

bles, he found them "mending their nets; and he said unto them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He took them away from their menial and worldly occupations, and set them to the task of winning souls. And that the Apostles themselves regarded the preaching of the gospel as their main employment, is abundantly evident. They appointed deacons, expressly that they might "give themselves to the Word and prayer;" and, says Paul, the chiefest of the Apostles, "Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." The prelates claim the honour of being successors of the Apostles. If they are, they have succeeded to any thing but the work and business of the Apostles. We deny that they are the successors of the Apostles in any sense of the term; but if an apostle means one that is *sent*, and if the embassy on which the disciples were sent was to preach the gospel, it is a piece of very high presumption for a set of men to claim the title of their successors, who seldom or never do their work, and who claim it on the ground that their proper business is, not to preach the gospel, but to govern the clergy.

We know it will be said that the Apostles were superior to presbyters and yet were themselves presbyters too. (1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John i.) To this it might be sufficient to reply, that though the Apostles might call themselves presbyters, taking that phrase in a large or loose sense for any church-officer, as the general of an army may be called a soldier, yet, formally speaking, they were not presbyters but extraordinary officers. Besides, granting that the office of presbyter was virtually, though not formally, included under that of apostles, they having, as apostles, power to act as presbyters,—it does not follow that the office of presbyter is included under that of a prelatival bishop, which, as we have seen, is no office at all in Christ's house; for no lawful power can be included in an unlawful one. But we deny that an apostle and a presbyter are opposed to each other in Scripture, as superior and inferior. There is not a title of evidence to show that the Apostles ruled over constituted presbyters, as the bishop rules over his clergy; on the contrary, we have clear proof that, when the Apostles exercised judicative powers in the assemblies of the Church, they acted for the time, not as Apostles, but as fellow-presbyters. (Acts, xv.)

If we be asked, then, how we vindicate our Reformers for not re-ordaining those who had received nothing more than ordination by a prelate, we would answer, that their ordination might be held as valid, not from any intrinsic power conferred upon them by prelatival ordination, but from the simple fact of their submission to the true Church of Christ, and being received by his ministers. By virtue of this reception, the ordination of these persons, which was formerly irregular and invalid, became valid,—for "to the pure, all things are pure."

This view of the subject was obviously that which was adopted by our fathers at the early period of the Reformation in Scotland. Row informs us in his History, that "Mr Alexander Gordon, commonlie called Bishop of Galloway, making petition to be Superintendent of Galloway, was refused, because, &c.; whereby it is evident, that by his Episcopacie, he had no *place in the ministrie, until he received admission from the General Assembly*. And at the same tyme, there was a general act concluded, That all ministers, they also that call themselves bishops, should be entered into the ministrie according to the ordour sett down in the Book of Discipline anent the admission of ministers, or else they should have no *placc in that holy calling*." Again in the Assembly of 1580, we find it stated, that "forsameikle as the office of a bishop (as it's now used and commonlie taken within this realm) hes no sure warrand, authoritie, or good ground out of the Scriptures of God, but is brought in by the follie and corruption of man's inventions, to the great