

The Church Times.

Rev. J. C. Cochran—Editor.

"Evangelical Truth--Apostolic Order."

W. Gossip—Publisher.

VOL. VII. HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, SATURDAY, OCT. 28, 1884. NO. 40.

Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & Date	MORNING	EVENING
Oct. 20	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
21	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
22	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
23	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
24	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
25	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
26	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
27	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
28	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
29	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3
30	Joel 2 Lu 15	Micah 6 Phil. 3

Nov. 10. Begin ver 23, and chap 12 to ver 17. To ver 11. To ver 11.

Portry.

A PRAYER FOR ASSISTANCE IN PRAYER.

Aid me, O Lord! to pray:
My soul alas! depraved by sin,
Is ever backward to begin—
Ready to turn away.

I know myself undone—
Most righteously condemn'd to die,
I see the way of mercy lie
Reveal'd in Christ, Thy Son,

I know that thou wilt give,
To all who pray, gifts greater far
Than earth's most priz'd possessions are,
By which their souls shall live.

Yet am I slow to bend
Before Thy throne the suppliant knee;
And seldom cry for grace to thee
Whom I so oft offend.

And when I seem to pray,
The lusts of earth allure my soul;
And often, loosed from all control,
My vain thoughts roam away.

I know it is not wise
Thus to forget the greatest good;
And for the trifles that intrude,
Neglect so vast a prize.

But lusts and cares prevail;
Lord! with so deep a sense impress,
Of want and danger, and distress,
That all their strength shall fall.

Aid me, O Lord! to pray—
Grant me the purpose to begin;
And, once thy temple gates within,
Compel me there to stay.

Religious Miscellany.

A DEFENCE

Of the Constitution of the Diocese of Vermont, in reply to the Statements of the Episcopal Recorder. By JOHN H. HOPKINS, D. D., L. L. D., Bishop of Vermont.

THE EPISCOPAL VETO.

Gentlemen:—The last number of your paper, under the date of January 7th, aims a vigorous blow at the Diocese of Vermont, on the subject of what the writer calls "The Episcopal Veto," which calls on her Bishop for some notice. And as it appears that the late editor, in the same paper, has announced the termination of his duties, and the publication hereafter is to be under your immediate direction, I must rely on your justice to insert, in your next, the present communication. We have been honoured by several assaults from the same quarter, to which I have made no reply, as I have always thought it best through my whole ministerial life to take no notice of personal censure. Nor should I deviate from my general rule on this occasion, if the question were not likely to assume an important aspect in the anticipated synodical organization of the English Colonial Churches.

I am aware, indeed, that your correspondent directs his attack against the Diocese rather than against myself. But I am bound in candour to say, that if the Diocese of Vermont has been misled in this matter, I am the responsible party. It was my hand which prepared the report of the large Committee to whom the new Constitution and Canons of 1836 had been intrusted. The alterations proposed during a long and thorough discussion with that committee were few, and did not touch the point in question. The report was unanimously adopted, and as unanimously passed by the Convention. After a satisfactory experience of fifteen years under our system,

the revision of the whole was proposed by myself in A. D. 1851, in order that a new edition might be published for the use of the Diocese. And the committee appointed to act with the Bishop concurred in his opinion that there was to be no change of principles. The report was adopted, and after the constitutional interval of a year the same system was ratified again by the Convention with the same perfect unanimity.

This proves conclusively that the former attacks of the *Episcopal Recorder*, and my eloquent brother the Rev. Dr. Hawk, upon the *inordinate power* of the Bishop, had not produced the slightest effect upon the judgment of the Diocese. And assuredly I have no reason to fear that your late assault will be more likely to "disturb our peace." With respect to ourselves, therefore, I may truly say that your argument, in the words of the poet, is *imbelle telum, sine ictu*. But a fair understanding of the subject is due to truth, and may be of use to others.

In the first place, then, I shall show that the phrase, "Episcopal Veto," is grossly improper, and gives a false view of the whole question. Every man of common sense and information must know that the *veto* (according to the very meaning of the word) signifies the power by which some functionary, as a King, or a resident, or the Mayor of a city, *forbids* an act previously adopted by a Parliament, or a Congress, or Corporation of Aldermen. The King does not sit with either house of Parliament, nor the President with either house of Congress, nor the Mayor with the City Corporation. And the action of the Parliament, or the Congress, or the Corporation, must be perfect and complete in itself, before the King, or the President, or the Mayor, can be asked for his consent, or can announce his formal disapprobation. Such is, properly, the *veto power*.

Now the system of our Convention has no affinity with this, but rests on the divine law of *Church Unity*. According to our established theory, the Church in her true organization, consists of the Bishop, the clergy, and the laity, of whom the Bishop, ecclesiastically, is, under Christ, the chief. True, he is one of the clergy, just as the Governor of a State or the President is one of the public functionaries. But he is as distinct from the clergy, in his proper office, as the Governor or the President is distinct from the other agents in our political system. Hence the Church depends on the Bishop for the Apostolic work of ordination, discipline, and government, in which she is plainly justified by St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus, the first Bishop of Crete. Hence, too, the Church requires the solemn vow of obedience to the godly judgment of the Bishop from every clergyman at the time of his ordination. And hence, by reason of the high importance which is justly attached to the Episcopal element, we have our distinctive title from it as the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States.

When the Diocese of Vermont, therefore, assembles in Convention, the Bishop presides, not as chairman nor as moderator, but as the chief and indispensable head of the assembly, by virtue of his Apostolic function. Along with him are the clergy and the laity, elected by the several parishes. All the proper constituents of the Church are present, under Christ, the Supreme Bishop of souls. And when they proceed to act they must act in unity, because the Bishop, the clergy, and the laity, are all *distinct and important parts of the same body*, and therefore must concur, or nothing can be done. But the Bishop has no more power over the clergy than they have over him. And the laity have the very same power against Bishop and clergy together. By what logic, then, can my worthy friend, the Rev. Dr. Hawk, prove his assertion that such a constitution makes the Bishop "absolute?" For if the fact that the Bishop's concurrence is necessary makes him absolute, it is evident that the clergy and the laity must each be equally absolute for the very same reason. So that here we should have *three absolute powers* in the same government! My respect for Dr. Hawk's will not permit me to call this Nonsense. But I must take the liberty of saying that no one ever laid down such a theory of absolutism before; and therefore he is at least entitled to the merit of perfect originality.

The truth, however, is, that no Diocesan Con-

stitution can be more just and equal to its three co-ordinate elements than ours. There is no more *veto* power in the Bishop than in the clergy and the laity, and hence the manifest result that there is *really no veto power at all*. The whole resolves itself into the simple principle of *Church Unity*. We are *one body in Christ*, and therefore, when we act, we must act together.

Suppose it otherwise—as, I am sorry to say, it might be, according to the Constitution of the older Dioceses—that the clergy and the laity could enact a canon against the consent of the Bishop, I ask any man of common sense whether this could properly be called *Episcopal* legislation? For where is the Episcopal character of the act when you have turned the Bishop adrift and consummated your work without him? Such legislation would plainly be not Episcopal, but Presbyterian, consistent, indeed, with the notions of those who abjure Episcopacy as a limb of anti-Christ, but totally absurd in a Church which venerates the Episcopate as an essential element of the Apostolic system, and believes that Christ has promised to be present with it "even to the end of the world."

To this principle of Episcopal concurrence, however, there is an obvious class of exceptions, as when there is no Bishop, or when he is himself the subject of Conventional action. Both of these arise out of the necessity of the case, and may not be extended beyond that necessity. And for both, our Constitution has made ample provision, by requiring the Bishop's consent to *acts of legislation only*.

Let me now proceed to the other points of my learned friend's objurgation, as quoted by your correspondent, and endorsed on several occasions by the *Episcopal Recorder*. Our Constitution is treated as "an innovation," because we presumed to differ from the older Dioceses, who had seen fit to ignore the Episcopal element in its proper legislative function, by reducing the Bishop in Convention to the place of a mere moderator, or rather chairman, allowing him to vote with the rest of the clergy, but giving him no higher authority over the ultimate decision than that of the youngest deacon on the floor.

Here, however, our censor must have forgotten that the system thus adopted was itself an *innovation* upon all true Church government, which never saw the light until the year 1788, being not quite fifty years older than our Constitution. It is well known that our first Bishops had to encounter the peculiar difficulties of our own infant Church, just after the war of Independence, at a time when the very name of Bishop was an object of general apprehension and hatred from one end of the country to the other, through the popular prejudice, which associated it with lordly assumption, and aristocratic rank, and monarchical principles. This was the cause why Episcopacy was put down so low, at the beginning of our American organization, that it has ever since been compelled to struggle for its proper claims in the face of a very inconsistent and thoughtless opposition. This was the cause why the Constitution of the General Convention, in A. D., 1789, only gave the Bishops a seat and a vote along with the other clergy. This was the cause why nine years elapsed before that Constitution could be so amended as to allow the Bishops to exercise the co-ordinate powers of a distinct House in our great ecclesiastical legislature. It would amuse one, if such reasoning could yield amusement, to see the Diocesan Constitution of Vermont rebuked as an *innovation*, when the General Convention had thus set the wise example of changing its first Presbyterian plan in favor of the only true Episcopal system. For it is evident that if a single Bishop in his own Diocese had no rights in legislation beyond the casting of his vote with the other clergy, there could be no good ground for making the Bishops a separate co-ordinate body in the Convention of the whole Church throughout the United States.

I grant, indeed, that this important amendment of our General Convention has not been followed by the older Dioceses, and so they still remain in their first unfortunate shape, as if it never had occurred to them that on such a plan they were depriving their Bishop of his proper place, and making the Episcopate look as much as possible like Presbyterianism. But what *authority* have they for this? Is there anything like it in the Epistles of St. Paul