

was his intention that it should always continue; for upwards of 50 years it remained in that position in England; but during his lifetime, i.e., in the year 1784, the societies in the United States, against his will, organized themselves into a body distinct from the Church, and assumed a pseudo-episcopal form of Church government under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States: on the death of Mr. Wesley in 1791, his followers in England separated from the Church. In Ireland, the societies were conducted according to his original design until 1816, when a large number of them followed the example of their English brethren and withdrew from the Church. There is still a small body in that country, which adheres to the original plan of Methodism, the members of which regularly attend the ministrations of public worship in their parish churches.

It may be of some advantage to place in contrast with the foregoing the hoary antiquity of the present Church of England, which descends by the strictest lineal succession from the first Christian Church planted in Britain. Christianity was introduced into that country, if not by the Apostle Paul as is sometimes asserted, at least by apostolic men, and several British bishops took part in some of the earliest councils; when, in after years, the light of Christianity was nearly extinguished throughout the principal part of the island by the incursions of pagan Saxons, it still shone faintly in Wales and Cornwall, where, on the arrival of Augustine, in A.D. 596, there were seven bishops under the metropolitan authority of the bishop of Carleon-on-Usk; during the early progress of the conversion of the Saxons, through the labours of Augustine and his immediate successors, the British Church kept aloof from the Anglo-Saxon; but in the course of time the two Churches were amalgamated, and the present Church of England is their true and lineal representative. We know that persons unacquainted with these facts assert that the present Church had its origin at the Reformation; but this idea is absurd. The Church at that time, through the action of the bishops and other clergy in her convocations, voluntarily threw off the errors that had been accumulating through successive ages, and resumed the simplicity and scripturality of her early youth; such a Reformation gives no more ground for the origination of a new Church in the reign of Edward the sixth, than the similar Reformation of the Jewish Church in the reign of Josiah gives for the Church after his time, being a different Church from that originated by Moses in the wilderness.

§ 6. *Opinions of leading Nonconformists on the rite of Confirmation.* I shall now give a few extracts from the writings of the founders or other influential members of those bodies, shewing their appreciation of the rite of Confirmation; other extracts shall be given when we come to the consideration of the scripturality of the rite. 1. *Lutheran.* HERRZOG.—“In the Apostolic Church the laying on of hands was connected with baptism, as the means of

communicating the gift of the Holy Ghost; wherefore Protestant polemics should never have allowed itself to accept the declaration that these passages, (Acts 19:6; 8:12-19; Heb. 6:1, 2, &c.), did not refer to the Holy Ghost, but only to the especial gifts of the Spirit in the Apostolic times.” 2. *Presbyterians.* (1). *Continental.* CALVIN.—“It was an ancient custom in the Church for the children of Christians, after they were come to years of discretion, to be presented to the bishop in order to fulfil that duty which was required of adults who offered themselves to baptism. For such persons were placed among the Catechumens, till, being duly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, they were enabled to make confession of their faith before the bishop and all the people. Therefore those, who had been baptized in their infancy, because they had not made such a confession before the Church, at the close of childhood or the beginning of adolescence, were again presented by their parents, and were examined by the bishop, according to the form of catechism which was then in use. That this exercise, which deserved to be regarded as sacred and solemn, might have the greatest dignity and reverence, they also practised the ceremony of the imposition of hands. Then the youth, after having given satisfaction respecting his faith, was dismissed with a solemn benediction . . . such as imposition of hands, therefore, as is simply connected with benediction, I highly approve, and wish it were now restored to its primitive use uncorrupted by superstition.”

OSTERVALD.—“Among the particular establishments which might be made for the edification of the Church, and the benefit of young people, there is one which would be of great use, and which seems to be absolutely necessary. And that is with relation to children who have attained the age of discretion, the same order should be observed for the admission to the sacraments, which was practised in the primitive Church when catechumens were to be received in the Church by baptism. This admission was very solemn; a long probation went before it; the catechumens were required to give an account of their faith, and they bound themselves by solemn promises and vows to renounce the world and to live holy. No such thing is done at this day at the administration of baptism, because young children are baptized; but what is not done at the time of baptism should be done when they come to years of discretion. And truly, if there is not a public and solemn profession, a promise on the children's part, I do not see how we can answer what is objected by some against infant baptism, which yet is a good and laudable practice. When children are baptized, they know nothing of what is done to them; it is therefore absolutely necessary that when they come to years of reason, they should satisfy and confirm the engagements they come under by their baptism, and that they should become members of the Church out of knowledge and choice.” (2). *English.* ASSEMBLY'S ANNOTATIONS.—“Not that Paul did rebaptize them. These words relate not to the words of Paul, but unto their hearing

of John's doctrine; and therefore Paul is not said to have baptized them, but to have laid hands upon them; that is a posture and act of confirmation, and initiation. Baptism is a new birth of the whole man; as we can be born but once in the flesh, so we can be born but once in the Spirit, [V. 6, Laid his hands upon them, Chaps. 6: 6 and 8: 17], he laid his hands upon them for confirmation; we read not that he re-baptized them.” CALAMY.—“And here it may be enquired, whether or no it is befitting, requisite, or allowable, that imposition of hands, joined with serious prayers to God for the strengthening and confirming grace of His Spirit for those who come to own their baptismal vows openly in the face of a christian congregation, and authoritative benediction on the part of the minister, as God's officer, should be used on this occasion? Where to I answer that there is a general unanimity among those who have been most diligent in searching into ecclesiastical antiquity, in reporting this as the current practice of the primitive Church; and that not only while miraculous gifts continued, but afterward. That it is convenient and warrantable, by Scripture as well as antiquity, were the opinions of our first Reformers in England, and the most celebrated divines we have had amongst us ever since. This was also the judgment of the learned Grotius, who was perhaps one of the greatest men these parts of the world ever produced.” (3). *American.* GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1812. “Children were presented to baptism, not so much by those in whose hands they were brought (though by them, too, if they were good and faithful men) as by the whole society of saints. The whole church was their mother. That this principle was in fact avowed by the primitive church in her practice, though not in the words of her confession, appears from the design of the rite of confirmation, the attention which was paid to the instruction of baptized children, and the discipline actually inflicted upon them in the case of improper conduct. First, it appears that a rite called confirmation was administered by the hand of the minister, or bishop, or elder, together with prayer on baptized children at a certain age. Both Calvin in his Institutes, and Owen in his Commentary on the Hebrews, acknowledge that this practice existed at a very early period in the Church. . . . This rite of Confirmation thus administered to baptized children when arrived to competent years, and previously instructed and prepared for it with the express view of their admission to the Lord's Supper, shews clearly that the primitive Church in her purest days exercised the authority of a mother over her baptized children.”

(To be continued.)

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND PHILOSOPHY.
BY E. S.

A GREAT objection is made to the received belief of the immortality of the soul, because that philosophic theories have been framed concerning it. Mr. Constable