

served by acting in agreement with what St. Paul here enjoins. And we do think, reasoning upon human principles, that is, keeping out of our consideration all reference to the Divine interposition for preserving the gospel from perishing among men, were St. Paul's precept to be totally neglected, the effect would be the extinction of religion. If this position, in its full extent, be well founded, or if well founded to any great extent, it ought most certainly to operate upon the minds of all, and more especially upon the minds of such as, from their situation have more or less influence upon those around them, and to lead them scrupulously not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.

It were well for a man to remember, that when he violates the laws of God in any instance, even though it be in failing to observe a positive appointment, his sin does not rest with, is not confined to himself; that it never fails to go beyond himself, and less or more to infect, if not finally to destroy others. True, at the great day of account every one shall be made responsible for what he himself shall be found to have done; but such is the intimate connection subsisting between one man and the men around him in this world, that, at that solemn day, many will perhaps find that the condemnatory sentence of the Supreme Judge shall not be based alone upon the evil that they have personally done, but also upon the evil of which they have been the occasion in others.

Let us be careful, then, to walk blameless in all the ordinances and commandments of God. In this lies our safety—in an opposite course our chief danger. Amen.

THE RISE OF THE PAPAL HIERARCHY. BY THE REV. ROBERT LEE, MINISTER OF CAMPSIE, SCOTLAND.
From the Church of Scotland Magazine.
(Continued from page 57.)

29. The causes hitherto adduced, affected the Episcopal order *generally*; we come now to those which tended to introduce an inequality of rank and authority among the bishops themselves. The circumstances which exalted metropolitans above bishops, exarchs and patriarchs above metropolitans, and finally, the pope above all, bear, it will be observed, a close resemblance to those by which the bishops had obtained a superiority over the Presbyters: nor can it be denied that our *certain knowledge* of the steps by which the *former* ascended to power and dignity, confirms, as much as any argument from analogy can, the ac-

count formerly given of the origin and progress of the Episcopal order.

30. The meeting of the church of Jerusalem, mentioned Acts xv, is by many authors considered as the first Christian council. A little attention, however, may convince us, that the assembly in question differed from the meetings afterwards called by that name, in every thing except its object, namely, the adjustment of controversies.

31. Concerning the origin of councils, there are two opinions. Some* imagine the idea to have been suggested by the meeting at Jerusalem, already noticed: to others,† it appears more probable, that the Greeks, among whom councils had their origin, imitated the confederacies of free states, which, from the earliest times had prevailed among that celebrated people.

32. That, during the apostolic age, the churches of Christ were bound to them only by unity of faith, and of spirit, and of teachers, is sufficiently apparent from the New Testament; and we have every reason to believe, that they continued so for a considerable period afterwards. All matters of internal concernment were conducted by the presbyterial court, or consistory; and though a practice of consulting, in cases of difficulty, those churches which had been founded by the apostles, very generally prevailed, yet the opinion of the latter might or might not be acted upon, as the consulting party thought proper.

33. Of synods or councils—the former being the Greek, the latter the Roman name for the meetings under consideration—we find not the slightest vestige before the middle of the second century. That at first the people had a voice in them, appears from the testimony of ancient writers, particularly of Eusebius and Cyprian. The former of these writers describing a council held at Antioch, in the former part of the third century, by which Paul of Samosata was condemned as a heretic, has preserved a superscription, which proves beyond dispute, that laymen were present and voted. Cyprian also mentions not only bishops, presbyters and deacons, but *Laici*, as participating in the decisions of two Synods, the one held at Rome, the other at Carthage; in which latter the re-admission into the church of those who had fallen off from the faith during the persecution under Decius, formed the principal subject of debate. The same causes, the most powerful of which, probably, was clerical ambition, which has diminished, or annihilated the power of the people, in the government of *single churches*, gradually excluded them from these more general consultations, till at last "councils" became *literally* "meetings of the clergy."

34. No sooner had the hint been suggested by the Greeks, than, either from caprice or from a conviction of their utility, synods became almost universal among Christians. The importance afterwards attached to them, the influence they exerted on the Christian world generally, and on the power of the hierarchy in particular, form a singular contrast with the obscurity and uncertainty of their origin.

35. As being under the same civil government, the churches, at first, of one province, met by their deputies, for the purposes of discussing, and of determining matters, which regarded their common interest, or which affected particular churches. The metropolis was naturally selected as the most convenient place of holding these meetings, in which the bishop of the capital *generally* presided. We say *generally*, because in several provinces, particularly those of Africa, (except Carthage,) the president of the synod was chosen, not on account of his see, but by seniority.

* Fra Paolo, "De Benef." who is followed by Campbell.

† Mosheim and others.

† Tertullian. De Jejuniis, c. xlii.