por-
tuguese, belong to the Pope. Who is the pope, said
the native, we never heard of him? The European
priests were yet more alarmed, when they found that
these Hindoo Christians maintained the order and
discipline of a regular church under episcopal juris-
diction; and that for 1300 years past, they had enjoyed
a succession of bishops appointed by the patriarch of
Antioch. We, said they, are of the true faith, what-
ever you from the west may be; for we come from
the place where the followers of Christ were first call-
ed Christians."

It appears, from the narrative of this eminent trav-
eller, that the Syrian churches "upon the sea coast,"
after a series of persecutions, were compelled to ad-
mit the supremacy of the pope. The grounds of these
persecutions cannot but be flattering to the reformed
Church of England:—"they were accused of the fol-
lowing practices and opinions; that the clergy had
married wives; that they owned but two sacraments,
baptism and the Lord's supper; that they neither in-
voked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in
purgatory; and that they had no other orders or
names of dignity in the church, than Bishop, Priest,
and Deacon.

But although the churches on the coast, as more
exposed to the power of their enemies, submitted to
the Romish hierarchy, those in the interior of the
country would not submit to the imposition, but "fled
to the mountain and sought the protection of the
native princes, who had always been proud of their
alliance."

Dr. Buchanan further informs us, that when "two
centuries had elapsed without any particular inform-
ation concerning the Syrian churches in the interior,
and when it was doubted by many whether they ex-
isted at all, he conceived the design of visiting them.
This design, as his narrative explains, was put into
execution, and the churches were discovered in all
their original simplicity and purity. After minute in-
quiries as to their founder, he came readily to the conclu-
sion that there was every cause for belief in their asser-
tion that their churches were established by the Apo-
stle Thomas. But what chiefly concerns our argument
is the fact of his discovering in those churches the three
orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, as maintained
in the Church of England. On one occasion, the
traveller asserts, he "was received at the door of the
Church by three Kasheeshas, that is, presbyters or
priests, who were habited in like manner, in white
vestments. There were also present two Shumsha-
nas, or deacons." On another occasion, he visited,
"Nar Dionysius, the metropolitan of the Syrian
church," and, after a long interview, in which the
conversation turned upon Protestant Episcopacy, he
observes, "The Bishop was desirous to know some-
thing of the other churches which had separated
from Rome. I was ashamed to tell him how many
they were. I mentioned that there was a Kasheeha
or Presbyter church in our own kingdom, in which
every Kasheeha was equal to another.—Are there
no Shumshanas? (deacons in holy orders.) None.
And what, is there nobody to overlook the Kashee-
has? Not one. There must be something imper-
fect here, said he."

Here, then, is a coincidence between a church in-
tact by the errors of Romanism and only recently
discovered, and the church of England as reformed
in the 16th century, which cannot but bring to the
mind of every one of its members the most heartfelt
joy and satisfaction. It is another—and a strong tes-
timony too—to the mass of evidence which the Scrip-
tures and Ecclesiastical History furnish in behalf of
that form of Church Government to which we con-
scientiously adhere.

*The Rev. G. T. Chapman, Sermons upon the Minis-
try, Worship, and Doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal
church.