

that every actual departure from the Scriptural order and union of a Christian congregation is rife with troublesome consequences. We allude in particular to the erection of walls of partition in the Church between one department and another of its sacred concerns, breaking the harmony of its movements;—to the device of associations and committees in order to discharge the very functions pro, to the Church;—the separation of the Lord's Treasury from all supervision of the Ministry and Eldership, under the plea of separating temporal things from spiritual;—and the placing of Sabbath Schools under self-governing societies of teachers, that do not recognize the control of the Kirk Session. Congregations in which these non-Presbyterian anomalies exist, may enjoy harmony for many years, owing to the predominance of good sense and Christian love—but they contain the elements of discord and disruption. Every heresy in Church government is sure to lead sooner or later to mischief. And we reckon it such a heresy to erect in a Congregation separate jurisdictions, all looking up to the popular approval as an apex, instead of maintaining one comprehensive consentaneous management, which may be made to comprise and employ all the energies of the Church members, and yet shall ever lead up, through the ordained Church officers, to the scriptural apex in the approval of Jesus Christ—the living and governing Head.

3. *The shrinking of Church officers from their proper responsibility.*—It is too common for Elders and Deacons to take the dignity of office, and enjoy the privilege of being consulted in regard to every measure, while they elude any annoyance or unpopularity that may result from decisions of the Session and the Deacons' Court. If any one, or any party in the congregation take offence at such decisions, the minister is often compelled personally to bear the brunt. Indeed there are cases, where a sensible minister would conduct the discipline of the Church far more effectively alone, than with such Elders as exist. They hamper his judgment with their advices and votes, while all the public responsibility is virtually imposed on him.

Under this head may come another great congregational evil occasioned by the office-bearers. We refer to the practice of resignation. When a step, perhaps of secondary importance, is taken, or not taken, contrary to the opinion and wish of an Elder or Deacon, or when he from any cause begins to feel a decreasing interest in the congregation—he sometimes shows his temper by resigning his office in the Church. We have known several flagrant instances of such misconduct, especially in rural congregations. Now, without entering on the general question of the permanent tenure of office in the Church of Christ, or at all denying, that it may be very expedient in certain cases, that office-bearers who have served for a long term of years should be allowed to retire from the active discharge of their functions and make room for the new zeal of younger men, we are very clearly of opinion, that the resignation of office with its solemn trust and responsibility, on any point of personal dignity or temper, is at variance with all high principle, and a great injustice to the minister and the whole brotherhood. This of course is a fault all the more serious in