

# The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

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## Poetry.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S RACE.

From the British Magazine.

He stood beside a dying bed;  
The lamp burnt pale and low,  
And, dimly seen, an old grey head  
Was battling its last foe.  
It was a father that lay there,  
That gazer was a son;  
I whisper'd, "There is help in prayer,"  
He said, "God's will be done!"

He stood amid a glittering crowd,  
Within the chancel wide,  
And gracefully the ring bestow'd  
Upon a blooming bride.  
"Rejoice, for love is round thee spread,  
And life is in its prime,"  
His smile was solemn, as he said,  
"It is a holy time."

He stood beside a healing spring,  
Whence drops of mercy fell;  
And lovedly was the new-born thing  
Bathed in that holy well.  
It was his eldest born,—I said,  
"Rejoice, my friend, rejoice!"  
"I do," he cried, with stooping head,  
And with a trembling voice.

He stood beside an open grave—  
The funeral rite was done;  
He had return'd, to Him who gave,  
His lov'd, his only son.  
"Do not despair, my friend," I cried,  
As all around were weeping;  
He smil'd upon me, and replied—  
"He is not dead, but sleeping!"

I stood beside a dying bed—  
"Twas no man's life lay there;  
A smile of holy light o'er'spread  
His countenance of prayer.  
He said—"In sorrow, faith was mine;  
In joy, a holy fear;  
Now both are lost in hope divine—  
Still, Saviour, thou art near!"

Such was his life! In joy and we  
His heart was full above;  
Faith was his only strength below,  
His only food of love.  
Teach me, O Lord, his life to live;  
Teach me his death to die;  
May I to Thesee times' moments give—  
Thou me eternity.

### THE HOUR OF DEATH.

By Mrs. Hemans.

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
And stars to set,—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, Oh Death!

Day is for mortal care,  
Eve for glad meetings round the joyous hearth;  
Night for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer;  
But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth.

The banquet has its hour,  
Its fev'ral hour of mirth, and song and wine;  
There comes a day for grief's overwhelming power,  
A time for softer tears; but all are thine.

Youth and the opening rose  
May look like things too glorious to decay  
And smile at thee; but thou art not of those  
That wait the ripened bloom to seize their prey.

We know when moons shall wane,  
When summer birds from far shall cross the sea,  
When Autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain;  
But who shall teach us when to look for thee?

Is it when spring's first gale  
Comes forth to whisper where the violets lie?  
Is it when roses in our path grow pale?  
They have one season,—all are ours to die.

Thou art where billows foam;  
Thou art where music melts upon the air;  
Thou art around us in our peaceful home;  
And the world calls us forth,—and thou art there.

Thou art where friend meets friend,  
Beneath the shadow of the elm or rest;  
Thou art where foe meets foe, and trumpets rend  
The skies, and swords beat down the princely crest.

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath;  
The stars to set; but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thy own, Oh Death!

### ON THE USE OF SCRIPTURE TERMS.

From the British Magazine.

The true Christian requires no lengthened discussion to prove to him the propriety of using Scripture terms; for whatever is found in Scripture, he believes to be impressed with the characters of truth, and to possess an authority too high for man to question. By those, then, who acknowledge the Bible to be the word of God, the scriptural use of scriptural terms must not only be conceded to all, but must also be required of all who, like themselves, profess to derive their principles from the sacred volume of inspiration. Nor is it to be imagined that, in the present day at least, the truth of this assertion will be attempted to be impugned. There is in Holy Writ such appropriateness of expression, such purity of language, united with such deep knowledge of human nature, and such irresistible power to convince, that from its pages even those who are unwilling to recognise its sacred origin have nevertheless not scrupled to supply themselves with sentiments and arguments to maintain their own moral systems. For the temper of this celestial armour is superior to all that is of merely human fabrication. And no wonder, therefore, if occasionally it should have been desecrated to unholy purposes, and have been used to defend principles in which the subtleties of human philosophy are attempted to be disguised behind the assumed appearances of innocence and truth.

But it is not such unhallowed use of Scripture language that is now to be considered. By designing enemies, Scripture terms may have been abused; but have they never been misapplied by injudicious friends? Is wilful perversion the only mode in which holy words may be misquoted? Assuredly it requires but little acquaintance with the nature of human knowledge to decide this question. There is in all men a strong disinclination to patient thought, an eagerness to seize upon the earliest-presented idea, and to cherish it with a fondness of attachment due only to well-considered and deliberately formed opinions. From this cause arises all that indistinctness of comprehension which prevails so universally, that it may almost be said with safety that there are scarcely any two ideas of which any two individuals entertain precisely the same notion or estimate. Nor is this dissimilarity of conception to be accounted for (in most instances) except by the neglect of careful

examination. If opinions be hastily received, they must derive their complexion from the ill-assorted perceptions of the moment; they must be blended with those foreign ideas which are too intricately mingled up with them to be readily separated, and which the mind, therefore, prefers to retain, rather than undergo the toil of untangling them. And when once an idea has been presented to the mind, and the hastily formed opinion been received, it is the nature of man to treasure it up in the memory, to be thenceforth recognised, not reconsidered; it is no longer a theme of inquiry, but is cherished as an acknowledged truth; no longer a subject of reflection to undergo judgment, but an established notion to be used as occasion may require. If, then, Scripture terms are thus treated, if the deep and mysterious truths which they state are received with hasty and rudely-acquiescent decision, what other result can be expected than that the terms should be misunderstood, and the ideas they were intended to convey, either altogether unperceived, or at any rate but vaguely comprehended? And if there be indistinctness of conception in the mind, how can there be perspicuity of expression in unfolding to another what is not accurately known to the individual himself? It cannot be. There may not, indeed, be wilful misrepresentation, but it will be impossible to avoid incorrectness of doctrine. The language may be scriptural, but if it have not been maturely considered, and its meaning investigated in long and often even painful research, it will not have scriptural meaning attached to it.

Of what, then, is the use of Scripture language a proof? If used with reverence and propriety, it is undoubtedly proof of scriptural knowledge and scriptural faith. For no man can connect together a number of terms and sentences aptly illustrating the same truth, and by their relative collocation confirming and explaining each other, without having acquired some considerable knowledge of the truth they inculcate. And again, no Holy Writ reverently and discreetly use the language of one Writ who does not implicitly and from his heart believe the awful mysteries which it unfolds. A lucid arrangement and appropriate comparison of inspired sentences is ample testimony of clearness of conception, and a thoughtful and reverent use of them as amply indicates a mind deeply imbued with a sense of their awful authority and divine sanction. But such testimony is not to be gathered from a familiar and indiscriminate use of sacred words. There is a distinction between the knowledge of wisdom, and an acquaintance with the words of wisdom,—between the thing signified and the symbol that communicates to the eye or ear that sensible impression whose intellectual discernment and thorough comprehension is knowledge. Words may be easily pronounced, but ideas are not of such easy acquisition. Nay, farther, an idea may, with no great difficulty, be presented to the mind, even vividly and brightly portrayed before it, in all the blaze of sudden and unclouded brilliancy; but such a display, however dazzling, is but little instructive, and is often illusory, because too transient of duration to permit its excellency to be examined. It is like a meteor-flash, seen and gone at once. It may leave behind a memorial indistinct and incomplete in its loveliness,—it may even have so far impressed its image on the mind, that whenever again presented before it, it shall excite similar feelings and sensations, and thus produce an opinion that it is thoroughly understood because capable of recognition. But as the mind has not detained the fleeting visitor sufficiently long to learn its form and features, and to take a copy as it were of its symmetry of outline and its peculiar lineaments; it is, in fact, a guest whose character is ever taken for granted, ever unexamined, and never known. This, which in the case of most men is true concerning all ideas, is especially true in reference to religious ideas. For many of the truths of Scripture relate to things which are not perceptible by immediate sensation, but are either understood by inference, or are subjects of faith. To acquire accurate notions of such truths then, must require more attentive consideration than is requisite for other ideas; and if these latter be difficult of comprehension, much more must the former be. And yet these are the subjects of familiar expression, these are repeated with an indefiniteness of meaning, an inconclusiveness of argument, and often with a perversion of truth, such as must strike with amazement and horror all who have attained even to an imperfect conception of their true significance.

It is an unhappy characteristic of the human mind, that it is ever willing to receive sound for sense, positiveness for accuracy, and obstinate attachment to received opinion for genuine love of truth. The appearance of wisdom and the semblance of virtue are, to an inexperienced eye, as fair as the truth itself; and they claim not that unwearied dedication of person and intellect which the Author of truth requires ere he will bestow the boon of knowledge or salvation. And this error spreads far and wide, and becomes bold and presumptuous; she clothes herself in borrowed robes, and assumes the name and titles of Truth; her pretensions are ever extravagant; and if her claims be questioned, she disclaims to wear her honour meekly, and is loud and stubborn. Arrogance, and self-sufficiency, and intensity of language are the aids by which she asserts her sway, and the arguments by which she deludes the ignorant, and persuades them to enlist under her banner. For all who will not take the trouble to learn for themselves, are very willing to adopt the opinions of those whom they conceive to be learned; and as truth must be certain, and wisdom distinct, they conclude that confidence is the proof of truth, and that what is forcible in expression must surely be correct in perception. No doubt, with men of ardent temperament, and who are also deep thinkers, it may be so. By such men, the subject of their frequent meditation is at length seen in all the broad extent of its comprehensiveness; and as intensity of feeling is united to great intellectual power, there will be an energy of language correspondent to the vigour of conception. From the sacred mines of inspiration will they bring forth in rich profusion, and string together the jewels of eternal faith, reflecting and increasing each the radiance of the other. But such union of powers is rare, and vehemence of expression is, therefore, so far from being generally the proof of depth of penetration and accuracy of knowledge, that it is most frequently used to conceal the very contrary, as men oftentimes assume a bold countenance to hide the weakness of a desperate cause.

And, if we examine somewhat more accurately the use of the half-understood phraseology of wisdom, we shall find that the words of truth are often made subservient to the purposes of error, and still more often robbed of the better part of their intrinsic excellence, and blended with sentiments of a different tenor, which ob-

scure, though they cannot wholly change, the meaning of scripture. Inference is a process in which the mind especially delights,—it begets a consciousness of intellectual strength, which can never be contemplated without complacency; and though of all modes of argument it is most liable to lead to unwarranted conclusions, yet, by affording for each link in the chain of argument an apparently consecutive and plausible reason, whose fallacy is not easy of detection, it obtains an influence over the mind so powerful that its conclusions are received with implicit credence, and asserted with all the authority of undeniable conviction. Hence it not unfrequently happens that the primary meaning of a sentence is forgotten in the exclusive attention paid to the apparently more valuable inferences to be deduced from it. And thus the secondary meaning (or rather the assumed existence of such a meaning) becomes the principal object, and is soon exalted into the real signification, from which a second set of inferences is drawn, oftentimes establishing principles at variance with the original sentiment. It would be easy to adduce examples,—such, for instance, as the notions usually entertained of the words *Repentance* and *Grace*, each of which has been roughly handled and rudely tortured by the hands of unskillful friends or designing enemies, until the one has dwindled down into a mere paroxysm of passionate feeling, and the other has been mystified into a vague and incomprehensible emotion—an undefined impression of an undefinable influence, not cognizable in the time of sober meditation, but perceptible only in the hour of transcendent and enthusiastic excitement. Were the real significations of these and similar words to be sought out with diligent and accurate research, how few of the prevailing errors of the day would be long maintained with that obstinate perversity of argument which the subtlety of a biased, though perhaps not wilfully deceitful, mind can powerfully display.

But if the thoughtless and unscrutinized use of Scripture terms can thus obscure the brilliant splendor of eternal truth, and casting a veil over their brightness, substitute for them the flickering and illusive glare of mere earthly conceits; if plausible argument derived from misconception can thus darken counsel and conceal true wisdom, what shall be said of that still more culpable use of holy words which neglects every purpose for which they were revealed, and brings them forward with unhalloved peculiarity to serve the ends of party, and to gratify the base and malignant passions of an inveterate bigotry? Fatal to true religion as the first, in degree at least, must be, it still may perhaps incur only the charge of misapprehension, or at most of thoughtless perversion; but this last is acrimie of a deeper dye,—it is a desecration and profaneness, that converts at once the pure words of life into a theme of contention, and arrogant debate and blasphemous presumption; that takes the hallowed fire from off the altar of God, not to enkindle holy affections, but to light up the flames of irreligious discord; that usurps the form of truth, not that it may take the heavenly pattern to copy its bright character and impress the linaments on the inward man, but to conceal more effectually the deformity of error, that while it bids the lips to pronounce the solemn words of life and charity and holiness, instructs the mind to read them as the well-known symbols of interested superstition, of hatred and bitterness and hypocritical aggrandizement.

Yet fearful as is such perversion of the words of inspiration, it cannot be concealed that in these latter times it has become especially prevalent. Religious phraseology, not to use a harsher term, is now the grand distinctive characteristic of Christian attainment. To talk of grace and faith, to lay down the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, to speak of the operations of the Spirit, and of the in-dwelling love of God, and to claim a perfect insight into all the mysteries of the scheme of redemption, interweaving amongst them the secret things that belong to the Lord God Almighty, and largely dilating upon those hard and little understood terms, reprobation, election, predestination, and the final perseverance of the saints; these are the topics that form the themes of discussion of man; too truly called *professors* of religion, the standard doctrines by whose wordly reception and declamatory defence they try the bands of the faithful and assign them at once a place amongst the members of Christ's spiritual church, or at once reject them with a scorn and a cool assurance of contempt, too cool, indeed, to issue from a bosom warmed with one spark of Christian charity too confident to spring from a mind that has dared to look into its own deficiencies, and to read there the lessons of humility and moderation which true wisdom and self-knowledge ever inculcate.

It is a fearful reflection that man possesses the power to apply even the words of wisdom and truth so as, in reference to himself, to rob them of all their excellent attributes while yet he is paying them an outward homage, whose showy deference may serve to elicit applause and increase reputation, though it be but the semblance of respect worn to conceal the inward indifference of the heart. And what else must be concluded of those, from whose lips the sacred words of revelation are flowing in uninterrupted course, at the very time when there is neither deadness to the world, nor integrity of principle, nor even common consistency of moral conduct to correspond with the sacred sanctity of their words and sentences. It is not that the use of scripture language and religious terms can be objected to, for their scriptural use is at once edifying to man and acceptable before God; but it is the thoughtless use of sacred words, the unmeaning repetition, the idle, and therefore profane, utterance of that which should never be pronounced without the deepest reverence and the closest attention of the mind. It is this unscriptural use, or rather abuse, of holy terms, against which it becomes every consistent Christian solemnly to protest. If the scheme of redemption be a mystery, solemn, sacred, and unsearchable, and if the hope of a future immortality be a subject too mighty for the noblest efforts and reflections of the soul to entertain with becoming devotion, surely there can be no license given to use the sacred phrases employed for their illustration with an irrelevancy of quotation and a familiarity of style that bespeak neither soundness of understanding nor reverence of feeling. A wise man will indeed speak wisdom, and a righteous man will speak righteousness, but it is not the utterance of either wisdom or righteousness that constitutes the wise or the righteous man. For it is possible "with the talents of an angel to be a fool," and it is equally possible with the tongue of a seraph and the glittering radiance of an angel of light to be a fiend. Display of truth proves not its cordial reception, nor encomiums of virtue a guiltless breast; for assertion and praise are neither belief nor practice, nor is the loudest

vindication of right a title to possession. The character must support the pretensions, or they are vain. So that they who with a slower hand to obey have a readier tongue to talk, or with an inferior or even equal show of service can assert their claim to superior knowledge and nobler principle, must either be miserably deficient in accuracy of comprehension, or, if not the victims of thoughtlessness and self-delusion, must be betraying a fearful degree of inconsistency, if not doing even worse—acting the wickedest and deadliest of all human deceits, the base profession of an unfeigned and hypocritical homage.

### THE CAUSE OF EPISCOPACY BRIEFLY STATED.

By the Reverend Charles Lesley, M. A.

(Continued from No. 24.)

SECT. III. *Objection from the times of popery in this kingdom, as if that did unchurch, and consequently break the succession of our bishops.*—I must now account for an objection, which with some seems a mighty one, even enough to overthrow all that I have said concerning the succession of our bishops, and that is the long midnight of popery which has in old time darkened these nations.

Well; the succession of which I have been speaking was no part of that darkness, and we have, by God's blessing, recovered ourselves in a great measure from that darkness: but that darkness was such as, with some, to destroy the episcopal succession; because, as they say, such great errors, especially that of idolatry, does quite unchurch a people, and consequently must break their succession.

This, by the way, is a popish argument, though they that now make it are not aware of it; for the Church of Rome argues thus, that idolatry does unchurch; and therefore, if she was idolatrous for so long a time as we charge upon her, it will follow, that for so many ages there was no visible Church, at least in these western parts of the world: and Arianism (which is idolatry) having broke in several times upon the Church, if idolatry did quite unchurch and break the succession, there would not be a Christian Church hardly left in the world; the consequence of which would be as fatal to the Church of Rome as to us; therefore let her look to that position, which she has advanced against us, that idolatry does unchurch.

2. But that it does not unchurch, I have this to offer against those papists, quakers, and others, who make the objection.

(1.) If it does quite unchurch, then could no Christian be an idolater, because by that he would *ipso facto* cease to be a member of the Christian Church; but the Scripture does suppose that a Christian may be an idolater, therefore idolatry does not unchurch. The minor is proved, 1 Cor. v. 11, "If any man that is called a brother" (that is, a Christian) "be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater"—say, Eph. v. 5, a covetous man is called "an idolater;" and Col. iii. 5, "covetousness is idolatry." So that, by this argument, covetousness does unchurch. If it be said that covetousness is called idolatry only by allusion, but that it is not formal idolatry; I know no ground for that distinction: the Scripture calls it "idolatry," and makes no distinction.

But in the first text quoted, 1 Cor. v. 11, both "covetousness" and "idolatry" are named; so that you have both material and formal, or what other sort of idolatry you please to fancy.

I grant that in one sense idolatry does unchurch—that is, while we continue in it, it renders us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and forfeits our title to the promises which are made to the Church in the gospel; but so does fornication, covetousness, and every other sin, till we repent and return from it. But none of these sins do so unchurch us as to exclude our returning to the fold by sincere repentance, or to need a second baptism or admission into the Church,—neither does idolatry. Do I then put idolatry upon a level with other common sins? No; far from it. Every sinner is not a leprosy; yet a leprosy is a man, and may recover his health. Idolatry is a fearful leprosy; but it does not therefore quite unchurch, nor throw us out of the covenant; for if it did, then would repentance heal it, because repentance is a great part of the covenant; and therefore since none deny repentance to an idolater, it follows that he is not yet quite out of the covenant. Some of the ancients have denied repentance to apostasy, yet granted it to idolatry; which shews that they did not look upon idolatry to be an absolute apostasy; for every sin is an apostasy in a limited sense.

(2.) Let us in this disquisition follow the example before mentioned of the apostles and most primitive fathers, to measure the Christian Church by its exact type, the Church under the law; which are not two Churches, but two states of the same Church; for it is the same Christian Church from the first promise of Christ, Gen. iii. 15, to the end of the world; and therefore it is said, Heb. ix. 2, "The same Church shall please actually to exist, as unto us." And these two states of the Church before and after Christ, do answer like a pair of indentures to one another, the one being to an iota fulfilled in the other. Matt. v. 18.

Now we find frequent lapses to idolatry in the Church of the Jews; yet did not this unchurch them, no, nor deprive them of a competent measure of God's Holy Spirit, as it is written, Neh. ix. 18, 20, "Ye, when they had made them a molten calf, and said 'This is thy God,'—yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not.... Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them," &c.

And let it be here observed, that though God sent many prophets to reprove the great wickedness and idolatry as well of their priests as people, yet none of these holy prophets did separate communion from the wicked priests; they would not join in their idolatrous worship, but in all other parts they joined with them, and set up no opposite priesthood to them. So little did the prophets think that their idolatry had either unchurched them or broke the succession of the priests; or that it was lawful for any, how holy soever, to usurp upon their priesthood, and supply the deficiencies of it to the people. And apply to this what I have before shewn in the words of St. Clement, "whose name is written in the book of life," that the evangelical priesthood is as surely fixed in the bishops of the Church, and its succession continued in those ordained by them, as the Levitical priesthood was confirmed by the budding of Aaron's rod, and to be continued in that tribe.

3. And here let our Korahites, of several sizes, take a view of the heinousness of their schism; and let them not think their crime to be nothing, because they have been taught with their nurses' milk to have the utmost abhorrence to the very name of a bishop, though they could not tell why; let them rather consider seriously the misfortune of their education, which should make them strangers to all the rest of the Christian world but themselves in a corner, and to all the former ages of Christianity.

They have been told that episcopacy is popery, because the papists have bishops.

So have they presbyters too—that is, parish priests; they have the creed likewise, and the holy Scriptures; and all these must be popish, if this be a good argument.

But are they willing to be undeceived? then they must know that episcopacy has none so great an enemy as the papacy, which would engross the whole episcopal power into the single see of Rome, by making all other bishops absolutely dependent upon that which only they call "the apostolical chair." And no longer

since than the Council of Trent the pope endeavoured, with all his interest, to have episcopacy, except only that of the Bishop of Rome, to be declared not to be *jure divino*; by which no other bishops could claim any other power but what they had from him. But that council was not so quite degenerated as to suffer this to pass.

And the Jesuits and others who disputed there on the pope's part used those same arguments against the divine right of episcopacy, which from them, and the popish canonists and schoolmen, have been licked up by the Presbyterians and others of our dissenters: they are the same arguments which are used by pope and presbyter against episcopacy.

When the pope could not carry his cause against episcopacy in the Council of Trent, he took another method, and that was to set up a vast number of presbyterian priests—that is, the regulars, whom he exempted from the jurisdiction of their respective bishops, and framed them into a method and discipline of their own, accountable only to superiors of his and their own contriving, which is exactly the presbyterian model.

These usurpations upon the episcopal authority made the famous Archbishop of Spalatro quit his great preferments in the Church of Rome, and travel into England, in the reign of King James I., to seek for a more primitive and independent episcopacy. Himself, in his *Consilium Profectionis*, gives these same reasons for it; and that this shameful depression and prostitution of episcopacy in the Church of Rome was the cause of his leaving her.

He observed truly, that the further we search upward in antiquity, there is still more to be found of the episcopal, and less of the papal emnity.

St. Ignatius is full in every line almost of the high authority of the Council of Trent, he took another method, and that was to set up a vast number of presbyterian priests—that is, the regulars, whom he exempted from the jurisdiction of their respective bishops, and framed them into a method and discipline of their own, accountable only to superiors of his and their own contriving, which is exactly the presbyterian model.

The usurped supremacy of the later bishops of Rome over their fellow-bishops has been as fatal to episcopacy as the rebellion of our yet later presbyters against their respective bishops.

And, indeed, whoever would write the true history of presbyterianism, must begin at Rome, and not at Geneva.

So very groundless, as well as malicious, is that popular clamour of episcopacy having any relation to popery. They are so utterly irreconcilable, that it is impossible they can stand together; for that moment that episcopacy were restored to its primitive independence, the papacy—that is, that supremacy which does now distinguish it—must *ipso facto* cease. But enough of this; for I must not digress into various subjects.

I have shewn, in answer to the objection of the ages of popery in this kingdom, that all those errors, even idolatry itself, does not unchurch, nor break succession. And, secondly, I have exemplified this from the parallel of the Jewish Church under the law. Then, applying this to our case, I have vindicated episcopacy from the imputation of popery. I will now go on to further reasons why the succession of our present bishops is not hurt by that deluge of popery which once covered the face of this land.

4. The end of all government, as well in the Church as state, is to preserve peace, unity, and order; and this cannot be done if the maladministration of the officers in the government did vacate their commission, without its being recalled by those who gave such commission to them. For then, first, every man must be judge when such a commission is vacated; and then no man is bound to obey longer than he pleases; secondly, one may say it is vacated, another not; whence perpetual contention must arise.

A man may forfeit his commission—that is, do those things which give just cause to his superiors to take it from him; but it is not actually vacated, till it be actually recalled by those who have lawful power to take it from him; otherwise there could be no peace nor certainty in the world, either in public or in private affairs; no family could subsist, no man enjoy an estate, no society whatever could keep together. And the Church, being an outward society, must consequently subsist by those laws which are indispensable to every society. And though idolatry does justly forfeit the commission of any Church in this sense, that God's promises to her being conditional, he may justly take her commission from her, and remove her candlestick: I say, though her commission be thus forfeitable, yet it still continues, and she still exists, till God shall please actually to recall it, or take it away; for no commission is void, till it be so declared. Thus, though the Jews did often fall into idolatry, yet, (as before has been said) God did bear long with them, and did not unchurch them, though they had justly forfeited. And these wicked husbandmen, who slew those whom the Lord sent for the fruits of his vineyard, yet continued still to be the husbandmen of the vineyard, till their lord did dispossess them, and gave their vineyard unto others.

And natural reason does enforce this: if a steward abuse his trust, and oppresses the tenants, yet they are still obliged to pay their rent to him, and his discharges are sufficient to them against their landlord, till they shall supersede such a steward.

If a captain wrong and cheat his soldiers, yet are they obliged to remain under his command till the king, who gave him his commission, or those to whom he has committed such an authority, shall cashier him.

And thus it is in the sacerdotal commission: abuses in it do not take it away, till God, or those to whom he has committed such an authority, shall suspend, deprive, or degrade (as the fact requires) such a bishop or a priest.

And there is this higher consideration in the sacerdotal commission than in those of civil societies, viz. that it is immediately from God: as none therefore "can take this honour to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron;"—so can none take it away but he that is as expressly and outwardly called thereto, as Aaron was to be a priest. For this would be to usurp upon God's immediate prerogative, which is to constitute his own priests. Upon this foundation I argue:

5. As the necessity of government, and the general commands in Scripture of obedience to government, do require our submission to the government in any, that claims a better right than the possessor;—so where a Church once established by God, though suffering many interruptions, does continue, her governors ought to be acknowledged, where there is no better claim set up against them.

This was the reason why our Saviour and his apostles did without scruple acknowledge the high-priest and sanhedrim of the Jews in their time, though from the days of the Maccabees there had been great interruptions and breaches in the due succession of their priests, and before Christ came, and all his time, the Romans, as conquerors, disposed of the priesthood as they pleased, and made it annual and arbitrary, which God had appointed hereditary and unmovable.