

in the Church, (nor indeed in any Society); the power of Absolution, and of Excommunication;—in other words, the power of excluding offenders from the Society for the violation of its rules, and of re-admitting them, upon satisfactory evidence of their sincere repentance.

This authority to govern the Church was intrusted by our Lord to His Apostles in the words already cited, and has been by them handed down to its Governors for the maintenance of discipline — “for edification, and not for “destruction;” to be exercised by them “not “as having dominion over your faith, but as “helpers of your joy;” and to this legitimate power you are commanded, in the word of God, to pay a ready and willing obedience. “Remember “them who have the rule over you,” says the Apostle to the Hebrews, (xiii, 7, 17,) “who have “spoken to you the word of God.”—“Obey them “that have the rule over you, and submit “yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as “they that must give account.”

Our Lord Himself having thus settled the constitution of His Church, and conferred on His Ministers the powers necessary for its continuance and government, “ascended up “where he was before,” and left them to the guidance of that Holy Spirit, who “giveth light “and understanding to the simple;”—No further commission can be obtained *immediately* from