

THE
AUTHORITY,

&c.

*General Reflections on Church Government*¹.

1. IT appears, from various declarations of our Saviour and his apostles, that the Christian Church will never cease to exist in the world. We may, therefore, fairly conclude, that the directions which are given in Holy Writ for the formation of the Church in the time of the apostles, are to be applied to the same society in all ages; allowance being made for the cessation of those miraculous powers which were granted to the first Christians, and for the unavoidable disturbance to which the regular order of the Church may be exposed in times of persecution. What the inspired apostles considered as important in the formation of the Church, ought not to be considered by us as of little import. The Church must be formed after some model; and we have no authority to deviate from that model which inspiration dictated, unless it be in such things as are, by a change of circumstances, rendered impracticable. It is not a sufficient objection to say,—the apostles did not *declare*, that this order was to be perpetual. Such a declaration was unnecessary. A

¹ Written about the year 1789.