

VIEWS OF OUR ZION.

No. III.

THE MINISTRY—(Continued.)

TESTIMONY OF THE PRIMITIVE FATHERS.

My last essay upon the Christian Ministry contained, briefly, a proof that in the times of the Apostles there were the three orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I shall now adduce such testimony, as may be necessary, from the successors of the Apostles,—commonly called the FATHERS of the church,—to show that in the ages subsequent to the time of the Apostles the same three orders were essential to the regular constitution of the Christian Ministry.

ST. CLEMENT, briefly alluded to in the last Essay, was contemporary with the Apostles, and his name is even mentioned by St. Paul, (Philip. iv. 3.) His testimony, though brief and as it were incidental, is therefore important; for, in his implied comparison of the Christian with the Jewish ministry, he distinctly alludes to three orders in the Church.

St. IGNATIUS was also a contemporary of the Apostles: the testimonies of whom to the existence of three orders in the Ministry are so full and evident, "that nothing," says Bingham, "was ever pretended to be said against them, save only that they are not the genuine remains of that ancient author; an assertion which has been so often considered and replied to by learned men, that there is no pretence left to favour such an imagination." In his Epistle to the Magnesians, he exhorts them to "do all things in unity, under the BISHOP presiding in the place of God, and the PRESBYTERS in the place of the Apostolical Senate, and the DEACONS to whom is committed the ministry and service of Jesus Christ." In his Epistle to the Trallians, he enjoins them to continue to "do nothing without the BISHOP; to be subject also to the PRESBYTERS, as the Apostles of Jesus Christ; and that the DEACONS also should by all means please all."

Pius, Bishop of Rome, who lived A. D. 156,—whose authority is allowed by Blondel, an adversary of Episcopacy, to be genuine,—addresses Justus of Vienna, as Bishop, and requires "that the Presbyters and Deacons may give him reverence."

IRENEUS, Bishop of Lyons, and the disciple of Polycarp, who was the pupil of St. John the Evangelist, abounds with testimonies to the same distinction of orders in the Christian Church. He speaks thus: "The blessed Apostles, founding and regulating the church, delivered the EPISCOPAL office for its government to Linus; of which Linus, Paul speaks in his Epistle to Timothy. To him Anaclethus succeeded:" after which he proceeds to give a catalogue of ten other Bishops, in direct line from the Apostles. The same Father also says expressly that there were Bishops as well as Presbyters in the Apostles' days. For "the assembly of Miletus," he says, "was composed of BISHOPS and PRESBYTERS, that were of Ephesus and the neighbouring cities of Asia." CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS says, "There are here in the Church, the different degrees or progressions of BISHOPS, PRESBYTERS, and DEACONS;" and he observes also, that "there are many precepts in Scripture appertaining to particular sorts of persons, some to PRESBYTERS, some to DEACONS, and some to BISHOPS also."

About A. D. 200 flourished TERTULLIAN, who, being himself only a presbyter in the church of Carthage, could have no wish to magnify the superior powers of the Bishop's office. Speaking of baptism, he says, "The right of administering this ordinance belongs to the chief priest, which is the BISHOP. Next to him, the PRESBYTERS and DEACONS have the right to administer it, but not without the Bishop's authority, in regard to the honour of the church, which being kept inviolate, peace is safe." The same Father, in making a challenge to the heretics of the day, says, "Let them show us the original of their churches, and give us a catalogue of their BISHOPS, in an exact succession from first to last, whereby it may appear that their first Bishop had either some Apostle, or some Apostolical man, living in the time of the Apostles, for his author or immediate predecessor."

From CYPRIAN, who lived A. D. 250, I shall only adduce this testimony, out of multitudes which his writings furnish, in favour of Episcopacy: "Through the changes of times and successions, the ordination of bishops and the government of the church have descended, so that the church is built upon BISHOPS, and every act of the church is governed by these Presidents."

CORNELIUS, Bishop of Rome, as cited in Eusebius' Eccles. History,—as an evidence that bishops were not the pastors of single congregations or on an equality with Presbyters—says, in writing to Fabian concerning the usurpation of Novatian, that "there ought to be but one bishop in a Catholic Church," and that, in his Episcopate, "there were forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, &c."

These quotations from the Fathers who lived nearest to the Apostolic age, and they might easily be multiplied an hundred-fold, place beyond all contradiction the fact, that the ministry of the church, according to its primitive constitution, was composed of BISHOPS, PRIESTS, and DEACONS. In short we can repeat, without the fear of refutation, what the learned Hooker thus undauntedly asserts, "There was not one church upon the face of the whole earth that was not ordered by Episcopal regiment, since the time that the blessed Apostles were here conversant."

Now, from all this mass of testimony, let me draw the conclusion in the words of Chillingworth:—

"Seeing that Episcopal Government is confessedly so ancient and so catholic, it cannot with reason be denied to be Apostolical."

"For so great a change, as between Presbyterian Government and Episcopal could not possibly have prevailed all the world over in a little time. Had Episcopal government been an aberration from (or a corruption of) the government left in the churches by the apostles, it had been very strange, that it should have been received in any one church so suddenly, or that it should have prevailed in all for many ages after. Tertullian very justly argues, that, had the churches erred, they would have varied: What, therefore, is one and the same amongst all, came not sure by error, but tradition: that in the frame and substance

of the necessary government of the church, there should be so sudden a change, as presently after the Apostles' times; and so universal, as received in all churches; this is clearly impossible.

"For, what universal cause can be assigned or feigned of this universal apostacy? You will not imagine that the Apostles, all or any of them, made any decree for this change when they were living? or left order for it, in any will or testament, when they were dying? This were to grant the question: to wit, That the Apostles, being to leave the government of the churches themselves, and either seeing by experience, or foreseeing by the Spirit of God, the distractions and disorders which would arise from a multitude of equals, substituted Episcopal Government instead of their own. General Councils to make a law for a general change, there was, for many ages, none. There was no Christian Emperor, no coercive power over the Church to enforce it. Or, if there had been any, we know no force was equal to the courage of the Christians of those times. Their lives were then at command, (for they had not then learned to fight for Christ) but their obedience to any thing against his law was not to be commanded, for they had perfectly learned to die for him.—Therefore, there was no power then to command this change; or if there had any been, it had been in vain.

"What device, then, shall we study, or to what fountain shall we reduce this strange pretended alteration? Can it enter into our hearts to think that all the Presbyters and other Christians then, being the apostles' scholars, could be generally ignorant of the will of Christ, touching the necessity of a Presbyterian government? Or, dare we venture to think them so strangely wicked all the world over, as against knowledge and conscience to conspire against it? Imagine that the spirit of Diotrephes had entered into some, or a great many of the Presbyters, and possessed them with an ambitious desire of a forbidden superiority, was it possible they should attempt and achieve it at once without any opposition or contradiction? And besides, that the contagion of this ambition should spread itself and prevail without stop or control; nay, without any noise or notice taken of it, through all the churches in the world; all the watchmen in the mean time being so fast asleep, and all the dogs so dumb, that not so much as one should open his mouth against it?

"But let us suppose,—tho' it be a horrible untruth,—that the Presbyters and the people then were not so good Christians as the Presbyterians are now; that they were generally so negligent to retain the government of Christ's church commanded by Christ, which we are now so zealous to restore; yet certainly we must not forget nor deny, that they were men as we are. And if we look upon them but as mere natural men; yet, knowing by experience, how hard a thing it is, even for policy armed with power, by many attempts and contrivances, and in a long time, to gain upon the liberty of any one people; undoubtedly we shall never entertain so wild an imagination, as that, among all the Christian Presbyteries in the world, neither conscience of duty, nor love of liberty, nor averseness from pride and usurpation of others over them, should prevail so much with any one, as to oppose this pretended universal invasion of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the liberty of Christians.

"When I shall see therefore all the fables in the *Metamorphosis* acted and prove stories; when I shall see all the Democracies and Aristocracies in the world lie down and sleep, and awake into Monarchies: then will I begin to believe that Presbyterian government, having continued in the Church during the apostles' times, should presently after (against the Apostles' doctrine and the will of Christ) be whirled about like a scene in a mask, and transformed into Episcopacy. In the mean time, while these things remain thus incredible, and in human reason impossible, I hope I shall have leave to conclude thus:

"Episcopal Government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church, presently after the Apostles' times:

"Between the Apostles' times and this presently after, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration.

"And therefore there was no such alteration as is pretended. And therefore Episcopacy, being confessed to be so ancient and universal, must be granted also to be Apostolic.*"

C. R.

* Chillingworth's Works, p. p. 297, 300, London Edit. 1719.

ARCHBISHOP SHARPE.

It was a custom with this excellent man during his journeys, to have a saddle-horse attending his carriage, that in case of feeling fatigued with sitting, he might take the refreshment of a ride. In his advanced age, and a few years before his death, as he was going in this manner to his Episcopal residence, and happened to be a mile or two in advance of his carriage, a decently dressed, good-looking young man on horseback, came up to him, and with a trembling hand, and faltering tone of voice, presented a pistol to his Grace's breast, demanding his money. The Archbishop with great composure, turned round, and looking stedfastly at him, desired that he would remove that dangerous weapon, and tell him fairly his condition. "Sir, Sir," cried the youth, with agitation, "no words, 'tis not a time for words now, your money instantly." "Hear me, young man," said the venerable prelate, "come on with me. I, you see, am a very old man, and my life is of little consequence; yours seems far otherwise. I am Sharpe, the Archbishop of York, my carriage and servants are behind; but conceal your perturbations, and tell me who you are, and what money you want, and on the word of my character, I will not injure you, but prove your friend. Here, take this, (giving him a purse of money,) and now tell me how much you want, to make you independent of so dangerous and destructive a course as you are now engaged in." "Oh, Sir," replied the man, "I detest the business as much as you do; I am—but—but—at home there are creditors who will not wait; fifty pounds, my Lord, would indeed do what no thought or tongue besides my own can feel or express." "Well, Sir, I take it at your word; and upon my honour, if you

will compose yourself for a day or two, and then call on me at —, what I have now given shall be made up to that sum; trust me, I will not deceive you." The highwayman looked at him, was silent, and went off; and at the time appointed, actually waited on the archbishop, received the money, and assured his Lordship that he hoped his words had left impressions which no inducement could ever efface. Nothing more transpired of him for a year and a half; when one morning a person knocked at his Grace's gate, and with a peculiar earnestness of voice and countenance, desired to see him. The archbishop ordered the stranger to be introduced; he had scarcely entered the room, when his countenance changed, his knees tottered, and he sunk almost breathless upon the floor. On recovering, he requested an audience in private; this being granted, he said, "My Lord, you cannot have forgotten the circumstance of relieving a highwayman. God and gratitude will never suffer it to be obliterated from my mind. In me, my Lord, you now behold that once most wretched of mankind; but now, by your inexpressible humanity, rendered equal, perhaps superior, to millions. O, my Lord, 'tis you, 'tis you that have saved me, body and soul; 'tis you that have saved a much lov'd wife, and a little brood of children, whom I loved dearer than my own life. Here, my Lord, is the fifty pounds; but never shall I find language to express what I feel; God is your witness; your deed itself is your glory; and may heaven be your present and everlasting reward." The archbishop was refusing the money, when the gentleman added, "My Lord, I was the younger son of a wealthy man; your Grace knew him, I am sure; my name is —; my marriage alienated the affections of my Father, who left me to sorrow and penury. My distresses—but your Grace already knows to what they drove me. A month since my brother died a bachelor, and intestate: his fortune has become mine; and I, spared and preserved by your goodness from an ignominious death, am now the most penitent, the most grateful, and the happiest of human beings."

THE CHURCH.

COBOURG, SATURDAY, JULY 8, 1837.

We shall be excused, we hope, by the author of the following Letter,—a layman of our communion, residing on the Bay of Quinte, and one with whom we have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance,—for giving it the present publicity.—We do so, because we consider it calculated to serve the cause we have in hand, a cause in which the writer manifestly feels a zealous and laudable interest.

It will be pleasing to him, as well as to our supporters generally, to know that our prospects of patronage continue to be cheering. At the present moment we number, on our various lists, the names of fully 750 subscribers, while from various agents to whom above 300 copies of our first, second and third numbers have been sent, we have still to anticipate the gratification of favourable returns. We have only to say that the fulfilment of the most sanguine expectations from them will only give us that number of subscribers which are absolutely necessary to pay the expenses of our undertaking.

Were the feeling which our correspondent, in the letter below, so properly manifests, universally acted upon by all those members of our Church who, we well know, desire her prosperity and pray for her peace, there is not a doubt that we should very soon be justified in issuing weekly 2000 copies of our paper. But we thank God for past success, and solicit the prayers of our supporters in conjunction with our own, for His future blessing.

In relation to our correspondent we need only add that the insertion of his letter will be a sufficient acknowledgment of its receipt:

" ——— 27th June 1837.

Dear Sir:—I have received the 1st and 2d Nos. of THE CHURCH. I feel delighted at the prospects which appear opening upon the valuable undertaking. I do trust that this work will not be allowed to fall to the ground, for the want of proper Christian support; and truly we are able, if we only put forth our energy, to sustain the publication, and to make it a blessing to the province.

I beg to enclose you 15s. as my subscription. There is scarcely a Churchman in the Province but might without any inconvenience pay this small sum in advance; and if they would only consider the importance of such a course to the Committee, they would not fail to put funds into the hands of the conductors of the work, to carry it on prosperously.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly

To the Editor of the Church.

We received lately a copy of a Sermon, politely forwarded to us by the Author, entitled, "CHRISTIAN UNITY NECESSARY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD, preached before the Board of Missions at New York on Sunday June 26th 1836, by the Rev. Samuel Farman Jarvis, D. D. Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature in Washington College, Hartford, Connecticut." This Sermon, which we have read with attention, evinces much learning; the arguments are sound and forcible, and the style clear, eloquent and impressive. We design in our next to furnish a brief abstract of its contents.

NOTICES.

The Quarterly Meeting of the Newcastle Dist. Committee of the SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, will be held at the Court House, in this town, on Tuesday next the 11th inst. at half past ten o'clock A. M.; and at the same time the meeting of the committee of the Travelling Miss. Society will take place.

The next quarterly meeting of the BOARD OF EDUCATION for this District will be held at the same place and day as the above, at 12 o'clock noon.