

diction best fitted to promote the well being and edification of the body of Christ. Its nature and extent are plainly set forth in the charge originally addressed to the eleven disciples, but equally binding on all Ministers ordained by the Holy Ghost. This charge is given, you will observe, without discrimination and is given "to the end of the world."

This is our only commission as ambassadors of Jesus. This conveys to us the sole authority under which we act, and unless this commission be suspended at some subsequent period of the Church's history—unless it be elsewhere qualified—there is, apparently, no distinction among Christian Ministers—a term which best designates their holy vocation. The Priesthood terminated when the great High Priest offered, once for all, his own body on the tree. Henceforth no man dare come, save as offerer of unhallowed incense, between his fellowman and his God, for we all have, now, free access, by one spirit, unto the Father.

Believing in the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, although not in the Prelatic acceptance, we direct your thoughts to the specific function of the Christian Ministry.

II. The first business, first in point of time and importance, on which the Apostles and afterwards the seventy were sent into the world, was to preach the Gospel. This too was the first active engagement of Christ's public life. To preach, therefore, must still be emphatically the duty of all who are duly consecrated to the office of the ministry till the end of the world. In addition to this, they are charged with the power of administering the sacraments; they are appointed to rule in the Church and to ordain other Ministers. It is well that these things are clearly laid down in Scripture, and not left to conjecture or idle speculation. To avoid misconception on this subject, the Hebrews are directly charged "to remember those who had the rule over them, who spake to them the word of life," and again, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account."—Heb. XIII. On Scriptural warrant, therefore, we claim from the household a dutiful respect for the Eldership, and especially for "those who labour in the word and doctrine." And such is our confidence in the divine arrangements, that we firmly believe that this honour shall not be withheld from those who serve Jesus with an uncompromising fidelity. This is not their reward, however; their reward is obtained hereafter.

The true ordination of the Christian Teacher comes from above, yet the Apostles, in their practice, most assuredly meant to convey to future generations a knowledge of that system which was best calculated to edify the infant Church. Otherwise, how shall we explain their frequent allusions to the outward ordination of the overseers of the flock. Was this observance, so plainly taught in Scripture, nothing more than a meaningless ceremony? One object answered by the "laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," was, beyond dispute, to prevent men from unwarrantably assuming the responsibility of the sacred office, to check the pretensions of ignorance and cunning, and to curb the spirit of all fanaticism and extravagance. Notwithstanding all the wisdom and circumspection of extensive