

publication may be thought to constitute, after all that has been said *a priori* and *a posteriori* on this subject, a species of *argumentum ad hominem* which, I doubt not, will come in with a sort of *clenching power* to the various proofs of Episcopacy already placed before your numerous and enlightened readers.

I shall not further detain you by these prefatory remarks than to say that I feel not a little ease to my conscience, in the delay of my proposed series of essays on the invaluable Liturgy of our Church, from the numerous powerful and beautiful elucidations of that most interesting subject which, from time to time, your well-stored journal has presented.

C. R.

### A CANDID EXAMINATION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH;

IN TWO LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

## LETTER I.

My Dear Friend,—

You have expressed your surprise at what you are pleased to term my apostasy from the faith of my ancestors, in having joined the Episcopal Church in this place, and have requested me to give you a full statement of the reasons by which I have been governed in this, to you, unexpected and extraordinary proceeding. Convinced as I am of your candor and sincerity, and knowing that the discovery and support of truth are with you paramount to every other consideration, I am confident that you will not condemn until you have thoroughly and without prejudice investigated the subject, and that you will not the less respect my vindication of myself although it should be presented to you in the style of a plain and an unlearned man. I am sensible that I am not sufficiently qualified to engage in religious controversy, nor have I a wish to possess such ability; still I think it a duty incumbent upon every one, not only to examine and to think for himself, unbiassed by interest or fashion, but to be able to give a reason for the faith which he has adopted.

I was educated, as you know, a Congregationalist, and it was not until I arrived at the years of manhood, that I understood any thing of the various sects into which the christian world is divided. I do not recollect ever hearing the Episcopal church mentioned, and I had no doubt, but that the only sure way to heaven, was that pointed out by the clergyman upon whose ministrations I always attended. His faith I considered to be the faith of the Gospel; his explanations were to me authoritative and infallible, and it never entered my head that it could be possible for the church to exist in any other form, either as it respects discipline or worship, even to the minutest particular, than it appeared in the place of my nativity.

At the time the Episcopal Society was established in this place, my ideas had, it is true, become somewhat enlarged; I had been in the habit of thinking more for myself, and the course of religious reading in which I indulged was considerably extended. I had learnt that a very small portion of the Christian world was, in government or worship, such as I had been used to; and I even dared to suspect that my belief was not necessarily right, morely from the circumstance that I had received and encouraged it from my infancy. I found that religion, in all its parts, was to be supported by the sure test of scripture and of reason. In the course of my reading and conversation, I had also learnt that the divines of the Episcopal Church had been distinguished for their learning and piety; that the best systems of divinity, and the most useful dissertations upon the several articles of the christian faith and practice, had come from their pens; and I was not a little surprised to hear our ministers frequently quoting them as authorities in the pulpit, and to see their libraries filled with the books they had published.

As I had become considerably acquainted with the clergymen in the neighbourhood, I perceived too, that they expressed a good deal of dissatisfaction in regard to the government of their own church, and some would even go so far as to recommend and vindicate the use of forms in worship. This convinced me that there was something wrong in the system, though I could not tell precisely what it was; and from all that I saw, and heard, and read, I felt it my duty, as a man who was to give a strict account of the improvement of his talents, to examine faithfully and impartially the nature of the Episcopal Church, when it was brought to my door, and to act according to my convictions. This examination I pursued to the best of my ability and opportunity, and the result has been a full and an unshaken belief that the government of the church by bishops, priests, and deacons, is of ancient and divine institution.

In my examination of the subject, I first made myself acquainted with the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in America. I also attended the worship of the Church, and although I was a little confused at the variety of form, yet there was an appearance of solemnity and engagedness in devotion, which was peculiarly impressive. My confusion I knew was owing to my having been used to a different mode, and did not therefore discourage me from a renewed attendance, until I was satisfied with the beauty and propriety of all. Every person will, I think, on first coming to church, especially if he has been acquainted with none but the Congregational mode, be unfavourably impressed with the service. The cause of which is, that he attends as a spectator, and does not perceive the reasonableness of the several prayers and praises which are intended only for pious and devout worshippers. They are not designed merely to be heard, but to be offered; and the humble Christian, who has long given vent to the emotions of his soul in their fervent strains, would deem it his greatest loss to be deprived of their use.

After I became acquainted with the government of the Church, I considered first, whether it was good in itself, and calculated to preserve unity and peace. I had heard much said of the power of bishops, and their infringement of the rights of the people, but I soon learnt that the charge was groundless, and that there was more true christian freedom in the Church than in any other denomination with which I was acquainted.

The Bishop has the power of ordaining Deacons and Priests, after they have been suitably recommended, with the assistance of his Presbyters; he confirms those that have been baptized; he

consecrates chapels and churches, and when present, he presides in Convention. But he has nothing to do with the votes of a people in the settlement and support of their minister; the clergy only are subject to his advice and direction. All acts in relation to the Church are passed in Convention, where the power of the Bishop is equal only to that of the Presbyter, the Deacon, or even the lay delegate. He can prescribe no new service; he can make no alterations in the old, and in every respect there is the same check upon the Episcopacy, as is possessed in a civil view, by the Legislature over the President. But there is a permanent and visible head to the Church; there is an authority to which offenders may be brought; there is a bond of union which strengthens and supports the whole; and although all the Bishops in America can exercise no more power than a single Presbyter, or association of Congregational ministers, there is, nevertheless, a source from which power emanates, and without which all would be confusion and anarchy.

And let me ask you, my friend, whether it is not necessary, that to every body there should be a head? The Church is a society which can exist only under a regular government, and how can this be administered without an authorised governor? And does not experience show that where all assume to be rulers in an equal degree, there is disorder and every evil work? What government ever existed long where there was not a due gradation in its officers? And how can it be expected, when mankind are so various in their tempers, passions, and pursuits, that one uniform course should be pursued, and the same end accomplished where there is no subjection and no control?

From considerations like these, I soon became satisfied that the Church was in itself the best mode of which I had any knowledge, so far as respected its government. It then became necessary to inquire whether it was agreeable to the will of God; for however useful and proper it might appear, still if it was contrary to his commands, I knew it must be rejected, and the views which I had entertained set aside as deceptions. To ascertain this, it seemed important to advert to the government which he himself established with the Jews, and here I found a striking similarity to the orders of the Church, in the several offices of High-Priest, Priest, and Levite. And is it not reasonable to suppose that where there were once types and emblems, there must now be the substance and reality? Although circumcision was no longer to be continued as a token of the covenant between God and his people, yet baptism was substituted in its stead, and for the same reason, the offices which had before prevailed must have something corresponding to them in the Christian Church; and what is there that answers to the High-Priest, if it be not the Bishop—to the Priest, if it be not the Presbyter—and to the Levite, if it be not the Deacon? But the argument is not, as some have pretended, that there must of necessity be Bishops, Priests and Deacons in the Christian, because there were High-Priests, Priests, and Levites in the Jewish Church. It is shown from this, that a diversity and an inequality of orders are not contrary to the will of God, but agreeable to his own government; and until there is some express command to the contrary, I think if there were no other reason, it is better to endeavour to imitate the divine conduct than to adopt the inconsistent and unprofitable inventions of men.

(To be continued.)

## THE CHURCH.

COBOURG, SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1838.

We have seen in two or three of the newspapers which usually advocate the interests of the Church of Scotland in these Provinces, such commendations bestowed upon the recently published reply of the Hon. William Morris to the Letters of the Archdeacon of York, as might lead to the supposition that this reply is a masterly specimen of literary composition, as well as a perfect example of close and incontrovertible reasoning. To neither the one nor the other, however, of these deductions can we allow ourselves to yield; for although, in the approbation which has been expressed of this production of Mr. Morris by the more zealous advocates of the cause he espouses, there may be every sincerity, still to the world at large is left the liberty of dissenting from the grounds of such eulogistic commendation. If, to be sure, in the style and arrangement of Mr. Morris's pamphlet we do not discover any thing that will allow us to rank it higher than a very common-place production; if a loose and ill-jointed construction of sentences and in some cases an absence of grammatical arrangement are, by a very ordinary reader, to be detected; we are well aware that, whatever be the native penetration and general ability of Mr. Morris, he himself lays no claim to that extent of literary attainment and skill and practice in writing which could place his recent production in that position to which the partial zeal of his friends would elevate it.—From the specimens of rebuke, indeed, which, in the course of his pamphlet, Mr. Morris himself frequently bestows upon the indiscretions of his friends, we are free to anticipate that he would cordially unite with us in the protest we beg leave to offer against at least the literary merit of his recent Reply.

Of the credit which is assumed to the soundness of his reasoning and to the incontrovertible truth of all his assertions, he may possibly be as tenacious as his warmest friends; but even on these points we must be so bold as to interpose a word of opposition also. In reasoning, the error is not unfrequently committed of drawing conclusions—in such cases seemingly correct—from false premises; and, on the other hand, of making false conclusions from premises which, in their separate and abstract order, may be correct. We do not mean to tire our readers with the niceties of a metaphysical disquisition, or to bring forward elucidations from the first principles of reasoning by which to establish the justice of our remark; but we leave them to judge, from such of the arguments of Mr. Morris as we may cite and remark upon, how far he is chargeable with one or both of the errors to which we have adverted.

He asserts, for example, that the Church of England is not the Church of the Empire;—and this conclusion seems to be

founded upon the admitted fact that within the empire the Church of England is an established Church, and the Church of Scotland is an established Church. But if we admit here the inference of Mr. Morris, while we deny not the abstract truth of his premises, we must conclude at the same time that the Empire, as such, has no Established Church at all. To that conclusion, however, both law and usage are opposed. The sovereigns of the Empire, for example, are legally bound to hold the religious faith of its Established Church; and as we know that the religious creed and discipline in which they are required to be trained, and according to which they are crowned, is that of the Church of England, we can hardly go astray in inferring which of the Established Churches is the Church of the Empire.

Moreover, the Imperial Legislature meets for the transaction of public business in London, and, as befits a Christian country, their deliberations are uniformly preceded by appropriate invocations of the blessing of Almighty God. But if the Church of England be not the Church of the Empire, how does it happen that in the United Legislature—embracing, it must be remembered, the representatives of Scotland which possesses its separate Established Church,—how does it happen that these devotions are appointed to be conducted by clergymen of the Church of England, and according to the prescribed ritual of that Church? It may be that the exclusion from this office of even a minister of the Church of Scotland, is regarded by some as an infringement of the "Articles of Union;" but if so, it has not yet been started either as a topic of grievance or as a subject of discussion in the mother country!

We have further to observe that our great Empire possesses fleets and armies proportioned to her power, and that to these, as becomes a Christian nation, there are attached ministers of our holy religion, that in all our enterprises and in all our conflicts there may be inculcated a due reverence and acknowledgment of Him who "stilleth the raging of the sea," and "maketh us to stand in the day of battle." Now, if the Chaplaincies of the army and navy are filled exclusively by clergymen of the Church of England, it is not hard to conclude which is the recognized Church of the Empire.

By parity of reasoning, the inference is equally incontrovertible, that if to the Colonies of the Empire the principle of an Established Church is to be carried out, that Church must be the Church of England; and whoever has perused the Instructions to Governors of Colonies, as published in 'THE CHURCH' of the 2nd December last, will understand at once that such has been the conclusion invariably drawn by the authorities of the Empire.

It is certainly not the fault of any Scotsman that his country does not contain much more than a tithe of the population of England and Wales, and not perhaps a hundredth part of the wealth and power of that portion of Her Majesty's dominions; but these are facts which ought to reconcile him to the preponderance of England in all matters civil and religious as long as his own rights and privileges within the limits of Scotland are religiously respected. That the fact of their possessing a distinct Established Church in Scotland, and that a respect for the principle which such an Establishment implies should, in all the Colonies of the Empire, give them a claim to the consideration and support of Government above every other religious denomination which recognizes no such principle, we are amongst the last to deny; but against the supposition, wherever entertained, that such should affect the exclusive right of the Church of England to be the Established Church in all the dependencies of the Empire, we must, and shall to the last, most solemnly protest.

Before noticing any others of the arguments of Mr. Morris in support of the pretensions of his Church to a parity of right with our own,—for we are compelled to be brief,—we must give a moment's attention to a reflection upon the Archdeacon of York, contained in page 45 of the pamphlet, in relation to what is termed the unseasonable time at which the Letters of that venerable gentleman appeared in this Journal. It is stated that the first of these Letters, although dated on the 17th November, was printed only on the 2d December, two days previous to the rebellious outbreak in the neighbourhood of Toronto. We beg to assure Mr. Morris and our readers generally, that four of these letters were in our possession before the day of the publication of the first; that one was printed before a suspicion had reached us that such an outbreak was contemplated; that the second was in type when the first intelligence of the rebellion arrived; and that the remaining two were written and ready for transmission to us before the expectation was very generally or seriously entertained in Toronto that an attempt so desperate would be made. Besides, the letters of the Archdeacon appeared at the very time that they were naturally called for; that is, immediately after the publication of the 'Correspondence' of Mr. Morris by which they were begotten. The time of their publication, therefore, was not studiously selected, but was the natural result of circumstances.

We shall conclude with anticipating the reply which every Churchman must be anxious to make to the insinuation contained in page 17 of the pamphlet of Mr. Morris, that a considerable number of the leaders in the late rebellion were members of the Church of England. We do not say that this inuendo—although it fits but awkwardly with the context—was introduced for any sinister end; but as the charge has been adduced, we are compelled, in justice to the members of our Church, to say, that of nine of the leading traitors in the late commotion, whose names are before us, one only is an Episcopalian, and he for many years a voluntary exile from the communion in which he had been baptized; and that of the rest, five are Presbyterians,—two of the five being natives of Scotland. It is possible that these last may have been Dissenters from the Established Church of that country, yet they form part of that body of Scottish Presbyterians who constitute, in very many instances, a majority of the congregations of the Kirk of Scotland in this Province, and who are by no means excluded from that numerical computation which is so often advanced in confirmation of the claim of that Church to an equality of right with the Church of England.