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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—ITS FOUNDATION AND STRUCTURE.

No. I. THE CHURCH.

What is the Christian Church? What its foundation? What the nature, manner, and order of its structure? These are important inquiries, at this age of the world; and as much so to the British public, as to any people. The *church*, is a *phrase* of undisputed consequence, in the conversation of politicians, on both sides of the water. It is in the mouths of lords, ministers, and commons—in the columns of court journals, and borough newspapers—in the pages of state papers, quarterlies, and volumes of history; and yet, from hearing and reading all these, one would sometimes be quite forcibly impressed with the conviction that “the church” was some aerial, invisible, ideal, irresponsible entity, which existed among men, but was not of men—to which all men, except the representatives of “the church,” are bound to pay shillings and homage. There are the church, the church of Scotland, the church of Rome, the Greek church; and from among these, it would not be a very easy task to select the “church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” But we are sometimes told that these are but several elements of the *visible* church, and that the *invisible*, or true church is the concentration, or *spiritual*, of these several elements. An *invisible* church may serve the purposes of politicians and worldlings, much better than it will serve serious and conscientious men, who expect to give an account to God of their sayings and doings in life; and who therefore, conceive that the primary business of the present life is, to lay a good foundation for the future—who realize that “it is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die.” Enough has been said to direct the mind of the reader to the present unhappy state of things.

Beyond all controversy, the Christian church is composed of the faithful men and women who keep the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the widest sense that can attach to “the church” as used in the sacred oracles—see Acts. xx: 28. Ephes. i. 22., iii. 10, Phil. iii: 6, Col. i: 18, 24, and kindred passages. The word church