

The sermon of Dr. Patton is able, and contains very much that is commendable and refreshing. We find, however, the usual assumptions *unwarranted by Scripture*, on which the offensive claims of "the Church" are founded, though they are imbedded amid fine language and plausible arguments. The text of the discourse was naturally discussed. "*And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers.*"—Acts II., 42.

I. With reference to doctrine, and

II. With regard to fellowship.

When speaking of Doctrine, the preacher essayed to test the apostolicity of the Church of England, by a comparison of the doctrines of the Church with the Apostles' teaching, adding, "To the Law, then, and to the Testimony, let us have recourse for an application of this test."

The doctrines of the existence of God; the Trinity; the fallen state of man; the work of Christ, as excluding the sacrifice of the mass and all creature mediators; the insufficiency of man; the necessity of the aid of the Holy Spirit; and the necessity of faith, manifested in holy living, were upon the whole successfully shewn to be doctrines held by the Church and taught by the Apostles, although the statements may not come up to the fulness of our Westminster definitions. When, however, Baptism is treated of, we find used the equivocal terms of Baptismal service, *for which there is no apostolic warrant*, that "God hath been pleased to regenerate them by his Holy Spirit, to receive them for his own children by adoption, and to incorporate them into his Holy Church."

These words may be defined in the lower sense of the terms "regenerate," "adoption," and "Holy Church," as referring to the Visible Church; but when used, as too often is the case, in a vague way, and interpreted as applying to the Church Invisible, they are unscriptural and out and out opposed to any proper view of scriptural religion.

Confirmation is next treated of, being put between the two sacraments, as if it were of equal importance, and not a mere human rite. Instead of quoting Scripture here,\* though he professes to go to the Law and the Testimony, the preacher asks a general question, not borne out by Scripture, concerning apostles laying on their hands on adult converts, and accommodating Scripture to his human view, adds, "and does the Apostle St. Paul enumerate this 'laying on of hands' as amongst 'the principles of the doctrines of Christ?'" This is all the apostolic authority for *confirmation* which can be quoted, and when the answer, no, is unhesitatingly given, the whole argument vanishes. We have no evidence that it is "after the example of the Holy Apostles," that a bishop practises confirmation. Next comes the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and with the statement therein contained a Presbyterian may be substantially satisfied, asserting as it does the necessity of faith in order to partake of Christ in the Sacrament, and implying that the reception of Christ therein is not "corporeal or carnal," but spiritual. The statement regarding the "undying misery of the wicked," we regard as exceedingly weak, being, so far as Scripture is concerned, not apostolic at all, but resting on a quotation from a Jewish psalm, and from the apocalyptic description of the torment of those who worship the beast and his image. It is a pity that a doctrine which has of late been so much impugned within the Church of England,

\* The English Church, in retaining the rite of confirmation, *has not grounded it on any institution by the apostles*, but merely declared the laying on of hands on the candidates, to certify them (by this sign) of God's favour and goodness towards them, to be after the example of the Holy Apostles.—*Alford on Acts* 8, 14.