

asserted in the Westminster Confession (XXX. sec. 1)—“The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate”—I proceed to speak of the points of divergence which gives to Presbyterianism its peculiar character. These are two, as affecting the rank or gradation of the church officers or governors, and the unity of the governed. By the one point, Presbyterians, giving to the New Testament presbyter or elder a different place from the Episcopalians, set aside that system; by the other, binding the whole church under the government of presbyters, they go beyond Congregationalism or Independency.

PRESBYTERIANISM AND EPISCOPACY.

Let me *first* touch on and endeavour scripturally to prove the assertions of Presbyterianism as against Episcopacy. Presbytery agrees with Episcopacy in having a teaching ministry, and that a teaching ministry which also rules. But it differs in having elders of the people ordained with equal powers to rule without teaching, and in placing all its church rulers on the same footing of rank or dignity. It does not need to be proved to Episcopalians that the ministers who teach the church should also rule it. What is to be proved is, *first*, that there are other office-bearers associated with the teachers also empowered to rule; and, *secondly*, that no gradation among the rulers of the church exists in the New Testament.

1. *The first distinctive principle*, then, of Presbyterianism at this point is the authority of other elders to rule along with teachers. This is not altogether confined, especially in later times, to Presbyterian churches. In the United States, in the Colonies of Great Britain, and in the now separately-governed church of Ireland, there are commissioners from the laity (so called) who rule in Episcopal Synods; and to a large extent the great Methodist body, which is hardly formally Presbyterian, has arrived at the same conclusion of blended government by teachers and lay representatives. But this principle is still more characteristic of Presbyterianism which from the first has incorporated it with its constitution, and by formal ordination—generally for life—of merely ruling elders to the spiritual oversight of the church, along with its teachers, has borne a great witness to the universal priesthood of believers, and to the variety of gifts in the church of Christ. The presence of ruling elders, chosen by the Christian people, in all public administration, their parity in rule with all other presbyters, and their investiture with every spiritual function short of labouring in the Word and doctrine—gives to Presbyterianism a broad basis in Christian sympathy, and meets a want universally confessed, though sometimes otherwise supplied, in the church of Christ. Nor is this mere human adaptation or expediency. It is believed that for this we have Divine warrant—in Rom. xii. 5, “He that ruleth” is distinguished from “him that teacheth;” in 1 Cor. xii. 28, “governments” are discriminated from “teachers;” and to these more obscure notices there is added the more definite regulation in 1 Tim. v. 17, which the great body of Presbyterians have regarded as clearly separating one class of elders from another, but with equal power to rule—“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine.” Every attempt to evade the