

# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

NOVEMBER, 1862.

The opening remarks of "No. VI. on the Roman Catacombs," which appeared in our September issue, have given much offence to many of our readers, some of whom have expressed themselves to us on the subject, with greater indignation than is at all necessary; though we are free to admit that there is just cause of complaint. A Presbyterian does not expect to have the primitive character of Presbyterian order denied by a Presbyterian and in a Presbyterian journal; and least of all would he expect it, in an article on the Roman Catacombs, from which the writer himself acknowledges that no evidence can be found on the subject. Dr. Campbell's theory of the origin of diocesan Episcopacy, and Whately's view of the inherent freedom of the Christian society to choose its own order as circumstances may render expedient, are confusedly mixed up in the article, with the writer's own notion that diocesan Episcopacy existed in the time of St. John and received his approval: and with his positive assertion, that the apostolic organization of the Church was "certainly no more Presbyterian than Episcopalian."

A well read Presbyterian can afford to smile at such notions or assertions, when, as in this case, they stand only on the magisterially expressed opinion of a writer who gives no evidence that he has ever fairly grappled with a subject which has divided the Protestant Churches from the days of the Reformation, and on which men of the most eminent learning and wisdom have held very different opinions from his.

We would respectfully request our valued contributor to intermingle no more "obiter dicta" on controverted points of ecclesiastical order, with the interesting and instructive information which he has gathered for our readers, concerning the Catacombs.

For ourselves we confess to a feeling of

regret for having admitted an article assuming the apostolic character of Episcopacy, and the non-apostolic character of Presbyterian order, without at the same time meeting the assumption with an expression of our own, very decidedly, opposite convictions.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of rich and cultured congregational singing. It is true we worship a spiritual God, who requires of us only a spiritual service; but it is also true that we who worship are largely dependent upon our senses for the excitement of spiritual feeling. If we read the Bible, we are greatly influenced by the beauty of David's poetry, the splendour of Isaiah's eloquence, and the intellectual force of Paul's reasoning. If we hear sermons, we are affected by the eloquence as well as by the orthodoxy of the preacher. If we pray, our devotions are winged by the fitness and tenderness of the words that we employ. So if we sing, we are affected by tune as well as by words. We ourselves can hardly suspect how much our spiritual fervor and joy are dependent upon the fitness and beauty of our vocal praise. It gives a color to every service, and a tone to every feeling. Every thing else is imbued by its subtle spirit,—chilled or jaded by its unfitness, or made to glow with fervor and beauty by its magic power. Excited and exalted by rapturous song, how easy it is to pray, how pleasant to preach, how profitable to hear. Our sympathies are excited, our souls are harmonized and vivified, we hardly know how. More than any thing else such singing makes the Sabbath a delight, and its early influence abides with us through life, investing the worship of our childhood with a beauty and a glory, instead of with a repulsiveness and a penance. Snatches of pious song will come back to us in maturer years, like Alpine echoes, softened and purified by distance, and with subduing and