The Church.

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Original Poetry.

For The Church.

THE REQUEST.

Lay me beneath the verdure of the green, the hallow'd ground,
Where lie the friends of youthful years all peacefully around;
Like faded flow'rs, of former days the beauty and the pride;—
Death cannot be a fearful sleep while resting at their side!

Lay me beneath the shadow of the broad, the waving trees,
Where from the hill the village Church o'erlooks the stormy seas,
While like a star above the main its gilded cross is seen
Still beaconing the mariner to shores of lovely green.

Lay me beneath the shadow of the spire and turrets tall,
The tow'r, whose silvery-sounding bell I heard in childhood call
The villagers to heav'nly pray'r—each lov'd, each friendly face—
Oh! is it not a sacred spot—a blest, a holy place!

It *is* a blest—a sacred spot!—long tost upon the wave—
How sweet to find beneath yon trees the Christian's tranquil grave,
Where never storm can trouble, in its visionless repose
The heart, that calmly slumbers on, forgetful of all woes!

Not mine—not mine, the marble, with its sculptur'd scroll o'er-head—
More fitly may the grassy turf bedeck my lowly bed;
There let the wild flow'r blossom, and haply o'er my grave
Some pious hand may bid the rose in short-liv'd beauty wave.

Meet emblem of the joys that once around my spirit twin'd,
Whose buds—alas! too briefly fair—were scatter'd on the wind;
Leaving no hope to cheer on earth, save that which points above,
And bids the weary wand'rer seek the home of heav'nly love.

In distant lands a stranger—I hasted to return,—
Again I cross'd of ocean the illimitable bourne;
Again I tread my native soil, my wayward wand'rings o'er,—
But where are they?—love's treasur'd ones must I behold no more!

I see but graves around me—the wind with hollow moan
Sighs o'er each green and grassy mound, each grey sepulchral stone;
Standing alone amid the tombs—the last of all my race—
I feel my earthly travel's done—this, this, my resting-place!

Then let me slumber on the couch where lie the lov'd of old,
This wearied heart can calmly sleep where kindred ones are cold;
Death can but bring me to the home where I would gladly be—
Body!—I give thee to the dust.—Soul!—mingle with the free!

J. H.

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

A SERMON *preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on Thursday, Sept.* 9, 1841, *at the primary Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, by the Rev.* A. N. BETHUNE, *Rector of Cobourg and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop.*

EPHESIANS ii. 20, 21.—"Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

When we contemplate the picture of the Church of God as represented to us in the text,—holy in its foundation, and required to be holy also in its perpetual and expansive growth,—how forcibly, my reverend brethren, must come home to our hearts the charge addressed by St. Paul to the elders of the Church convened at Miletus; "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood!" And in that assemblage of the Ephesian elders, and St. Paul addressing to them his paternal counsels, how impressively is there realized to us the joyous and refreshing scene of to-day,—the elders of this portion of the Church militant gathered for a similar purpose here! Differences of time and circumstances will convey some corresponding diversity to the details, if they do not to the essentials, of Christian custom. The elders at Miletus were assembled probably in some "upper chamber," perhaps upon the sea-shore, to hear the last instructions of St. Paul and receive his parting blessing: we are gathered in a noble temple, specially consecrated to the service of God, and re-erected, as we are all aware, under circumstances of peculiar trial, with a promptness and munificence highly creditable to the Christian spirit of those who are accustomed to worship within its walls. But whether we assemble in the humble edifice, casually furnished by individual good-will, or are gathered in the stately cathedral pile, the identity of the solemn ceremonial,—the identity, especially, of the offices of those who are engaged in it, is religiously preserved. "It is," says an excellent contemporary divine,* "the same Church, it is the same Episcopacy; but the identity is that of some majestic river with the quiet little stream in which it begins. It is the identity of the Thames rolling its full tide through the busy stir and the lavish magnificence of the great metropolis, with its remote and tranquil sources. The Church, that mighty river of God, exhibits scarcely less of contrast, when after the flow of eighteen centuries, we compare it with the holy springs in which it took its rise, and from which it still derives its purest and brightest waters."

But our assemblage here to-day, in conformity, as we perceive, even with Apostolic usage, receives much of additional interest and importance from the fact, that we have now, for the first time, met as the members of a distinct Diocese, with a spiritual Overseer specially appointed to this division of the Canadian Church. Upon the gratifying and auspicious circumstances which have given us that nearer and more endearing spiritual relationship to one whom we had long been wont to regard as a Father in our Israel,—gladly seeking his counsels and availing ourselves of his experience,—it is almost unnecessary, after the many expressions of our satisfaction and joy already publicly declared, that we should renew our congratulations; but with this branch of the Colonial Church presented to-day, in however circumscribed a degree, in its compactness and completeness before us,—the three orders of the ministry here assembled,—our Bishop, surrounded by his Presbyters and Deacons, prepared this day to communicate to us his paternal instructions and bestow upon us his paternal benediction,—we cannot but be alive to the interest of the scene, and appropriate with renewed consolation to our hearts the promise that there shall never here be "wanting a man to stand before the Lord for ever,"—that "never shall the gates of hell prevail against" the integrity and the holiness of the Church of the living God.

It is within the memory of some whom I have the gratification of addressing to-day, when five or six labourers only were all that were engaged in the cultivation of this immense portion of the vineyard of the Lord; and at the period, when just one and twenty years ago, the first Bishop of Quebec, upon this very spot, held his final Visitation of this portion of his Diocese, there were not more than fifteen resident clergymen to receive the Episcopal Charge. During this interval, in the face too of many discouragements and difficulties, the great increase which is testified in the present assemblage is a ground for fervent thankfulness and hope. If the spirits of the departed righteous should be permitted to revisit the scenes of their earthly toils and trials, how would it rejoice the heart of the first Overseer of the Canadian Diocese to observe the church-spire crowning and enlivening the features of what was a wild and lonely spot in those days when he pursued his route along the borders of this magnificent lake in a birch canoe,—reposing at night in a tent upon its shores, in some inlet where the forest stretched to its margin, and no sign of civilization was near; and how would it gladden the spirit of his apostolic successor to perceive, in many of those places where once, as he pursued his way, he startled perhaps the deer from his retreat,—to perceive there, where he was accustomed to deliver the Gospel message to a few hearers gathered with difficulty together, the sacred edifice erected and the faithful pastor pursuing his daily ministrations! And I am sure, my brethren, that I can rely upon your heartiest concurrence in the prayer that our own revered Diocesan, whose presence amongst us is so gratifying an incident to-day, may be spared to see a similar multiplication of the fruits of his zealous labours; that before it shall please God, in his wisdom, to cause him to exchange the earthly mitre for the heavenly crown, he may be permitted to witness an augmentation of churches and an increase of clergy, equally refreshing and rejoicing to the heart.

Nor, in contemplating with thankfulness the gratifying progress of this branch of the Colonial Church, should we withhold our congratulations upon the equally bright prospects of the sister Diocese in this Province. Long possessing with them the same superintending Head, we are necessarily linked to them in bonds of more than ordinary sympathy and affection; and our feelings of regard and attachment will be quickened from the recollection that the Overseer of that Diocese is the same pious and distinguished individual from whom, three years ago, we were assembled here to receive the Episcopal Charge. Our interests, indeed, are one, not less from identity of government and belief,—every where a bond of union to those who maintain the genuine principles of the Church of Christ,—than from local association and contiguity. We shall feel therefore, mutually I trust, a growing and unalterable interest in the welfare of each other, and be able to adapt, interchangeably, to our feelings under joy or sorrow, the injunction of the Apostle, to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep."

Such, my reverend brethren, has hitherto been the growing strength and efficiency of our Zion; and are we allowed to doubt the fulfilment of a promise, as applicable to the future, which has been so faithfully realized in the events of the past? No—we cannot distrust the continued blessing of our God, if we are but true to our vows and faithful to Him: "the city of our solemnities," the fair structure of the visible Church will, we believe, in every future age, provoke more of the wonder of her foes and the joy of her children, as they "walk about, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces."

It is useless, however, to disguise from ourselves the obstacles which, humanly speaking, are presented to these hopes: it is well, indeed, that we should foresee and provide against them, that dismay may not overtake us in the hour of experienced trial, but rather that we may be nerved for greater vigour of exertion, and wait, with no relaxation of the patient struggle, for the departure of the darkest and stormiest day that may overcloud our prospects. We must not withhold from ourselves the painful consequences of the fact that, in contemplating the future prospects of the Church in both sections of this Province, we have not to rest, as we had hoped, upon the produce of a patrimony which we had ever believed to be exclusively our own. High authority has decided that we had, in some degree, erred in our conceptions of this right; and it is not for us to controvert the justice of their decision. While we abide patiently and contentedly by the issue, we shall regard the deprivation we have experienced as one of the chastisements which Almighty God, from time to time, is pleased to send upon his Church,—whether, to adopt the familiar words of a very interesting portion of our ritual, it be to "try our patience for the example of others, and that our faith may be found in the day of the Lord laudable, glorious, and honourable, or else to correct and amend in us whatsoever doth offend the eyes of our heavenly Father." Be this as it may, it will be received with submission, and it will, we trust, excite in every member of our communion an anxious and hearty effort, to supply, by individual bounty, what we have lost of our public heritage.

But no comparative weakness of our external condition, no discouragements under which we can labour, no desertions of friends nor persecutions of enemies, can militate against the real and internal strength of our cause. The opposition of the envious, or the clamours of the thoughtless can never affect the validity of our title to be regarded as the true Church of Christ, nor diminish in ourselves the obligation, both as to Evangelical truth and Apostolic order, "earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." And we shall contemplate the opposition to our legitimate claims with the less concern, from knowing that, to a great extent, it is purely the result of contingent circumstances, wholly independent of the actual merits of the case. The very individuals, in many instances, who are loudest in their condemnation of what they term the arrogant pretensions of the Church, are the descendants of persons born, and nurtured in, and who would gladly have died for her communion. But from the absence of all the means of grace under a rightly constituted ministry, many of the children of these once vigorous advocates of the principles of the Church, grew up without baptism, without catechetical instruction, without the means of participating in her worship or her ordinances. The result is natural, and to be deplored rather than wondered at. They were lured, and they gradually attached themselves, to any mode of desultory and irregular religious teaching which chanced to be within their reach; and in the absence of a valid ministry and a rightly constituted Church, they soon learned to overlook the importance of ascertaining whether *they* were commissioned hands which administered the Sacraments of the Lord, and whether they who "exhorted and rebuked with all authority," could exhibit the credentials of a valid and apostolical appointment to the charge. Familiarity would soon reconcile to the most repulsive features of this irregularity; and the forms and ceremonials of a visible Church would be, in many cases, maintained, not even with this recognition of the principle of sacerdotal order and succession expressed by Micah of old, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a *Levite* to my priest."*

The long absence, or the inefficient supply, of a regular ministry would necessarily increase this evil, as familiarizing the religious portion of the population with irregularity, and, from the mere force of custom, giving a sanction to the principle of dissent. But if a neglect, or parsimony, in quarters beyond our control, has caused the spread of these erroneous opinions, and created a state of things inconsistent with the position of the Church of Christ as originally constituted, it does not,—whatever may have been the cause, or however extended may be the baneful effects,—diminish the reality of the error, not even if the whole population should apostatize from her communion. We should be just as correct in giving our sanction, upon those grounds, to such a departure from primitive truth and order, as Moses would have been in falling in with the idolatry of his countrymen, because they *all*, even with Aaron at their head, committed the grievous sin of worshipping a golden calf instead of the living and true God. We are not, therefore, to shut our eyes to a misfortune, if we may not denominate it a sin of the times, in believing that the principle of dissent is right in proportion to the breadth of the surface which it covers, or the root which it has been permitted to take. It is as much an exotic and a tare when covering the land with its shadow, as when it was diminutive and unnoticed as the grain of mustard-seed; and it is internally and essentially as erroneous, even as the established faith of a nation, as when shamed into some obscure corner, the contempt or abhorrence of the rightly-judging and the sober-minded.

This view of the case, my brethren, would enable us better to discriminate between a false and a true liberality: we are accountable for all our talents and gifts,—for our means of judging as well as our means of action; and however men may applaud a course which flatters the spirit of human pride and independence, we shall have to account for our adoption or approbation of it, if it is found to be in opposition to the revealed direction of heaven.—The Church, with a firm rejection of the "many inventions" of men in its constitution and operation, must be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," or it is not the edifice which God will recognize, or in which He can be expected to vouchsafe his presence. With these divine and apostolic founders of the Church there must be a positive connection and a perfect agreement in those who now direct the spiritual combat on the highest pinnacle, or hold the standard upon the furthest battlement of Zion: the connexion, in short, must be positive and continuous betwixt the Apostolic holders of the sacerdotal commission, and those who have now the oversight in the Church of God. It is not enough that members of the great "household of faith" shall be able to point to many a fabric of fair proportions, each exhibiting the outward features of the temple of truth: these, in their separation, and apart especially from the appointed foundation, must be regarded as rival structures, —the materials of their composition at the best torn from, and marring the uniformity of the one great edifice in which the Church of God was designed to be comprised. This Church, I repeat, was obviously designed to be one and an indivisible fabric, not a scattered and disjointed mass of materials, heaped up by unauthorised artificers, without consolidation or proportion; and the best, nay, the only test of this unity, is an uniformity of government and order as well as of faith; and the only guarantee of an uniformity of government is in the principle, now happily better understood, of the APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION. If we abandon that principle, we reject the only source of a supply of valid ministers of the Church of God; we cast away the only safeguard against its distractions, and, as far as man is concerned, its destruction. We must not therefore, my brethren, be frighted by the unmeaning sounds of a popular clamour from adhering to the truth, or from defending the right: the ignorance of others can never be a justification to ourselves to cast away the benefits of our knowledge; nor will the objection which prejudice not less than blindness begets, diminish our responsibility, or lessen our punishment, if we abandon tenets and surrender principles which the Scriptures lay down and our own consciences approve.

To this reverend and learned audience,—amongst whom I recognize many fathers and brethren at whose feet I should gladly sit to receive instruction,—it would be a supererogatory work to bring forward all the facts and arguments, by which to shew that the Church to which we belong is framed according to the model and built upon the foundation which God himself has revealed. Of one point, in the progress of such an argument, we ought never to lose sight,—that the system of Episcopacy, as now maintained, is but a continuation of what was originally established, under the Mosaic dispensation, by the direct appointment of the Most High. In the touching words of a contemporary writer,* we may assert of the great features of that economy, "the notes of that golden harp were not struck to die upon the breezes of Judea, nor its last sighs breathed 'beside the waters of Babylon' to expire among 'the willows,' and be heard no more;" and in the language of another, a shining light in his day, "the two moieties of the people of God, the one before, the other after the redemption performed by Christ, may both be rightly, and most aptly named, the CHURCH OF GOD,"† The three orders existing then have their correspondence in the three orders existing now; and we should not, indeed, conceive it possible that the Apostles of the Lord Jesus would, without a special command, have departed from that model of ecclesiastical polity: the very fact of the existence of the coincidence in the primitive Church would seem to prove the *motive* of its retention. In the words of the excellent Jones of Nayland, "the wisdom of God is here very evident in appointing the orders of the Christian ministry after the pattern of the Jewish Church, which was of his own appointment so long before. That there might be no uncertainty in a case of such consequence to the souls of men, there was no novelty, but a continuation of the like administration with that which had all along been known and acknowledged in the Church."

This coincidence, my brethren, is an argument of immense weight in the advocacy of our Episcopal form of Church polity; and in relation to the direct evidences of its divine and apostolic origin, it might be sufficient to repeat the challenge of the learned and judicious HOOKER, to shew "where there was one Church upon the face of the whole earth that was not ordered by Episcopal regiment, sithence the time that the blessed Apostles were here conversant." And we may add with the able and pious Bishop HALL, whose treatise upon Episcopacy must ever remain an unrefuted and unanswered work, "There is none of you, I hope, can be so witless as to question these diversities of ministries. Did they ever read histories that doubt of this point? Sure they have never so much as seen them. Turn over all the monuments of times and places, so far as ever Christendom hath spread itself, you shall find nothing more evident.—I will not here stand to abridge the annals of all nations and regions. Look upon the Councils, and first of all, the first and chief of those which are styled general,—the great Council of Nice. You shall there see three hundred and eighteen bishops; so many as Abraham had soldiers in the victory over the kings, as Ambrose wittily alludeth. But perhaps they were then but newly instituted, newly received in the Church: no such matter: those fathers profess it to be τα αρχαια εθη, *the ancient guise*, 'that the Bishop of Alexandria should be over Egypt, Libya, Pentapolis, as the Bishop of Rome was over his suburbicary Churches.' Do but hear Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, an old man of above threescore, solemnly protesting that he succeeded his grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, for seven successive generations, in the same episcopal chair. Hear but Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, Dorotheus, Eusebius, describing and recording the Bishops of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rome, in the undoubted order of their successions, not only by their numbers, but by their names also. Certainly, never day looked forth since the age of the Apostles, wherein the spouse of Christ wanted the attendance of these bridemen. But why do I urge this? The sun is in heaven and shines there. Even Jerome himself, though but a presbyter, and a stout champion of his own order, yet deduceth this difference of degrees from the cradle of the first schism, from the common decree of the first Church, from tradition Apostolical."

Rather than descend to minuteness of authority, or to long extended argument, I shall adduce the masterly and concentrated reasoning upon this point of the learned Chillingworth; which, although it may be familiar to many who hear me, may possibly be new to others, and, at all events, it will endure frequent repetition: "Seeing Episcopal government is confessedly so ancient and so catholic, (universal) it cannot with reason be denied to be apostolic. For so great a change, between presbyterial government and episcopal, could not possibly have prevailed all the world over in a little time. Had episcopal government been an aberration from, or corruption of, the government left in the churches by the Apostles, it had been very strange that it should have been received in any one church so suddenly, or that it should have prevailed in all for so many ages after. 'Had the churches erred, they would have *varied*: what, therefore, is one and the same amongst all, came not sure by error, but by tradition.' Thus Tertullian argues, very probably from the consent of the churches of his time, not long after the Apostles, and that is a matter of opinion much more subject to unobserved alteration. But that in the frame and substance of the necessary government of the church, a thing always in use and practice, there should be so sudden a change, as presently after the Apostles' times, and so universal as received in all churches, this is clearly *impossible*.

"For what universal cause can be assigned, or feigned, of this *universal* apostacy? You will not imagine that the Apostles, all or any of them, made a decree for this change when they were living; or left order for it, when they were dying? This were to grant the question,—to wit, that the Apostles being to leave the government of the churches themselves, and either seeing by experience, or foreseeing by the Spirit of God, the distractions and disorders which would arise from a multitude of equals, substituted episcopal government instead of their own.—General councils to make a law for a general change, for many ages there were none. There was no Christian Emperor, no coercive power over the church, to enforce it. Or if there had been any, we know no force was equal to the courage of the Christians of those times.—Their lives were then at command, (for they had not *then* learnt to *fight* for Christ,) but their obedience to any thing *against* the law was not to be commanded, (for they had perfectly learnt to *die* for him.) Therefore, there was no power then to command this change; or if there had been any, it had been in vain.

"What device then shall we study, or to what foundation shall we reduce this strange pretended alteration?—Can it enter into our hearts to think, that all the presbyters and other Christians then, being the apostles' scholars, could be generally ignorant of the will of Christ, touching the necessity of a presbyterial government? Or dare we venture to think them so strangely wicked all the world over, as, against knowledge and conscience, to conspire against it? Imagine that the spirit of Diotrephes had entered into some, or a great many, of the presbyters, and possessed them with an ambitious desire of a forbidden superiority, was it possible that they should attempt and achieve it at once, without any opposition or contradiction? And, besides, that the contagion of this ambition should spread itself and prevail, without stop or controul, nay, without any noise, or notice taken of it, through all the churches in the world; all the watchmen, in the mean time, being so fast asleep, and all the dogs so dumb, that not so much as one should open his mouth against it?

"But let us suppose (though it be a horrible untruth) that the presbyters and people *then* were not so good Christians as the presbyterians are *now*; that they were generally so negligent to retain the government of Christ's Church commanded by Christ, which we are now so zealous to restore; yet certainly we must not forget or deny that they were men as we are. And if we look upon them but as mere natural men, yet knowing by experience how hard a thing it is even for policy armed with power, by any attempts and contrivances, and in a long time, to gain upon the liberty of any *one* people; undoubtedly we shall never entertain so wild an imagination, as that, among all the Christian presbyters in the world, neither conscience of duty, nor love of liberty, nor averseness from pride and usurpation of others over them, should prevail so much with any one, as to oppose this pretended universal invasion of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the liberty of Christians.

"When I shall see, therefore, all the fables in the Metamorphosis acted, and prove stories; when I shall see all the democracies and aristocracies in the world lie down and sleep, and awake into monarchies, then will I begin to believe that the presbyterial government, having continued in the Church during the Apostles' times, should presently after (against the Apostles' doctrine and will, and the will of Christ) be whirled about like a scene in a mask, and transported into episcopacy. In the mean time, while these things remain incredible, and, in human reason, impossible, I hope I shall have leave to conclude thus:—

"Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church presently after the Apostles' times.

"Between the Apostles' times and this presently after, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration; and, therefore, there was no such alteration as is pretended.

"And therefore Episcopacy, being confessed to be so ancient and catholic, must be granted also to be apostolical."

These, my reverend brethren, I regard as irrefutable words; and if, with the conclusion to which they compel us, we adduce the fact that Churches planted by Apostolic hands, and subsequently isolated for many ages from the Christianized world,—strangers to Romish usurpation, and unacquainted with the workings of modern dissent,—that such Churches have exhibited the complete Episcopal system, is an additional proof of its divine and apostolical origin which it would be a mark of scepticism to resist. The Syrian Christians in the South of India, when discovered by the Portuguese in 1503, were found to have maintained the order and discipline of a regular Church under *Episcopal jurisdiction*; and to have enjoyed for 1300 years a succession of Bishops appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. The Abyssinian Church, which had been lost sight of during many centuries, manifested the same form of Episcopal Church government; and the ancient British Churches, in a great degree sequestered from the world, exhibited precisely the same system of ecclesiastical government from the introduction of Christianity about the year 63 to the middle of the sixth century, when St. Augustine visited the island by authority of the Bishop of Rome. The pretence, therefore, cannot be advanced, that it was the ambition of the Papal See which introduced this sameness of Church polity, as better preparing the minds of Christians for subjection to its usurpations.

It was asserted by one of the old Fathers that for the Gospel to have been propagated without the intervention of miracles were in itself a greater miracle than any which it records: we, my brethren, may take up the same sentiment, and say, that for the system of Episcopacy to have appeared at a confessedly early age throughout all Christendom, and that without any opposition that we can hear of, and to have continued for several centuries in detached communities of Christians holding no intercourse with each other, would, if it had not been planted and established by Apostolic hands, be a greater mystery to understand, a harder difficulty to solve, than any which metaphysician or schoolman has ever yet proposed for the entanglement and confusion of mankind.

But let me pause a moment to say that it is not enough simply to recognize the Apostolical constitution of Episcopacy, and to assert, as needful to the primitive form of the Church, the mere existence of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. A society of mere laymen might themselves adopt this form, and assume these names, and even the advocates of dissent might choose to shape their system to an external conformity with this model. But this alone will not suffice. Bishops only can consecrate Bishops, as well as Presbyters and Deacons; but Bishops, correctly speaking, *cannot* consecrate Bishops without a valid and continuous derivation of their authority from those who were Bishops or Apostles at the beginning. Unless thus derived, the authority must originally have come from those who had no commission, and therefore no power, to impart it. The doctrine of the Succession, then, becomes intimately and indispensably interwoven with the question of Episcopacy: the latter, without the former, becomes merely a name which any society may adopt—which any spiritual teachers may assume. The Apostles as "the foundation," and our Lord Jesus Christ as "the chief corner-stone," must be referred to as the beginning from which this official descent is traced.

And here, my brethren, in referring to the divine authority of Episcopacy, and the necessity of an Episcopal Succession to the identity, the visibility, the reality of the Christian Church, let us not be thought to advert to something of mere theory and show, which it may be quite regular to insist upon, but in the maintenance of which there is nothing of practical benefit involved. It must be almost needless to say, that what is divinely constituted,—what we believe to be so, and what we can prove to be so,—can never be resolved into a mere matter of theory or speculation; which it may be harmless and decent, but which there can be no obligation, to retain. The extension of such a principle would soon go to subvert every thing that is essential in Christian faith, as well as every thing that is hallowed and venerable in its order. But it is right to feel and to understand, that none of the Divine appointments in relation to the Church of God are without their practical benefit; and it needs but little contemplation of the obvious effects of Episcopal government,—but little inquiry into the advantages which history furnishes as appertaining to it, to be assured that there has been, in the case of its successive dispensers, a very special fulfilment of this Divine promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

St. Paul himself bore testimony to the importance of the Episcopal office, as affecting the well-being of the Church, when he said to Barnabas, "Let us go again, and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do;" and we read that when he proceeded upon this visitation throughout Syria and Cilicia, "the churches were *established in the faith and increased in numbers daily*." So important, indeed, in the early Church was this supervision deemed, that it came to be an established rule that where any Diocese became so large that its several Churches could not be visited *annually* by their Episcopal head, such Diocese should be divided. And it is a well known historical fact, that for the purpose of better working out the principles of the Reformation by increasing the means of a more frequent episcopal supervision, Archbishop Cranmer proposed, and actually obtained the royal approbation of a Bill to add twenty bishops to the English Establishment.

Where the Episcopal system has been rejected, we observe in most cases a rejection also of many of the essential tenets of Christianity. And Arius was no doubt sensible of its correcting influence upon his soul-destroying heresy, when he sought to take away what the Council of Carthage called the "three steps of the clergy." In the native country of Luther, a melancholy laxity of doctrinal opinion seems to have attended the abandonment of that principle which best ensures a vigilant supervision of faith and practice; and in the Genevan churches, which own as their founder the great reformer Calvin, who unhappily abjured, though he respected and admitted, the advantages of Episcopacy, Arianism is stated to have "taken full possession of the chairs and pulpits." "Our Quakers," says Jones of Nayland, "who *are farthest from the Church*, are totally departed from the truth of Christian doctrine; and many of those separate congregations, who were puritans and believers in the last age, are Socinians and infidels in this." Corresponding to this is the fact announced in a Dissenting publication that "out of 258 Presbyterian congregations in England, 235 were in the year 1832 Unitarian. In other words, of a body of between 2 and 300 Churches, originally orthodox, so large a portion as 11-12ths had lapsed into grievous and fatal error." And to state a converse fact, "although Unitarianism has prevailed to a great degree in the Eastern States of America, and particularly in Boston, and has swept away many orthodox bodies of Christians, it has not made its way into a single Episcopal congregation." Lord Herbert of Cherbury, an individual of infidel principles asserts (what there is so much co-inciding testimony to establish,) that the failure of the Reformation in France was chiefly owing to the anti-episcopal prejudices of those who were most warmly engaged in it. And we are scarcely allowed to doubt that it is the repudiation of this apostolic system which is producing the present distractions in the established Church of Scotland. Heartily then may we concur in this exhortation of a distinguished prelate, "And for you, my dearly beloved brethren, for Christ's sake, for your souls' sake, be exhorted to hold fast to this holy institution of your blessed Saviour, and his unerring apostles, and BLESS GOD FOR EPISCOPACY."‡

If, my brethren, we abandon that principle,—if we concede to inferior orders the right of ordaining,—if presbyters are brought to feel that they may lawfully lay hands upon others, where can we anticipate a termination of the divisions to which the assumption of that power would lead? What surety have we, if that principle be yielded, that every presbyter in a Diocese may not, in time, become the founder of an independent religious society? Or how shall we resist the conclusion that the irregularity tolerated in one, must be tolerated in all; that undue usurpation in the layman is not less culpable than in the presbyter or deacon; and that every individual member of the religious community is a Church within himself, and is competent to exercise for himself every priestly function? It is strange that a concession liberally made to the society of Christ, is invariably withheld from the mere secular community; that titles of honour and offices of responsibility, if assumed by individuals in the state without the proper authority, would expose to ridicule and in some cases to punishment. And yet with this principle constantly acted upon in the ordinary affairs of life, persons will treat as a thing of nought this caution of an inspired Apostle as respects the ministerial office, "No man taketh this honour to himself, except he be called of God as Aaron was."

Well did Hooker say, "Episcopal authority was ever in a manner sanctified unto the Church of Christ, by that little bitter experience which it first had of the pestilent evil of schism." And surely there is wisdom in what is thus expressed by St. Clement, a contemporary of the Apostles: "The Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that contention would arise concerning the Episcopate: for this cause, therefore, having received an accurate foreknowledge, they appointed those above mentioned, and have delivered an orderly rule of future succession, that when they died, other approved men might receive their ministry and office." This principle, we repeat, is necessary to the unity, the identity, the integrity of the Christian Church; and, to use the words of an excellent Divine, "as when the pillars are removed, the building must fall, and when the lamp or the candlestick is broken, the light will be extinct; so, if the Church be taken away, the truth falls along with it, as we have seen, and do see, in this country."†

But let us take care, my brethren, that while we enjoy and preserve this building of the Church of God fitly framed together, it be not rendered, through our own indifference and neglect, a mere showy and venerable pile, fair and attractive outwardly to the eye, but with silence in its apartments and desolation in its courts,—no glorious light within to animate the scene, no voice of praise to give it life and gladness, no appropriate holiness to do honour to the God in whose name it stands. That building, rightly constituted, resting on the true foundation, formed and finished after the Divine model, "groweth," as the Apostle assures us, "unto a holy temple in the Lord." If it be holy in its foundation, it is holy also as respects the precious deposit which is committed to it, and it should be holy in all its appointments, in all its ministering servants. A glance at the doctrinal tenets of which the Church is the accredited depositary, embraced in those noble summaries, her Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, will suffice to shew that, like the king's daughter, she is "all glorious within," while without, her pattern is in strict conformity to the revelations of the Most High. In all these formularies we see firmly and distinctly maintained the essential doctrine of the Trinity, of which, while schismatics have corrupted and denied it, the Church has been uniformly a faithful witness. There, too, is positively asserted the Divinity and the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, both vainly impugned by successive teachers of heresy. There, is taught the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, without which the doctrine of the Trinity, as revealed in Scripture, becomes a contradiction, and our own best consolations are struck away. There also, while we attach due value to the authentic voice of the primitive Church, as serving to illustrate, and, in certain doubtful points, to declare the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, we profess our belief that these "contain all things necessary for salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." In the articles of the Church, we oppose the principles of the Pelagian on the one hand and of the Perfectionist on the other, in maintaining the doctrine of Original Sin,—that not only is it "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam," but that this inherited depravity clings even to the regenerate; demanding, on our part, perpetual vigilance and a constant recourse to the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." And there, too, we have inculcated the crowning doctrine, the "mother-grace" of Christianity, Justification by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—rejecting the sentiment, wheresoever taught, that man's righteousness has any meritorious share in effecting our reconciliation to God, and directly asserting that good works are only acceptable to God,—that, in short, they only deserve the name of good works,—as they spring out of a true and lively faith.—If then, my reverend brethren, we are true to our Episcopal regimen; if we are true to our principles as ministering servants in the ransomed Church of the Lord, we must, without compromise, without reserve, "declare the counsel of God" as thus revealed. Nor is it enough to hold these truths, as a theory to which our understandings can subscribe; but they must be grafted in the heart, be the "speech with grace" which we are commanded to employ, and be visible in our lives.

For worse than vain will it be, if the accredited ambassadors of the Lord are merely the inanimate receptacles of these truths,—if they are not proved to be, both by their teaching and their example, the "lively oracles" of God. Worse than vain will it be, if we, my reverend brethren, "hold the truth in unrighteousness,"—if this superscription, traced not in letters but apparent in our lives, be not graven upon the badge of our ministry, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." It would be a grievous mockery of the words of our text, if, in contemplating the great "household of faith," the commissioned servants of the Lord should not be found to manifest that force of truth and power of godliness which realizes the society of the Church to be a "holy temple in the Lord." We are all of us, it is true, infirm beings; as an inspired Apostle declared, "men of like passions with others;" but more is the need of watchfulness and prayer and struggle,—more should we labour and "study to shew ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed." And feeble must our faith be, if we doubt the blessing of God upon these strivings and these prayers. "As we trace the various links in that golden chain," whereby, to use the words of a son of the excellent Wilberforce, "those who have ordained us are joined unto Christ's own Apostles, let the eye of faith be fixed upon him on whom it all depends; who as the Father sent him, so sent his own Apostles; and thus, even when the sense of *personal* unworthiness is deepest, we may be strong in the cheering consideration of our *deputed* strength; yea, 'we may thank God himself who hath counted us faithful, putting us into the ministry.'"

But I need not, myself a weak disciple and an humble labourer, reiterate the "word of exhortation:" my long trespass upon your time and attention warns me to a close; and I shall conclude my feeble exhortations in the words of a prelate,‡ whose memory must be precious to the Church as long as the promise of our Lord's protection to her shall last:—

"We divines are pleiades, as Gregory saith; let us therefore shine still together, though not without some difference of place. In a pomegranate are many grains under one rind: you know the mystery; let us join these pomegranates to our bells; let us be loud, but consorted; let us devote for ever, with one mind, with one heart, all

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* Rev. Dr. Hinds.

* Judges xvii. 13.

* Rev. Derwent Coleridge.

† Rev. Dr. Field.

* Bishop Hall.

† Jones of Nayland.

‡ Bishop Hall, Sermon before the Convocation in 1628.