

REFLECTIONS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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We hear a great deal said at times by dissenters and others about the absence of instruction in the Holy Scriptures concerning the organization and the ministry of the Church; and their conclusion therefrom that the institution, the ministry and the government of the Church are matters of no particular importance.

They argue from the silence of Scripture on the matter that these things were originally left to the choice of the people to frame and arrange them as they deemed advisable: that if Christ intended but one form of ministry or government: or that but one particular visible organization should obtain for the whole world, He would have given more frequent and express charges and directions concerning them: and as these minute directions were not given, therefore it could not have been of much concern in the mind of Christ, of what form the Church or her ministry should be.

This sophistry, and this conclusion seem very plausible and are easily thrust down the intellectual throat of those who would have it so.

But a study of the facts of the matter leads us to a very different conclusion, and shows that all these things were just as the Church holds and has always taught: viz, that the Church is a Divinely instituted organization with a Divinely appointed ministry of three-fold order, and that all things in her are to be done according to the mind

of Christ, and not according to the wishes of the ever variable and never constant mind of man.

As to the absence of direct commands in the New Testament concerning the institution of the Kingdom of God on earth, which Christ Himself, and His forerunner, S. John the Baptist constantly declared to be "at hand," "nigh unto you," it is just exactly what we should expect.

The New Testament Scriptures were written by eight men, to people amongst whom the Church had already been founded for several years, and to people who had absolutely nothing to do with its organization.

The Apostles were the organizers of the Church of Christ, and they only. They were the Divinely appointed agents for the work of institution; and so important was the work they had to perform that our Blessed Lord delayed His glorious return to the right hand of the Father for forty days in order that He might "speak to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," Acts i: 3. It was not till after "He had given them commandments" *ibid* 2—the full instructions for their work, that He left them to carry out His designs, and establish that Divine Colony of the Kingdom of Heaven—the Church of the Living God, by which, and through which, He intended to evangelize the world.

This point is often lost sight of. The fact is not always recognized that those great forty days were occupied by our Risen Lord in instructing the Apostles for their special work; and what they did immediately they were left alone, must of necessity be the putting into practice what He had just been teaching them.

What need was there then for such