

*thropoi*) can be true ministers of Christ—the hands of ten thousand bishops can never make a *wicked* man a true minister of Jesus Christ or invest him with a sacred character. St. Paul's epistle to Titus casts light upon the order of the "faithful men" mentioned in Timothy. The office of Timothy and Titus was the same: to the former St. Paul writes, "The things that thou hast heard of me, &c. commit thou to faithful men," &c.: to the latter, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders*, (*presbuteros*, presbyters) in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, &c. For a bishop (*ton episkopou*) must be blameless," &c. (Titus i. 5, 7.) Now Timothy was not to set apart an order of men superior to *bishops*; but *presbyters* in Titus are called *bishops*, when their *ordination* is spoken of; therefore he was not to set apart an order of men superior to *presbyters*. The Apostle, therefore, in both places, is speaking only of the ordinary ministers of the Gospel, and there is not the slightest foundation in the New Testament to support the gratuitous assertion, that Timothy delivered the "same authority to other faithful men," which had been given to him by St. Paul.

There is a fallacy, also, in the very wording of the question and answer, calculated to deceive. As they stand we should be led to conceive, that the *Apostles generally* committed to their successors the "same authority which they received from Christ." But the passages quoted in way of proof, refer only to *St. Paul* in the case of *Timothy* and *Titus*. From a *particular* proposition to draw an *universal* inference, is a violation of a known principle of reasoning; and equally is it so to draw an argument from the conduct of *one* of the Apostles to the conduct of the *whole*. *Paul* did so, therefore, *all the rest* did so too!

Except Timothy and Titus, there is no proof from the sacred writings that any of the Apostles ever set apart to the ministry an order of men superior to presbyters; and these were superior only in their extraordinary character. Of the ordinations of the twelve, we believe no mention is made; and we have no unquestionable history of the course they pursued. The ordinations of St. Paul are generally mentioned: "When they [Paul, and Barnabas his companion] had ordained them *elders* (*presbuteros*) in every church," &c. Acts xiv. 23. But St. Paul calls presbyters *bishops*. (Acts xx. 17, 28.) Therefore, unless he ordained an order of men superior to bishops, he ordained none, as ordinary ministers, superior to presbyters. Will the advocates of the divine origin of prelacy favour us with one incontestible instance of the Apostles and Timothy and Titus ordaining a diocesan bishop—a person to an order superior to that of presbyters, and to have ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a number of presbyters and churches, and of their commanding such an order of persons to be preserved in the church in an uninterrupted succession, so that the absence of a person of this order from any particular church, is sufficient entirely to invalidate its claims to being a Christian church?

On 2 Tim. ii. 2, Dr. Macknight has the following note

"Eusebius, E. H. 1 8, c. 4, speaking of the churches founded by Paul and Peter, saith, 'But how many, and who, having become genuine imitators of these' [Apostles] 'were esteemed fit to feed the churches founded by them, it is not easy to say; unless it be such as any one may easily collect from the writings of Paul.' If in the days of Eusebius the succession of pastors in the churches founded by the Apostles was so uncertain, these successions must now be much more uncertain, considering the many ages which have elapsed since Eusebius wrote. Nevertheless, as in his time the authority of the ministry was not called in question, on account of the intrusions of pastors into particular churches without due warrant, so the authority of the ministry can as little be called in question now on that account, in regard it is *nowhere* promised in Scripture, that the succession of pastors in the church should be *uninterrupted*."

The true succession is the succession of the *faith*, *piety*, *devotedness to God*, *the Spirit's inward call*, which the Apostles possessed and manifested, and the being set apart to the work of the ministry by *pious*, *experienced* ministers of the church. Our Lord has brought before us the character and claims of ministers: but does he direct us to form our opinions of these from any real or supposed uninterrupted succession, or from the mere fact that they have had the hands of a certain order of men placed on their heads, who profess to have derived their *authority* for this purpose from an uninterrupted line of bishops? If this be the case, the claims of ministers would, as it regards the most of men, escape scrutiny; as very few are capable of conducting such an enquiry, and even those that are, would find insurmountable difficulties, a broken chain, ungodly bishops, and vain pretenders. Under these circumstances the Christian church could never obey the command of Christ and "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. vii. 15.) But our Lord places before us a species of trial within the reach of the most illiterate, and of very easy application. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." As assuredly therefore as "thorns" produce not "grapes," or "thistles" bear "figs," so assuredly an *ungodly* man is not a *true* "prophet," a *real* minister of Jesus Christ, though episcopally ordained. So on the other hand, as "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit," and "cannot bring forth evil fruit," so, every truly converted pious person, called of God, and set apart to the ministry by the pious "elders" of the church, though not episcopally ordained, is a *true* minister of Christ; and as such, God will honour him by giving him "*seals* to his ministry," and the enlightened, liberal, and pious part of the professedly Christian world will receive him. So much for the "uninterrupted succession!" (To be continued.)

ADVICE.—Take every day some serious turns with death. Think where you shall be a few days and nights hence. Happy he that knew what to-morrow meant for twenty years together! Believe it you will find it no little thing to die.—Rev. J. Alleine.