

planted by the apostles, had not a vestige of the hierarchial system about them; but that they manifested the mind of Christ that they should be simple, independent organizations, owing alligence only to him, accepting his word as the only law, rule of faith, and book of discipline, and be only bound to one another by the bonds of brotherhood. In the attestation to these truths, the mission of Congregationalism began in England in 1585, in the face of fierce persecutions and by sowing its seed in the martyrs blood. The correctness of these conclusions concerning the constitution of the early Christian Church, may be seen at once by the following statements of learned and impartial ecclesiastical historians, as follows :

In the first century, "Every church was *essentially independent of each other*. The churches, thus constituted and regulated, formed a sort of federative body of *independent religious communities*, dispersed through the greater part of the Roman Empire, in continual communication and in constant harmony with each other."—*Waddington*.

"All the Churches, in those primitive times, (the first century) were *independent bodies*, or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches founded by the apostles had frequently the honour showed them to be consulted in difficult cases, yet they had *no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws*. On the contrary, it is clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had *equal rights* and were in all respects on a footing of equality." "During a great part of this (the second) century, the churches continued to be, as at the first, *independent of each other*, or were connected by no consociations or confederations. Each church was a kind of little *independent republic*, governed by its own laws, which were enacted, or at least sanctioned, by the people."—*Mosheim*.

"Each church, though connected with the rest by ties of faith, hope and charity, seems to have been perfectly *independent*, so far as regards any power or control. The plan of the apostles seems to have been to establish a great number of *distinct, independent communities*, each governed by its own bishop (or pastor,) conferring occasionally with the brethren of other churches, but owing no submission to the rulers of any other church, or to any central common authority, except the apostles."—*Archbishop Whately*.

The testimony of Neander, Giesler, Gibbon, and other historians, is coincident with that given above. Looking back from the present to the past, when these principles were enunciated, we see how greatly they have pre-

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