

clared that no curse could be too bad for those who rejected an Episcopacy so moderate. His friend Beza expresses himself in much the same manner. Both indeed, lived to eat their own words on this, as well as on many other subjects, but it was when interest and ambition had perverted their understandings. In no part of his Christian Institutes does Calvin reason so weakly as in book 4th, where he treats of the government of the Church. Here he tries to prove that Bishops, Elders, and Pastors are appellations without any distinction; but he is forced to have recourse to St. Jerome, a Father of the 4th Century, to give even a shadow of support to this strange opinion. "A Presbyter," says St. Jerome, "is the same as a Bishop, and before dissensions in Religion were produced by the instigation of the devil, and one said I am of Paul, and another I am of Cephas, the Churches were governed by a common council of Presbyters. Afterwards, to destroy the seeds of dissension, the whole charge was committed to one. Therefore, as the Presbyters know that according to the custom of the Church they are subject to the Bishop, who presides over them, so let the Bishops know that their superiority to the Presbyters is more from custom than the fear of the Lord, and they ought to unite together in the government of the Church."

It is evident that St. Jerome here alludes to the dissensions among the Corinthians mentioned by St. Paul, which induced him to appoint Bishops or Rulers to preserve discipline and order. There is a great want of candour in considering this quotation, favourable to an equality among Bishops and Presbyters, as the same Father asserts in many places the existence of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, as separate Orders in the Church: he calls the Bishops, the sons of the Apostles, and asserts that without the Bishop's licence, neither Presbyter nor Deacon has a right to baptise; and he farther allows, that Episcopacy was in his time universally established. At first the appointment of Rulers or Bishops was not required, for the Apostles had the charge of the Churches, and so long as they were in the habit of frequently visiting them, matters proceeded decently and in order; but when the time of their departure drew nigh, they set Bishops over each Church, to govern with the advice of the Elders, but with a marked pre-eminence. That a distinct form of Church government is not laid down in the New Testament, may be easily ac-