

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY 15th OCTOBER, 1830.

In our columns of this week will be found an article which we have copied out of the Christian Advocate, intitled the "Martyrdom of Polycarp," and credited to *Jones' Church History*. We offer it to our readers as a very interesting item of ancient history, showing how believers were once called upon to "confess Christ before men," and how manfully they resisted all attempts to induce them to deny their Divine Master, choosing rather to endure the greatest torments from them than "kill the body but are not able to kill the soul," than be guilty of the sin of apostasy. It is good for us sometimes to look back on the "cruel mockings and scourgings" which those soldiers of the cross so bravely bore, and ask ourselves how we should "hold fast our profession" if our country should be overrun by an enemy who should require us to redeem a few short years of this uncertain life at the expense of our faith.

But notwithstanding the article may be read both with pleasure and profit, we feel it our duty to caution our readers against a most serious error into which *one word* in it is calculated to lead such as are not well instructed in the leading facts of the Christian Ministry: we mean the word *pastor*, which occurs in the second sentence of the second paragraph of the article, as descriptive of the office which Polycarp held in the Church "for more than eighty years." This word is invariably understood, we believe, in common speech, to signify nothing more than the superintendence and instruction of a single congregation. *Primitive Church History*, however, informs us, that Polycarp was a *Bishop*, in the modern sense of the word, and for a great many years exercised *Diocesan Episcopal Jurisdiction*. The original Greek word of which our word *bishop* is a contraction, is *Episcopos*, and is never rendered *pastor*. Its meaning is an *overseer*, or *superintendent*. Tho' a superintendent may "feed the flock," yet the *pastoral care*, as we commonly use the term, does not necessarily devolve on him. When Paul had "the care of all the Churches" on his hands, he was *pastor*, or *parish priest*, to none of them: in propriety of speech he could not be so called. The word *shepherd*, or *pastor*, in the New Testament, is rendered from the Greek word *poimēn*, and never from *episcopos*. Now, as the substitution of the word *pastor* in place of *bishop* could scarcely be *accidental*, we may fairly enough allow it to be *his design*. If so, it can embrace but *one object*; namely, that of opposing Episcopacy. This historical forgery, (for in strict justice we can call it by no softer name,) at first view appears extremely suspicious. It looks as if the author of it were afraid of plain honest truth. It seems very much as it would in a litigant to kill one evidence whose testimony he feared, and suborn one in his place who would testify as a *hireling*: and, in the estimation of sober and dispassionate thinkers, it cannot but injure the cause in which it is engaged. For illustration, we will take the liberty of citing three parallel cases.

1.—The corruption of the text of the New Testament in Acts vi. 3: by substituting the pronoun *ye* in the place of *we*; which goes to transfer the power of conferring holy orders from the *Apostles* to the *people*. A few years ago, the Connecticut Bible Society published an edition of the Scriptures, in which this corruption appeared. The Episcopalians made some public inquiry into the matter, which produced a defence involving evidence strong enough for conviction of the charge; as may be seen by a reference to the *Episcopal Watchman*, Vol. I. pp. 62, 79, 93. In page 62 will be found the following remarks: "The editions of the English Bible, printed from 1638 to 1660, including the period of Cromwell's ascendancy, were thus perverted. Then there was an obvious motive for it; for then, a desperate effort was making to establish congregational supremacy: and by the alteration of a single letter in this single passage, the power of ordination was transferred from the Apostles to the Congregation. Whether the same motive exists now—or whether there is, at this day, any disposition to maintain congregational supremacy, at the expense of Episcopal authority, is a question which others are as competent to decide as myself. I will only add the single remark, that the perversion of the sacred text, which commenced in the days of Cromwell, continued through seven or eight subsequent editions, down to 1685—that it has since been adopted in Baxter's paraphrase, and Ridgley's Body of Divinity, (Philadelphia edition,)—later still, 1802, in a Worcester edition of the Bible, and last of all, so far as I know, in the Hartford edition, printed for the Connecticut Bible Society."—That which requires the *corruption of scripture*, ought certainly to be regarded as *anti-christian*.

2.—There has been lately published at Boston, a book purporting to be a *Dictionary of the Bible*, by Howard Malcolm, in which is contained, (*See Episcopal Watchman*, Vol. II. No. 11.) "the following startling article:—

"MATTHIAS, one of the seventy disciples, chosen by the first Church, perhaps without a sufficient divine warrant, to fill the place of Judas Iscariot."

How willing men "who profess and call themselves Christians" can be to surrender their belief in the Bible sooner than part with their own inventions!—"Perhaps without a sufficient divine warrant!" What means this insinuation that Matthias, though "numbered with the eleven," WAS NOT AN APOSTLE? Is Mr. Malcolm afraid that by acknowledging the validity of Matthias' ordination to the Apostolate, he should entangle his feet in the snare of *Apostolic Succession and Diocesan Episcopacy*? Or, since St. John declares, *Rev. xxi. 14*, that he saw the names of the *twelve Apostles of the Lamb* in the *twelve foundations* of the New Jerusalem, does he choose to reinstate Judas in that apostleship "from which he fell," rather than acknowledge "the *Homish* plan of having bishops with power over their fellow-ministers," as he calls it? The inference is undeniable, that, if the eleven had power to supply a deficiency in their original number, they had power to add to it, as in case of the Apostle Barnabas, *Acts xiv. 14*. And since they actually did both, it furnishes the highest possible presumptive evidence that the apostolic order, by whatever name it might be afterwards known, was to be continued in the Church to the end of the world: of which the New Testament furnishes more substantial though indirect evidence than is generally supposed.

3.—The third instance is one of a *Tract* on the Divinity of our Lord, No. 214, published by the American Tract Society, in which the two following statements occur:—"Ignatius was a disciple of John, and pastor of the Church of Antioch."—"Theophilus was ordained pastor of the Church at Antioch about the middle of the second century."—Observe in both these, that the word *bishop* is taken away, and the word *pastor* substituted in place of it. The motive for thus falsifying the primitive records of the church is too obvious to need comment: of the *spirit* in which it was done, we say nothing. But this kind of management is very apt to over-reach itself, and be "taken in its own craftiness."—For doubtless the compilers of the Tract in question did not observe the absurdity involved in the words "ordained pastor of the church, at Antioch, about the middle of the second century;" namely, that it is assumed, that in the year 150, the great city of Antioch, where "the disciples were first called Christians," and which was one of the five principal Episcopal Sees of these times, viz. Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople, contained only one congregation; or, that one presbyter had the pastoral care of the many thousands of Christians who then dwelt in that city. In Acts the xv, we find that the Church of Antioch was so respectable, that it "pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." Before this, Paul and Barnabas "had ordained them *elders* in every city," of which Antioch is named as one; and immediately after the promulgation of the decrees of the Apostles by Paul and Barnabas, "the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily." In Acts xx, we find that at Ephesus there were many presbyters, whom Paul, by his Episcopal authority, summoned to meet him at Miletus, in the same manner that our present Bishop Stewart summons his clergy to meet him wherever he thin is proper. But for there to have been only one congregation at Antioch in the year 150, the church must have diminished in numbers amazingly instead of increasing: or, if one presbyter had the *pastoral care* of the great multitudes who were then converted to the faith, it must have been one of the grossest abuses in *pluralities of livings* that ever was heard of; and the poor people must have experienced a famine indeed of the word of life. If the opposers of Episcopacy should find, in these days, such an enormous abuse of the pastoral charge under its superintendence, as they right-manfully claim in behalf of what they call their own party in those pure and primitive times, we should never hear the end of it. It is also a circumstance most worthy of remark, and most curious in its character, that the source from which the compilers of the above named Tract drew their information respecting pastor Theophilus, so as to be able to give dates, &c. is the *annals* of the Church itself, which gives catalogues of the different lines of succession of the Bishops, (among whom was this same Theophilus,) who had ruled the different sees, from the very commencement of the lines of succession either in the persons of some of the apostles, or of those by them placed in the Episcopal chair, and endowed with the plenitude of the