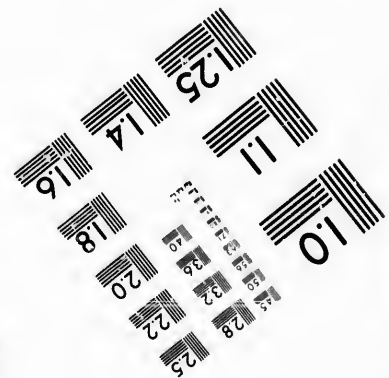
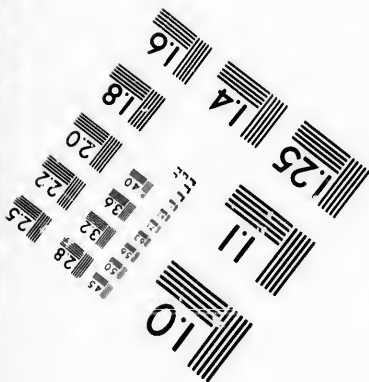
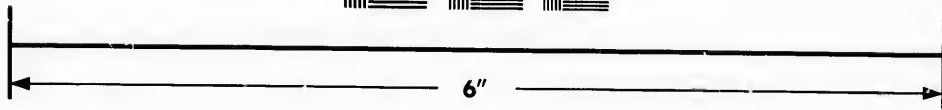
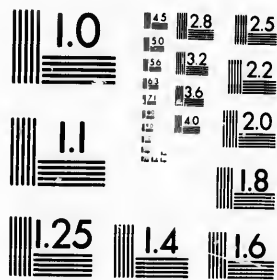


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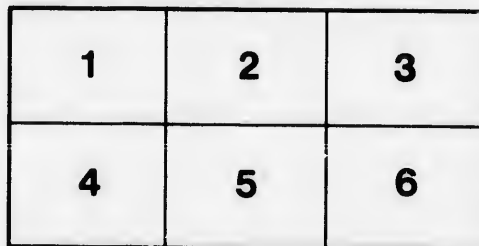
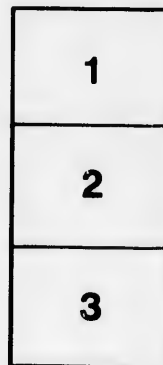
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# REASONS UPON 'REASONS,'

OR

A BISHOP'S TRUE POSITION

IN SYNOD ASSEMBLED.



MONTREAL :

PRINTED BY J. C. BECKET, AT HIS STEAM-PRESS PRINTING OFFICE,  
NO. 38, GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

1856.

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\*\*\* "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear."—Acts xv. 10.  
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## REASONS UPON "REASONS."

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A Diocesan Synod may be defined as an assembly called together by authority, composed of the *Bishop, Presbyters and Brethren*, not for the purpose of making new canons or laws for the government of the Church, but to enforce canons made by the General Councils, or National Convocation.

The first *National Synod* which we read of in England, was that of Hertford, in 673; and the last was that held by Cardinal Pole, in 1555.

Diocesan Synods were not wholly laid aside till by the Act of Submission, 25 Hen. VIII, c. 19., it was made unlawful for any *Synod* to meet, unless by royal authority.

This law having never been repealed, and the Colonies being in the see of Canterbury, any attempt at reviving Convocation by voluntary association would be a direct infringement of the royal prerogative, and contrary to law.

The Convocation is summoned by the Queen's writ, directed to the Archbishop of each Province, requiring him to summon all Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, &c. The power of the Convocation is limited by a statute of Henry VIII. They are not to make any canons or ecclesiastical laws, without the Queen's license; nor, when permitted, can they put them in execution, but under several restrictions.

The first *Christian Council* that we read of, is in the 15 c. of the Acts of the Apostles. There the Council was composed of the *Apostles, and Elders and Brethren*, see verse 23. And when the questions



were decided for which they had assembled, St. James, their presiding Bishop gave expression to their deliberations, and the matter became law.

This is in agreement with St. Cyprian, where he says, "All things shall be examined, you (the brethren) being present and *judging*." Ep. 12. And again: "*According to your divine suffrages: according to your pleasure.*" Ep. 40.

This then, is the Apostolic rule, and all Christian Synods should, in their composition, be formed after this original model; it is not therefore correct to define a Diocesan Synod as composed of the "Bishop and Clergy." It must never be without the *lay* element. "*The Apostles and Elders and Brethren.*"

The question being conceded that a Synod will be formed in the Diocese of Montreal, (the expediency or usefulness of which, however, is strongly doubted,) what authority should the presiding officer or Bishop have in such assembly? The same as St. James had in the council of his brethren at Jerusalem, and no more: that was, to pronounce the *judgment* of the elders and brethren.

No authority should be granted him to prorogue the meeting at his pleasure, nor to withhold his assent when the voice of the majority of clergy and laity has deliberately decided. For what is a Bishop but one of the clergy? although the chief in his own diocese, Chrysostom saith, "*Inter Episcopum et Presbyterum interest fermè nihil.*" "Between a bishop and priest, in a manner there is no difference." Again, "What things he spake concerning Bishops, the same are also meet for Presbyters, whom Bishops seem not to excel in any thing, but only in the power of ordination." And St. Jerome asks, "*What a Bishop, by virtue of his place and calling may do more than a Presbyter, except it be only to ordain.*" Barrow, in his celebrated Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy, quotes St. Chry-

sostom with approval as affirming the episcopal power not to be *αὐθιρία*, or *ἀρχή*; and goes on to say: "At first the episcopal power did only consist in paternal admonition, and correction of offenders, exhorting and persuading them to amendment; and in case they contumaciously did persist in disorderly behaviour, bringing them before the congregation: and the cause being there heard and proved, with *its consent*, imposing such penance or correction on them as seemed needful for the public good, or their particular benefit."

The author of "Reasons" observes, "In passing a regulation in Synod, in opposition to the Bishop, we of the clergy or of the laity, should be resisting an authority given him by God. This consideration might well settle the whole matter." Reasons, 12. And so it might if it were true. And in order to give weight to his argument, (the only weight he can produce,) he quotes from the "Fathers": "The issue then is this; the Presbyters, and Clergy and Laity, must obey, therefore the *Bishop must govern and give them laws.*"

We also shall quote from the "Fathers." Origen saith: "*Sensus nostri et enarrationes sine scripturis testibus non habent fidem.*" "Our judgments and expositions without witness of the Scriptures have no credit."

Therefore, the enquirer after truth may say to the author of "Reasons," in the words of St. Ambrose, "*Ego vocem pastoris inquirō: Lege hoc mihi de Propheta: lege de Psalmo: recita de Lege: recita de Evangelio: recita de Apostolo.*" "I require the voice of the Shepherd, read me this matter out of the Prophets; read it me out of the Psalms: read it me out of the Law: read it me out of the Gospel: read it me out of the Apostles."

Not one word has the author of "Reasons," given from holy Scripture, nor from the history of our own times since the reformation, nor of the working

of synodical action in the United States, where the authority of the Bishop is simply that of the *presiding chairman*, in all the dioceses with the exception of one; but he produces a few stale extracts from the Fathers, perfectly irrelevant to the subject of Diocesan Synods. The prophet Jeremiah adviseth us better, "Trust ye not in \* \* \* \* \* words that cannot profit." Yielding to none in reverence for the great divines of our church, which are quoted in the "Reasons," we must protest against the practice of extracting brief sentences from voluminous writers, and endeavoring by means of excerpts taken apart from their context, and without reference to the times or circumstances in which the works were composed, or to the objects which the writers had in view, to bring the weight of their great authority in support of the "Autocracy," which it is sought at the present day to establish for the Episcopate.

As however, St. Ignatius and St. Cyprian, both holy martyrs, seem principally relied on, we shall quote counter extracts from their writings, to show the undue weight to which the episcopal office was magnified, even at that early period of the Church, and to prove that no reliance should be placed upon their opinions in matters affecting our own ecclesiastical polity. Take the following from the short epistles of Ignatius, a contemporary of the Apostles, "Be ye subject to the Bishop as to Jesus Christ." (*Ad Trall. c. 2.*) "Follow your Bishop as Jesus Christ the father, the Presbyters as the Apostles, reverence the Deacons as the Ordinance of God." (*Ad Smyr. c. 8.*) And in the writings of St. Cyprian, Epist. 75, we find the following passage claiming the full apostolic authority for the Bishops. "*Potestas peccatorum remittendorum apostolis data est \*\* et episcopis qui eis vicariū ordinatione successerunt.*" Shall we be bound by such dicta as these? Nay,

verily, but comparing such sentences with the writings of the Apostles, we are led to exclaim as St. Hilary to the Emperor Constantius, "*Fidem, imperator, quæris? Audi eam non de novis chartulis, sed de Dei libris.*" "Doth your Majesty seek the faith? Hear it, then, not out of any new scrolls, but out of the books of God."

The true position of a Bishop, therefore, in Synod assembled, is to preside, to pronounce the judgment of the Council, and in case of a tie, to have a casting vote, as the chairman, in any other deliberative assembly.

We again refer the reader to the 15 c. of Acts, where we consider this point clearly set at rest by the Apostolic custom, to the law of England where no one Bishop has the power proposed by the author of "Reasons," and to the regimen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, where the universal practice is different from that sought to be imposed upon us.

"If we deprive the Bishop of this power," says the author of "Reasons," "What power? the power to negative any question which he may think proper to put down, shall we not be 'taking the side of those who in former days were always the enemies of our Church, and of her form of Government?' And will not the clergy be brought into antagonism with their Bishop, 'to the certain peril of violating their ordination vows?'" This is begging the question, this is a bugbear worthy only of a narrow mind. There is no class of men on the continent more disposed to be respectful to their Ordinary than the clergy of the Diocese of Montreal. Yet, if the question is between God and man, "ought they not to obey God rather than man?" And does not the very fact of the Diocesan calling together his clergy and their lay Delegates to deliberate upon matters and things touching the inter-

ests of the Church, destroy the idea of the Divine right "given him by God?"

And what becometh of "the divine right" when the next senior Dignitary takes the chair? If the clergy differ from *him* in Synod assembled, do they do so "to the certain peril of violating their ordination vows." The chain requires a link here. The "Reasons" want a reason to keep them together at this point.

We have no apprehension that the clergy will be moved by this shallow device to sacrifice their private judgment, in a case where no canonical obedience can be shown to be required of them; but we of the Laity should take warning, for if this despotic authority be once conceded to the Bishop, we deprive ourselves of all control over the proceedings of the Synod, and subject ourselves as it were to a *double veto*, for after overcoming the scruples of the clergy, and securing, perhaps, a small majority of that body in favor of any particular measure of Church reform, we should probably find that in the end it would be negated by *that power* which we had ourselves consented to enthroned above us.

We shall conclude these reasons in the language of one of the "Fathers," St. Jerome.

"Thou that art a maintainer of new doctrine, whatsoever thou be, I pray thee spare the faith that is commended by the Apostles' mouth. Why goest thou about, to teach us that faith which before we never knew? Why bringest thou us forth that thing that Peter and Paul never uttered? Evermore until this day the Christian world hath been without this doctrine."

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