

ans, Presbyterians, Methodists, &c. that have made it the main issue. And, therefore, it is an issue which owes all its importance to the circumstances of these parties. They all assume, that there is an *hereditary official grace*, which is essentially indestructible. Not even the most flagitious acts of impiety, and immorality of the man can interrupt, or nullify the virtue of the office. It is assumed that there is a distinct order of men, called of God, as Aaron was, having not only *l'esprit du corps*, but a divinely authorized *succession*, self-creative, and self-consecrative, continuing through all time, with the freshness of immortal youth ; possessing the sole authority of reading the Scriptures in public assemblies, preaching the gospel, dispensing the ordinances of christianity, and governing the church. But still to simplify the point on which the controversy rests—the main issue which the Christians and the Pope have made, and which I, my dear sir, must join with all the advocates of Diocesan Episcopacy, is found in the assumption of Bishop Onderdonk. I need not say, that the idea, or thing, called *succession in office*, by authority of Jesus Christ, as essential to the administration of the institution called the kingdom, or church in this world, is that assumption which has escaped the worthy “ Assistant Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”—This succession, not being proved, by any of your writers, which have fallen into my hands, they all beginning at the second, and not at the basement story of the house of Aaron, their superstructure is to my mind, as truly baseless as the earth resting upon the back of a tortoise, which itself stands upon nothing.

If there had been only one precept, delivered to the Churches, by any Apostle, or any saying of theirs, implying the duty of Christians to preserve such succession—or, to the Bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Corinth, or Philippi, either concerning their own succession, or the necessity of transmitting from generation to generation, certain hereditary rights of office, reason would command that I should diligently consider it. But in the perfect absence of any such intimation, and in view of the fact, that Paul makes succession in office, an argument, to show the *imperfection* of the antecedent economy, judge my surprise, at seeing, not merely succession in office, pleaded, as essential to the perfection of the christian economy, but also assumed as a part of the christian institution itself !

I will not now institute an inquiry, whether the authority to ordain to office, or to administer ordinances, can be more honorably or safely lodged in the person of Pope Gregory and his heirs forever, or in the words of the Apostle ; or whether the grace of office is more direct and accessible, flowing from the head of the church, by the constitutional provisions found in the volume of the Good Spirit : or in the circuitous route of all the (variety of) Bishops of seventeen hundred years. This may