

authority, not only affords a preponderance of argument in favour of any branch of conduct, in which they may be imitated; but it is expressly proposed in Holy Scripture, as a model of our conduct. The apostle Paul says, "Walk so as ye have us for an example;" and no good reason can be given why his example should be followed only in things pertaining to private life. His example, as a superintendent of the Christian Church, calls for imitation. We may, therefore, rank among the number of Divine precepts, such rules as he prescribed for the formation and government of the Christian Church, as far as they relate to it in a settled state, in which no miraculous powers were to exist, nor special inspiration to direct its governors.

5. Though the Scriptures are our only sure guide with respect to Christian doctrines and practice, yet, if it should appear, that the Scriptures are silent with respect to a matter of fact, well known to those whom the apostles addressed in their Epistles; we seem to be directed in this particular to the first writers in the Christian Church, who have mentioned the fact concerning which we are enquiring. If, for instance, an officer of some consequence in the Christian Church is frequently mentioned in the New Testament, in the choice of whom great care was to be observed, and yet the Sacred Writings are silent with respect to the duties of his office; we are evidently led to inquire of the first Christian writers what these duties were, and to acknowledge them to be the proper duties of the office.

6. It has been considered by many as a sufficient proof of the rectitude of the government subsisting in any Church, that the labours of its ministers have been beneficial to mankind. If these have turned sinners unto righteousness, they are regarded as possessing a sure testimony of the Divine approbation of their conduct. The conversion of sinners has perhaps never been effected by any who have