

times conscious that a sentiment is erroneous, without clearly perceiving the reasons of the fallacy. As the mind in each case is desirous of receiving satisfaction, and as the propositions before us are of great importance, let us consider the reasons upon which they rest:—

1st observation. That it is an erroneous opinion of the ministry to suppose that any order of men now in the Christian Church are successors of the Apostles, is, it may be thought, a deviation from our subject; since, to suppose that any men are successors of the Apostles, is not to think that they are divine. But to exalt a person in one degree above the station in which he is placed, is to err in favor of exalting him to the highest degree; and particularly in this case, as the persons who assert that they are successors of the Apostles, maintain that they are in similar senses the successors of Christ; therefore, their pretensions may be viewed in the light of requiring homage from men.

Omitting at this time the argument which is often adduced against there being a succession of Apostles, from the consideration that there is no power in the Church of God to consecrate an Apostle, which is evident in the instances of Matthias and Paul, I would observe: That it is pleaded, as a reason for the succession of this office, that Timothy was ordained Bishop of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, and Epaphroditus of Phillipi. It is said that these persons were invested with apostolic powers, because there is mention made in some instances of their being superior to Elders or Presbyters.

But this argument proves they were not invested with Apostolic powers; for the evidence that they were superior to Presbyters is not so certain as that the Apostles were superior to them. For in those passages in which their *pretended right to control Presbyters is asserted*, the apostolic right of the Apostles to *control them* is exercised. Thus the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, "Receive not an accusation against an elder or presbyter, but before two or three witnesses." Here the command is positive, "*Receive not*," whereas, the duty enjoined with respect to the character of an elder, whether he were a deacon or an equal, may be