

individuals to be ordained. The Commission first delivered by Jesus Christ to his Apostles, has thus been handed down, in uninterrupted succession, to the Bishops, and through them to the Priests and Deacons of the present day; nor do we, in the Episcopal Church, consider any Ministry as lawful, or any ordination as valid, unless it be clearly derived from this sacred source.

When our Lord had declared this principle in the manner already stated, and had formally commissioned the Apostles, he conferred on them the gift of the Spirit; "He breathed on them, "and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted "unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, "they are retained." These words which are still adopted in the Ordination of Priests to their sacred function, have been strangely misunderstood by those who have supposed them to convey to the Church, or even to the first Apostles, the power of pardoning sin, or of condemning sinners. "The Son of Man, "indeed, had power on earth to forgive sins;" but it was because "the Father had committed "all judgment to the Son," and "made him "the judge of quick and dead." "Who can forgive sins, but GOD only?" To the Apostles and to their successors was given merely that power, without which there can be no discipline