

opinion that these "faithful men" were not of an order superior to presbyters: if so, their successors are not scripturally of an order superior to presbyters.

"Q. May any one undertake the duties of the Christian Ministry without such authority?"

"A. No. 'No man taketh to himself this honour, but he (only holds it) that is called of God, as was Aaron.' (Heb. v. 4.)

This verse is quoted in proof that no persons should undertake the office of the ministry without the authority of bishops: if this can be really substantiated, then the ministry not so undertaken, is essentially invalidated. The meaning of the verse should, therefore, be well understood, as such important consequences are involved in its present construction.

If it be considered as referring to the Christian ministry, all it requires is a call thereto from God, and consequently that none are true ministers but those who receive this call. This has nothing to do with the authority of bishops, and its quotation is not in point.

But some commentators are of opinion that this verse does not refer to the Christian ministry, among whom is DR. ADAM CLARKE, a "man of deep research," and of various "learning." His comment is as follows;—

"But he that was called of God, as was Aaron.] God himself appointed the tribe and family, out of which the high-priest was to be taken: and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high-priesthood. As God alone had the right to appoint his own priest for the Jewish nation, and man had no authority here; so God alone could provide and appoint a High-Priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people; Christ for all mankind.

"Some make this an argument for the *uninterrupted succession of popes and their bishops* in the church; who alone have the authority to ordain for the sacerdotal office; and whosoever is not thus appointed, is with them illegitimate." It is idle to employ time in proving that there is no such thing as an *uninterrupted succession* of this kind: it does not exist: it never did exist: It is a *silly fable, invented by ecclesiastical tyrants, and supported by clerical coxcombs*. But were it even true, it has nothing to do with the text. It speaks merely of the appointment of a high-priest, the succession to be preserved in the tribe of Levi, and in the family of Aaron. But even this succession was *interrupted and broken*, and the office itself was to cease on the coming of Christ, *after whom* there could be no high-priest; nor can Christ have any successor: and therefore he is said to be a *Priest forever*; for he ever liveth the Intercessor and Sacrifice for mankind. The verse therefore, has nothing to do with the *clerical office*; with *preaching God's holy word, or administering the sacraments*; and those who quote it in this way, show how little they understand the Scriptures, and how ignorant they are of the nature of their own office."

"Q. Is an inward call to the Ministry sufficient without the outward ordination?"

"A. No. Aaron was called of God; but he was publicly ordained by Moses."

The "ordination" or *setting apart* to the sacred office is not peculiar to the Church of England: it is observed by all other orthodox Christian churches. To say that none are inwardly called but those who are "ordained" by bishops of the Establishment, is to "limit the Holy One of Israel," and contradict his known mode of procedure. The question implies that there may be an *inward call* of God to the ministry where there is not an *outward ordination* by the Church of England. What then in this case is to be done? Shall the person so situated obey man rather than God? Is the authority of "Bishops" superior to that of the Deity? And is their refusal to "ordain" a sufficient reason to induce the individual "called of God" to "hold his peace," and "preach not the Gospel?" Surely not. The truth seems to be this—If God has *really* called a person to give himself up exclusively to the work of the ministry, divine providence will open his way to his being properly set apart for this work by qualified ministers in some part of the Christian Church: otherwise, third parties may defeat the divine purposes. The converse, however, of the catechism is true,—"*The outward ordination*," even by Bishops, is absolutely worth nothing, without "an inward call" from God. The latter is essentially necessary to the constituting of a valid and scriptural ministry, but ordination by *Bishops* is not at all essential. A valid scriptural ministry *can, and does* subsist without it.

"Q. May not persons think themselves called of God, when they are not so called?"

"A. Yes. St. John says, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets,' (that is, false teachers,) are gone out into the world.'" 1 John iv. 1.)

That persons may think themselves called of God to the ministry when they are not so called, is a general truth to which we yield assent, though we are far from thinking the text applicable which is here quoted to prove it. Before it can apply, it must be first proved that these "false prophets," thought themselves "called of God." For aught we know with certainty to the contrary, they might have derided the idea of an inward call and entered into the "priest's office" for the "loaves and fishes."

As, however, some may really think themselves called of God when they are not, we would ask, By what peculiar means candidates for ordination in the Established Church are rendered *infallible* on this subject? Why may not they be deceived as well as others? Is there a *miracle* wrought in their behalf to preserve them from self-deception? And can each and every one of those who have received an "outward ordination" abide the text of our Lord,—"*Ye shall know them by their fruits*?"

"Q. Did not St. Paul enjoin Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, to be cautious whom he ordained to his Ministry?"