

EPISCOPACY.

PROOF FROM SACRED HISTORY THAT THE DIVINELY INSTITUTED APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION CONTINUED AND INCREASED IN EFFICIENCY DURING THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.*

Soon after our blessed Lord's ascension, Matthias was chosen in the room of Judas at the instance of the apostle Peter. (Acts 1.) Within two years after that event, Saul of Tarsus was converted and commissioned by the Saviour to bear his name "before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." St. Paul asserts that he was not behind the very chief-est of the apostles. Like them he was an ambassador for God. (2 Cor. v. 20.) Like them he proclaimed the terms of reconciliation and pardon to guilty men. He baptized (1 Cor. 16:). He excommunicated (Tim. i. 20:). He shewed forth the Lord's death in the Eucharist (1 Cor. xi. 23:). He ruled the people whom he had converted (see his epistles;) and lastly he appointed persons to assist him in the performance of his momentous duties. (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Tim i. 3; Tit 1. 5.

Soon afterwards we find Barnabas associated with St Paul, and travelling with him throughout Asia Minor—Barnabas is represented as performing the same offices with his coadjutor, such as preaching (Acts xii 5:). confirming the churches (xiv. 22:). ordaining elders in the churches which had been founded. Like St. Paul, Barnabas is also invested with the title of an apostle. (Acts xiv 4, 14.)

Silas is mentioned in Acts xv. 22, as "chief man among the brethren." We find him travelling through Asia Minor with St. Paul, and exercising the same authority with that apostle and Barnabas.—Like Barnabas also he is described in Scripture as an apostle. St. Paul writes (1 Thess. ii. 6. comp. with i. 1) "We [i. e. Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus] might have been burdensome as the Apostles of Christ."

A similar charge was committed to Titus. Let his powers in the island of Crete be considered.—To him are specified the qualifications of the inferior clergy [Tit. i. 6.] His credential from St. Paul is "for this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting and ordain Elders in every city as I had appointed thee." [Tit. i. 5:] and again "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject" [iii. 10]—The government of the church, including the powers of ordination and excommunication, is committed to Titus personally. Titus was also an apostle in name as well as fact. St. Paul speaking of him says, [2 Cor. viii. 23] "Whether any do inquire of Titus he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you, or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers [literally the *apostles*] of the Churches, and the glory of Christ."

Epaphroditus is also to be included in the same high rank. Although little is known of his history, yet the strong expressions used by St. Paul in regard to him, shew that he is to be classed with Barnabas, Silas, and Titus. "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and companion in labour and fellow-soldier, but your messenger [literally *apostle*] and he that ministered to my wants." [Phil ii. 25.]

Andronicus and Junia [or Junias] Rom xvi. 7 are to be added to the number. The apostle thus respectfully alludes to them: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the *Apostles*; who also were in Christ before me."

Another striking instance is that of Timothy. One of the churches established by St. Paul was that of Ephesus. Having remained in charge of it more than three years, he discovered the utmost anxiety for its prosperity on his departure. [Acts xx. 25.] In this state of feeling he appointed his companion Timothy to the flock and to superintend its spiritual interests. [1 Tim i. 3.] In his first Epistle to this admirable man, it is plainly implied that Timothy was an apostle in fact. He was a steward in the house of God [iii. 15:] He authoritatively declared the terms of pardon and salvation [2 iv. 5:] He ruled all ranks of Christians, servants and masters,

[chap. vi.] young women and elder women, chap. v.] young men and elders, [ib.] deacons and the wives of deacons, bishops [that is elders, presbyters, or priests] and their families [ch. iii.] and finally he had power to commit the teaching of the truth "to faithful men who should be able to teach others also."

[2 Tim. ii. 2.] Timothy also bore the name of an apostle. This is applied to him by St. Paul in the text quoted above, in common with himself and Silas or Silvanus: "We [i. e. Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus] might have been burdensome as the *apostles* of Christ." [1 Thess. ii. 6.—i. 1.]

Thus we have a distinct mention in Scripture of at least nine apostles in addition to the eleven immediately commissioned by our Saviour. That there were many more is obvious from two passages [2 Cor xi. 12 and Rev. ii. 2] in which *false apostles* are mentioned. These could not have been, nor could they have pretended to be, any of the original eleven, or of the nine whose names are given above. Their assuming the title of Apostles proves therefore that there were enough of others who had this title to make their pretended claim to it plausible. And those others must have been, ordained not by Christ; but by men who had his commission.

The last evidence on the subject which we shall adduce from Scripture is derived from the epistles dictated by our Saviour to the seven Churches of Asia, and found in the second and third chapters of Revelation. We learn from these remarkable passages that although at least one of these Churches contained at the time in question many members and ministers, one person alone was regarded as the head of each, and was held responsible for the conduct of those committed to his charge. Each of these responsible heads is denominated an "Angel" a term signifying messenger, and almost synonymous with the word "Apostle." In one of these churches, viz that of Ephesus, there were many Christians and elders at the time when Paul bade them farewell; that is soon after the year 60. Timothy as we have seen was placed in charge of elders, deacons, and people, with authority to rule the whole Church.—

In the year 96, when the book of Revelation was written, and when the Church of Ephesus had doubtless greatly increased, we still find that the "angel" possessed the same supreme and apostolical power which Timothy had exercised in the year 65. "Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write: I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." In each of the remaining six epistles, the "angels" are held accountable for the spiritual condition of their several churches, and are blamed or commended individually for their respective merits.—This agrees precisely with the tenor of the charge committed to the eleven by Christ, and discharged by them in common with Matthias, Barnabas, and Paul, Silas and Timothy, Titus and Epaphroditus, Junias and Andronicus.

As long then as the Scriptural history of the Church continues, that is during the first century, we find the succession of apostles continuing, and their number increasing. We find also that, including the seven angels and the traitor Judas, no less than *twenty-eight apostles* are mentioned in Holy Writ. These Apostles are not distinguished from other ministers by their miraculous powers, for even the Deacons Philip and Stephen [Acts vi. 8—vii. 6] are represented as working many miracles. Nor are they peculiarly distinguished as the writers of the Christian Scriptures, for Luke and Mark, the authors of a large and interesting portion of the New Testament are not mentioned as apostles. But all of the apostles who are particularly noticed are described as alone governing all classes of the people of God, and judging the tribes of the spiritual Israel. None but Apostles are recorded as ordaining to any permanent office in the ministry: and from them alone the elders [or priests] and deacons are represented as deriving their appointments to feed the flock of God, to baptize, to celebrate the eucharist, or to excommunicate. They alone admit to apostolical authority coadjutors like Timothy and Titus with power to perpetuate the sacred succession. In short, apostles alone are the sources of all go-

vernment, under Christ, and of every ministerial office among Christian people. If it could be shewn that the Apostolical succession has been lost or interrupted, it would also follow that the ministry has become extinct, and that no authority remains on earth to beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.—To be concluded in our next number.

THE FOUNDERS OF DISSENT.*

Upon the cruel persecution raised against the Protestants, under Queen Mary, among great numbers who fled the kingdom to seek for shelter, several went and resided at Geneva, which is a commonwealth governed without a king, and where the religion, contrived by Calvin, is without the order of Bishops. When the Protestant faith was restored by Queen Elizabeth, those who fled to Geneva returned among the rest home to England, and were grown so fond of the government and religion of the place they had left, that they used all possible endeavours to introduce both into their own country; at the same time continually preaching and railing against ceremonies and distinct habits of the clergy, taxing whatever they disliked as a remnant of popery, and continued extremely troublesome to the Church and State under that great queen, as well as her successor King James I. These people called themselves Puritans, as pretending to a purer faith than those of the Church established. And these were the founders of our dissenters. They did not think it sufficient to leave all the errors of Popery, but threw off many laudable and edifying institutions of the Primitive Church, and, at last, even the government of Bishops; which, having been ordained by the Apostles themselves, had continued without interruption, in all Christian Churches, for above 1600 years. And all this they did, not because those things were evil, but because they were kept by the Papists. From thence they proceeded, by degrees, to quarrel with the kingly government; because, as I have already said, the city of Geneva, to which their fathers had flown for refuge, was a commonwealth, or government of the people.

Those wicked Puritans began, in Queen Elizabeth's time, to quarrel only with surplices and other habits with the ring in matrimony, the cross in baptism, and the like; thence they went on to further matters of higher importance; and, at last, they must needs have the whole government of the Church dissolved. This great work they compassed, first by depriving the bishops of their seats in parliament; then they abolished the whole order; and, at last, which was their original design, they seized on all the church lands, and divided the spoil among themselves; and, like Jeroboam, made priests of the very dregs of the people. This was their way of reforming the Church. As to the civil government, you have already heard how they modelled it upon the murder of their King, and discarding the nobility. Yet, clearly to shew what a Babel they had built, after twelve years trial and twenty several sorts of government, the nation grown weary of their tyranny, was forced to call in the son of him whose life those reformers had sacrificed.—And thus were Simeon and Levi divided to Jacob, and scattered in Israel.

S O N N E T.

The young Communicant.

Hail young disciple,—thou whose early feet From the broad pathway of the world have fled, Who, listening to the Lord, with reverence meet Hast to his ritual bow'd thy lowly head,— How beautiful!—to heed the heavenly call Ere the full freshness of thy morning prime, Before the dark clouds threat, the mildews fall, Or o'er thy temples creep the frost of time: So, from each vile that lureth from the fold Still may thy chosen Shepherd hold thee free, And from all ill, till life's brief hour be told O sweet disciple, may He succour thee,— Till to that radiant clime, thy spirit soar Where storms shall shred the rose and toss the bark more.

*From Dean Swift's Sermon on the Martyrdom of King Charles I.

*From the Church.