

## SAFETY OF THE CHURCH.

All things shall pass away! The glorious earth,  
Studded with lofty mountains, must dissolve  
And melt into oblivion:—its towers,  
Its lofty palaces, and battlements,  
Its shining temples,—all must feel the shock  
Of the last trumpet's blast, and at the sound  
Fall into dust.

The ever restless, wide, unbounded sea,  
Rolling in awful majesty its waves,  
Its sparkling coral caves—the tomb  
Of many a shipwrecked mariner. Its spoils  
Of treasure, sucked into its greedy depths—  
Shall be no more—when the dread oath is sworn,  
“Time now must end!”

The glorious firmament above—the sun  
The moon,—the hosts of glittering stars,  
Which sang enraptured at creation's dawn  
The praises of their king,—obedient still  
To His Almighty word, fall from their spheres,  
Lo! from the East appears a brighter light,  
Eclipsing all.

Earth, sea, and sky must perish,—but God's church  
Shall never see destruction. Christ appears  
Her Pilot in the storm. Guided by Him,  
Though on creation the last tempest beat,  
Safely she holds her course,—and in the sea  
Of fiery glass, spreading before God's throne,  
Rests peacefully.

Milway.

## THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

The Church being a society of which Christ is the head, from whom alone all the benefits belonging to it are derived, the appointment of the governors, together with the rules and orders by which this society is to be managed and directed, must originate with, and receive its sanction from him. For man, merely as a man, can claim no rule over his fellow-creatures. Government, therefore, whether in church or state, must look to that supreme Disposer, from whom all power is derived; by whose authority alone the validity of its exertions can be established. The reason of the thing, in this case, we shall find upon inquiry to be confirmed by the history of facts.

When our Saviour, after his resurrection, proceeded to the regular establishment of his Church upon earth, he appointed the eleven principal disciples, or Apostles as they are called by way of distinction, to meet him in a mountain in Galilee, for the purpose of delivering his commission and directions to them on that subject. “Then the eleven disciples (we read) went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them. And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach (or make disciples in) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. xxviii. 18.

It is to be observed, that our Saviour's disciples at this time exceeded the number of five hundred.—After his resurrection, St. Paul tells us, that “he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.” But our Saviour did not deliver the commission for administering the sacraments of his Church to his disciples at large, but only to his eleven Apostles; and to them not by accident, but, it should seem, by express design; and in consequence of a particular appointment to meet him for that purpose.

Now the granting a commission manifestly implies, that none but those to whom it has been delivered,

have authority to act in that business for which the commission has been granted. Was it otherwise, the commission would be an useless form. Christ, therefore, by making choice only of eleven out of the whole number of his disciples, intended, it is presumed, that the business which he authorized them to do, should not be performed by every one that might think proper to take upon him to execute it.

It is remarked further, that the tenor of the commission delivered to the Apostles seems purposely calculated to provide against, and thereby to render unnecessary, all self-constituted authority in the church. “As my Father has sent me,” said Christ, “so send I you,” &c. According to the common import of which words, as well as the received sense of them in the Catholic Church, our Saviour is to be understood as if he had said, “with the same power and authority that my Father sent me into the world, to constitute and govern my Church, I send you and your successors, for the further advancement of the same divine purpose; and lo! my Spirit shall accompany the regular administration of the office to the end of the world. As therefore, in consequence of the mission which I have received from my Father I send you, so, by virtue of the mission received from me, you have authority to send others, for the purpose of carrying on, and perpetuating, the plan which I have set on foot in the world, by a regular administration of the affairs of my kingdom, to the end of time.”

But, it may be said, although this commission, delivered to the Apostles, stamps a distinction upon their character, and evidently invests them with a particular office and authority; yet it does not furnish sufficient light, by which to determine the precise constitution of the Christian Church. It certainly does not; and was there no other light vouchsafed to us on this subject, we should not speak so decidedly upon it, as we now feel ourselves authorized to do.

But, perhaps, more information may be expected in this case than the Bible was designed to furnish. Divine revelation, it is to be observed, was not meant to gratify the curiosity, but to furnish information sufficient to establish the faith and govern the practice of the Christian professor. It is not to be supposed, that in the short history given by the Apostles, one thousandth part of the doctrine, or instruction, delivered by our Saviour to his disciples, could be recorded. St. John makes use of a strong expression, where he says, that “if all things which Jesus did should be written, every one, the world itself could not contain the books that should be written;” thereby giving us to understand, that the histories written by the Apostles furnish but a very short abstract of our Saviour's life and conversation; by no means sufficient to qualify the reader to form a minute and circumstantial judgment, with respect to any particular transaction recorded.

Upon the subject before us, for instance, we have no information but what is derived from the mere recital of the fact, that our Saviour did, after his resurrection, deliver a commission to his eleven disciples, relative to the government of his Church. The manner in which this commission was to be carried into effect, is to be ascertained by the subsequent practice of the Apostles; which doubtless conformed to the direction they had received from their divine Master. For it is not to be supposed that our Saviour would fail to accompany the delivery of so important a commission, with all the information necessary for the parties intrusted with it. Indeed, it should seem as if this was one of the principal objects our Saviour had in view, in remaining so long upon earth after his resurrection; since we are expressly told, that he, employed that time, in speaking of the things “pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Acts i. 3. If the Apostles have not recorded the directions, which accompanied the delivery of their commission, we are not from thence warranted to conclude that no directions were given; but, that they were judged unnecessary to be particularized; for this reason, it may be, because the government of the Christian Church was to correspond with that of the Jewish.

For the Jewish and Christian Church are to be considered, not so much different establishments, as editions, if we may so say, of the same Church (God, the former constituting as it were the ground plan, upon which the latter has been built).

Indeed, as the economy of man's salvation formed one complete whole, it is but to be expected that there should be an uniformity in its several parts: although the modern Christian, by confining his attention to one particular part of the divine dispensation, thereby unqualified to trace the resemblance between them.

If God then thought proper, himself to regulate the service of the Jewish Church, by the express appointment of those who were to bear office in it, is reasonable to suppose, that he would adopt a similar plan in the Christian church. Nor is it to be imagined, that he who did all things with regularity and order; who in his own person paid a delicate regard to the ordinances of the old dispensation, which were to be done away; should leave the affairs of his new Church only in an irregular and disorderly condition.

The history of the Christian church proves that he has not done so; it being taken for granted, that the practice of the Apostles, in the execution of their commission, will be admitted as authority sufficient to establish this fact. The Apostles, we are told, did not enter upon the discharge of their commission, if they had received the promise of the Father in the gift of the Holy Ghost. “They were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with the power from on high.” Luke xxiv. 49. What form of government, therefore, the Apostles agreed to establish in the church, if not expressly communicated to them by Christ in person, must be considered as established under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, apostolical practice, with respect to the government of the church, well ascertained, must in this matter be equivalent to apostolical precept with respect to the doctrine of it; because the Holy Spirit, by whom the Apostles were directed, and whose office it was to teach them all things necessary to the well-being of the Christian church, would not lead them into error in one case more than in the other.

What that form of government was, we shall be at no loss to determine, if we are disposed to inquire fairly into the subject. Indeed, the constitution of the Christian church, as established by the Apostles, may be considered to be sufficiently notorious, from their writings, to render particular proof on the subject unnecessary.—N. Y. Churchman.

## JOHN WESLEY AND THE OXFORD TRACTS.

A writer in the British Magazine gives the following quotation from No. 76 of the Tracts for the Times:

“By baptismal regeneration is meant, first, that the sacrament of baptism is not a mere sign or promise, but actually a means of grace, an instrument by which, when rightly received, the soul is admitted to the benefit of Christ's atonement, such as the forgiveness of sin, original and actual, reconciliation to God, a new nature, adoption, citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and the inheritance of heaven, i. e., regeneration.”

And quietly requests his readers to compare with it the subjoined extracts from the works of the Rev. John Wesley:

## BAPTISM, &amp;c.

“It is the initiatory sacrament, which enters us into covenant with God,” [Works, vol. xiii. p. 395, edition of 1812, in 16 volumes.] “What are the benefits we receive by baptism is the next point to be considered; the first of these is the washing away the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death,” [p. 398] “Baptism, the ordinary instrument of our justification,” [399.] “By baptism we are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ, its head,” [p. 400.] “By baptism we are made the children of God. And this regeneration, which our Church in so many