

prominent and so frequently repeated by him, that they seemed more like a little lesson repeated over and over again by rote, than the result of deep research and serious consideration. Without going into the particulars of a somewhat desultory conversation, suffice it to say that the Committee, convinced that the assertion that prelatical or diocesan Bishops were the successors of the Apostles as superior officers in the church, lay at the root of the whole controversy, pointed out to Mr. Leach from Scripture the qualifications of the Apostles,—that they were immediately commissioned, and personally instructed by our Lord himself,—that they had seen the Lord after his resurrection, and could personally testify to the fact of the resurrection,—that the commission of each of them was universal and unlimited, “to all nations,” “all the world,”—that after the extraordinary out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, on the day of Pentecost, they were divinely inspired, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,—that they were endued with the power of working miracles and of speaking in tongues they had never learned,—that they had the gift of prophecy and foretold future events,—that they could discern the spirits, and detect the most hidden dissimulation and hypocrisy,—that they possessed the power of inflicting judgments on the opposers of the truth,—and that they were able to communicate the extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. In view of these qualifications of the Apostles, the Committee demanded of Mr. Leach the proofs that the Apostles had, or ever were to have, successors in the extraordinary part of their office, or otherwise than as ordinary Ministers of the Word; but not one proof could he give. More than that, no prelatist ever has been able, or ever will be able, to give such proofs. The whole matter is here concentrated to a single point; and until prelates can show “the signs of an apostle” “in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds,” let their unfounded claims to be “lords over God’s heritage” be put forth with less confidence.

With regard to both gentlemen holding the opinions charged against them in the libels, and there described as heretical and schismatical, the proof was at once direct and conclusive. A remark or two, however, may be made on the character and tendency of these opinions. They are clearly opposed to the teachings of Scripture; for there is not in the New Testament the slightest vestige of any such personage as a diocesan Bishop or Prelate,—the words Bishop or overseer, and Presbyter or Elder being there applied to the same individuals. And it has often been proved already, and can be proved again, that the Presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland, which is the great cause of offence with Prelatists, is founded upon the Word of God, and, consequently, possessing as she does, along with this mark, the evident tokens of God’s Holy Spirit, within all her borders, carrying on a work of grace in the souls of her members and people,—she is a church of Christ.