

# THE HARBINGER.

UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.—*St. Paul.*

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## FOR THE HARBINGER.

### HAVE THE APOSTLES SUCCESSORS?

This may appear a strange question, when there is so much noise about Apostolical succession, in the present day; but it is this very noise that makes the question proper and important.

The correct answer is *no*. The Apostles were called to their office by Christ, the head of the Church, as expressly as Aaron was called to his, and if they were to have successors, they would require to be called by Him too, and we would need to have some account of it, but where have we any such statement in the New Testament?

Does a man's getting some learning, and making a profession of religion, it may be hypocritical, and being appointed by a King or Queen to an office which has a large emolument, and little labour annexed to it, an office which he may make a sinecure of if he pleases; does this make that man a successor of the Apostles? It may indeed give him an opportunity if he choose, to be in some things, an imitator of one of the Apostles; but it can no more make him a successor of the Apostles, than it makes him a successor of Christ. In as far as men pretend to be successors of the Apostles, just so far they should possess their qualifications.

The Apostles, or rather the church, needs no such officers. When a governordies, (however well he may have performed his work,) there is need

NOTE.—Christ not only gives no hint of such a succession but the contrary, telling that the disciples should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and they are by their writings doing so, and will yet do so to a far greater extent, and for a longer period.

of a successor, for he can do nothing belonging to his former office after his death; when he dies as a man, he dies as a governor; not so the Apostles; they died as men, but live as Apostles, and are witnesses of Christ in their writings, and ten thousand successors, (however qualified,) could not perform the service to the Church that the Apostles are now performing.

As Christ lives as Head of His Church, and is according to his promise, with them till the end of the world, He needs no Vicar. So the Apostles are present in all the Churches, where the Scriptures are practically regarded, answering all questions, deciding all controversies, binding and loosing, &c.

When Israel of old, asked a king, God considered the request, as a virtual rejection of himself, and of his prophet Samuel. So when men now desire or believe in one, as vicar of Christ on earth, or in others as successors of the Apostles; they virtually nullify the Bible, and reject both Christ and his Apostles. It were well if more importance were attached to an Apostolic spirit, and character. But to pretend to Apostolical succession, when men do not possess their spirit, nor imitate their moral excellence, is most false, and ruinous as it is false.

But allowing that those who pretend to it, do prove their apostolic succession, what would it avail to such of them, as are without piety or to their hearers. Can vestments, or robes, or mitres, or pompous, or ridiculous ceremonies, more becoming the theatre than a place of worship, be an acceptable substitute for faith and love to God