

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE."

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CHILDREN OF LIGHT.*

Walk as children of light.—Eph. v. 8.

Walk in the light! so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love
His Spirit only can bestow
Who reigns in light above.
Walk in the light! and sin abhorr'd
Shall ne'er defile again:
The blood of Jesus Christ the Lord
Shall cleanse from every stain.

Walk in the light—and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His,
Who dwells in cloudless light onshrin'd
In whom no darkness is.
Walk in the light!—and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away,
Because the light hath on thee shone
In which is perfect day.

Walk in the light—and e'en the tomb
No fearful shade shall wear;
Glory shall chase away its gloom,
For Christ hath conquered there!
Walk in the light! and thou shalt be
A path, though thorny, bright;
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God himself is light!

ORIGINAL.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN
NEWCOMB.†
PART II.

REASONS WHY I AM A CHURCHMAN.

In stating my religious opinions I did not give my reasons in full for joining the Church of England.—Now give them.

As formerly observed, I was, for a long time in suspense. I read the scriptures, especially the New Testament, with care, and I could not find any particular form of Church Government described there. And upon comparing the New Testament with various forms, creeds and practices of the professing christians of the day, I was at a loss to know what denomination were in the right way. I saw there must be one church; and I could not understand how two or more denominations professing as directly opposite to each other, as light is to darkness, could both, or all, be that one true church. I also saw that there was one Lord, one God, one Baptism: and one communion. But there are two Baptisms, with scores of Faiths and communions: aye the two latter are yet increasing; for any man possessing a good share of talent and cunning, with education, can go to preach in some new place—talk about the Revelations he has received from Heaven, the call of the Spirit to preach the Gospel, the anti-christian churches now in the world, the defects of ministers in general, the abundance of followers, with whom he forms a Church directly. This is the way that many churches have been formed: and I could not see how each one, of those formed—ten, fifteen, or eighteen hundred years after the ascension of Christ—could be one true church formed by him.

From the Gospel Messenger.
Continued.

I saw that they all appealed to the scriptures in support of their doctrines; and I did not know from scripture which was right. But there were other things of no little importance which I found myself at a loss to know from scripture. Ought the sabbath day to be kept holy any longer than is necessary to attend the public worship of Almighty God? Ought there to be three orders of Clergy in the Church, (Bishops having authority over several congregations?) Ought women to be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Ought infants to be baptized? Ought baptism to be performed by immersion, or by sprinkling? Ought the power of admitting and excluding members to lie in the Minister, or members of the church? Ought the people to ordain, appoint, and remove their minister at pleasure; or ought that power to lie in the Bishop?

These, and other points, not clearly set down in scripture; some of which cause controversy with professors; christians of the present day; each party declaring their doctrines to be clearly laid down in scripture; seemed to present an insurmountable barrier to me, in finding the true way.

After much thought I came to the resolution of examining, as far as lay in my power, what was the Faith and practice of the primitive christians, for the first century, or 2 or 3 after the Apostles. I thought it not safe to depend on my own judgment in interpreting the scriptures, and deciding upon what denomination of christians was now right; for this reason, with others:—those who leave one and the same denomination in which they were bred, and unite with another, because they say the Holy Spirit has worked on their minds and influenced them to do so, immediately separate in opinion amongst themselves. For instance, many hundreds have left the Church of England, because they say the Holy Spirit has taught them that the church is in error, in gross darkness, anti-christian, formal, corrupt, popish, worldly, altogether of this world. Its ministers caring nought for the flock, if they can but get the fleece; and so on. I ask how does it happen that those leaving the church for the same cause do not all join in opinion after they have left it; and so all join with some other as brethren in one cause? But instead of this, we find that one becomes a Wesleyan and another an abaptist, one a Calvinist and another an Arminian, one a Quaker and another a Socinian, and so on: and all led by the Holy Spirit, to adopt and promote those different sentiments. This was a mystery which I could not fathom. For those same persons will say of each other, that such or such doctrine is unscriptural, contrary to the plain written word of God—are damnable, not calculated to lead people to salvation, and so on. Thus, that Spirit which caused them to separate from the church, cannot keep them together; but separates them as far from each other, as they are from the church.

Accordingly I proceeded to examine as far as lay in my power, for my means were limited, the doctrines and practices of the primitive christians: for I intended that if those doctrines and practices did not disagree with the Scriptures, I would join with that church which at this day appeared nearest thereto.

I soon found by the earliest records that there were three orders of Clergy from the time of the Apostles, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. That the Bishops, and they only had authority to ordain.—That they exercised authority over the Presbyters and Deacons: and over the churches in making rules and regulations for the good governing thereof. That they appointed and sent ministers wherever they thought proper, and that the people had no power to appoint, or exclude their ministers. And this I found to be perfectly agreeable to the New Testament; for St. Paul, after having given sundry orders and

directions to the Corinthians about the churches, says; and the rest will I set in order when I come, and again; keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you. And again he says; and so ordain I in all the churches.

It is evident that St. Paul appointed Timothy, over the church at Ephesus; and we may reasonably suppose that he had authority over several adjoining ones; as had Titus, and other Bishops appointed about that time. And as to the ordination, St. Paul says; and thou my son be strong, &c. This was when he was appointed Bishop; he had been appointed Presbyter some time before this; some writers suppose by several Presbyters. But admitting this, St. Paul might have been among them, and ordained him, with the consent and assistance of the Presbyters present. Yea, St. Paul might have accepted of their assistance, merely as an act of friendship towards them: yet not as being necessary.

Then as to Titus, St. Paul says; For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting; and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee. But what would St. Paul have said, if the christians of Crete had said to Titus, as the Christians of Nova Scotia say to (or of) their Bishop, who is appointed by the Bishops of the church, and left in this country for the very same purpose that Titus was left in Crete:—thus, suppose they had said, "you may go to St. Paul and let him send you where he choose, to Otahoite for aught that we care, or wherever you can get hearers. As for us, we are going to ordain Mr. M. for our Pastor, and we want none of your assistance nor St. Paul's, either in ordaining our Elders, or ruling our churches: for we can make all the rules and regulations we wish, and set in order every thing that is wanting, without St. Paul or you."

Now, what would have been the consequence? Would they not have been sharply rebuked by St. Paul? Would not those who persisted in their refusal to hear Titus, and the Presbyters and Deacons appointed by him, have been cut off from the Church? But we have good reason to believe that they did obey Titus, and those whom he ordained in the several offices of the Ministry.

Thus I examined the practice of the church down for 300 years; and found that in every great city which contained several churches, there was a Bishop. And in times of persecution the Bishops were frequently the first victims, for the horrible tortures, inflicted on the christians by the heathens: because they (the Bishops) were noted for their great and extensive influence over their congregations.

So if the government of the church by Bishops be anti-christian and unscriptural, then there was no true church in the world during the first 300 years of the christian era, and 10 cruel persecutions. But we know that the church which endured those persecutions, and which was governed by Bishops, was the true Church, and the only true one in existence, as descended from Christ and his Apostles. Therefore if the appointment of Bishops were an innovation, I would be glad to know from those who say so, when the church, (as a body,) existed without them? I cannot find from Scripture or Ecclesiastical History, when it did? And, in fact, I am satisfied from both together, that it never did! Therefore that church which was organized by Christ himself, as the true and only church, cannot exist where the Bishop does not preside.

Thus, I became clearly satisfied that the Episcopal Church, and she alone, is descended by regular succession, in the order of her ministry, from the Apostles. That she is the true church, of God—the one in which the means of salvation are to be had. And that we have no certain grounds to believe from scripture that any other will be acknowledged by