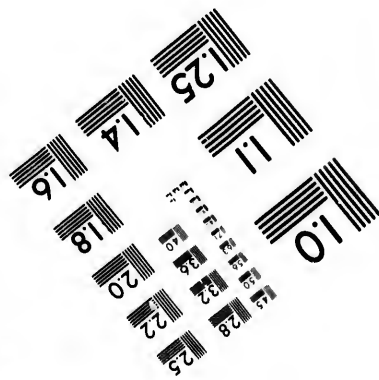
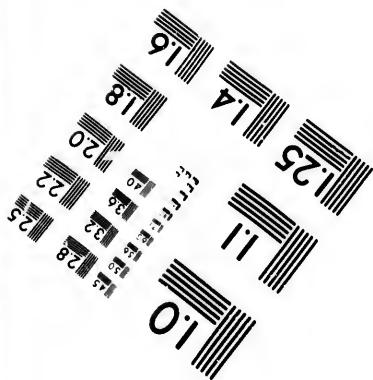
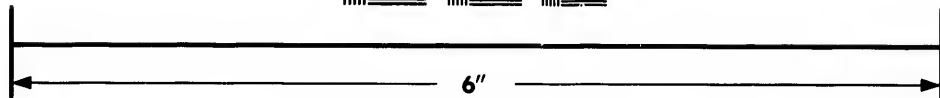
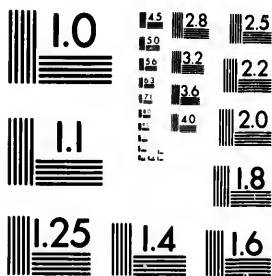


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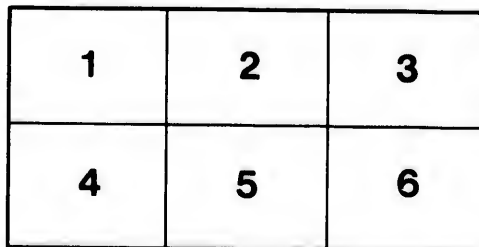
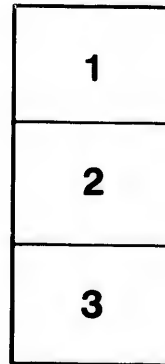
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CHURCHES:

THEIR ORIGIN AND CLAIMS

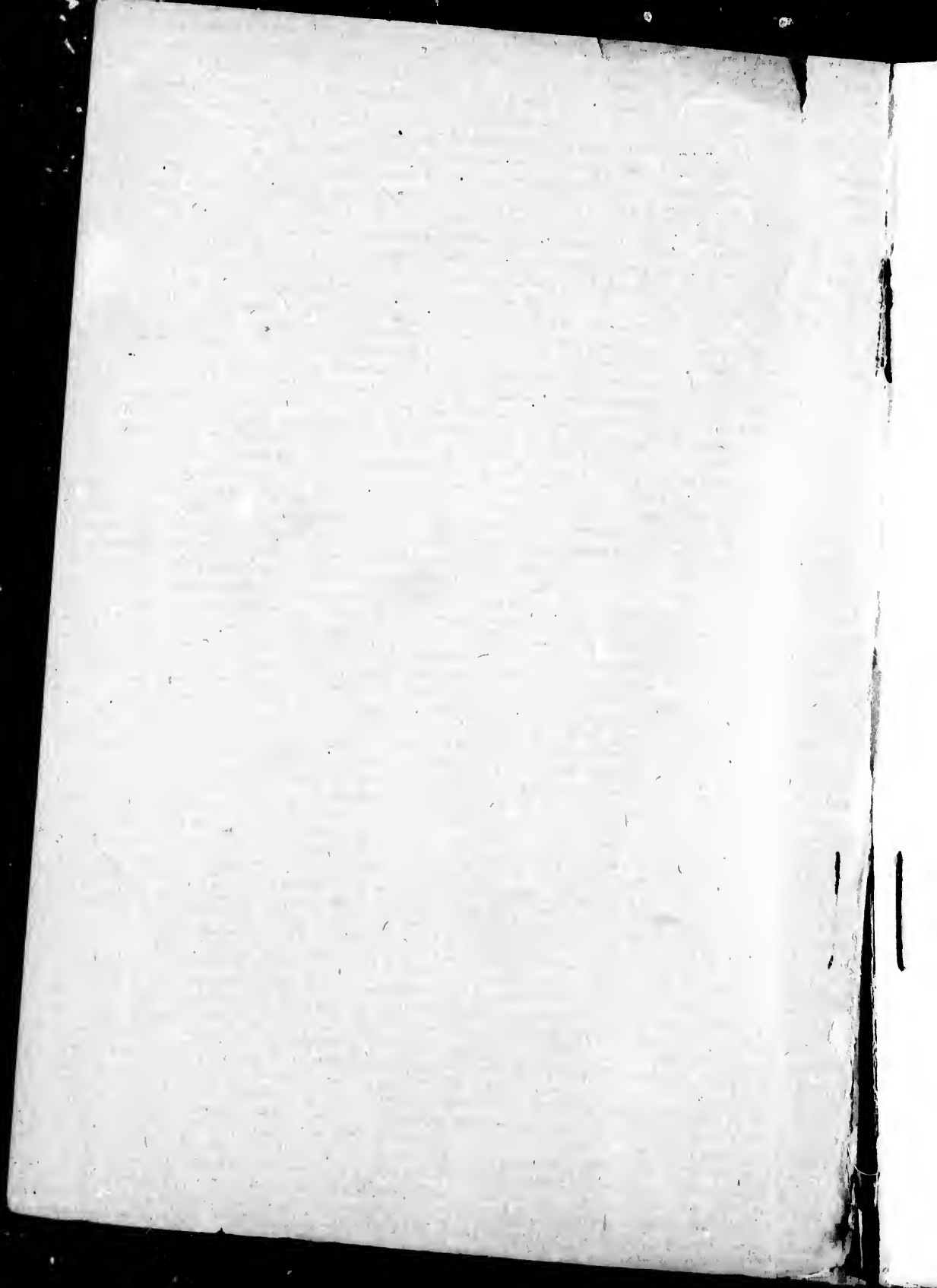
Lectures by

REV. SAMUEL HOUSTON, M.A.

"NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATOR."

KINGSTON, ONT. :
JOHN HENDERSON & Co.

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1892.



PREFATORY NOTE.

SOME two or three months ago, a course of what was called "Lenten Lectures" was delivered in Kingston, in the lecture room of St. George's Church. In the first of these lectures, all that are not in Anglican communion were pronounced as out of the Church, without a ministry and with no valid sacraments; with disregard for truth and history, we were all stigmatized as Dissenters. Such unfounded exclusiveness provoked a newspaper controversy, in which the lecturer had a considerable share. During the course of the controversy, the following lectures were prepared, and were delivered in Cooke's Church. Those that heard them were so earnest in their wish to have them published that I could not well refuse. As they were hastily got up, and as my time is largely occupied in other duties, no very great erudition and no finished style are claimed, as cultured people will at once see.

There is just a word that may be said from another point of view. If "Protestant peace" is to be respected, and no one prizes that more than I do, it must be based on mutual acknowledgment of an honourable

kind. If one section of the Catholic Church makes offensive pretensions, and imagines that it can stand on an elevated pillar and look down with scorn on other sections that are just as scriptural and are doing the Lord's work as effectively, then words about peace and unity are a mockery.

It is evident that if Messrs. Spencer and Mayne are genuine representatives of the Church of England, then Dean Alford, Bishop Lightfoot, Dr. Jacob, and many others, are not representatives. Whether our friends in Kingston or the scholars and divines mentioned are to carry more weight may, without prejudice, be left to the reading public.

KINGSTON, June, 1892.

S. H.

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LECTURE FIRST.



CHURCHES: THEIR ORIGIN AND CLAIMS.



LECTURE FIRST.

CHURCHES: THEIR ORIGIN AND CLAIMS.

A FEW words are needful regarding the interest that has lately been awakened in Church principles and Church history. No apology is needed for the action that some of us thought it needful to take in defence and explanation of the ground on which we stand. For years past there appeared from time to time in the local papers reports of lectures and sermons, as also sometimes letters and charges in which the most extravagant assumptions were put forth. Some of our neighbours claimed to have a monopoly of Church order and Church grace, almost of salvation itself. For a long time we let these things pass, we were no seekers for the notoriety that is in controversy. We not only did that; we failed to some extent to teach our own people the grounds whereon our doctrines and polity rest. Our young people were often at a loss when half-playfully and whole-earnestly they were assailed on account of the narrowness and the novelty of the Church to which they belonged. Some of these young people at all events were not ready at once to show that it is not we that are narrow, but our neighbours; that we never propose to unchurch any of our sisters;

we not only do not do it, we do not think of doing it. The narrow, bigoted people are those that would monopolize the word Church to themselves, and dub others bodies. The narrow, bigoted people are those who do not acknowledge the ordination of other Churches, and hardly even the baptism. Moreover, our young people are staggered oftentimes when they are told that they belong to a Church which in comparison is of but yesterday, while there is available for them an ancient Apostolic Church which is able to trace its pedigree back to Peter and John and Paul. It is claimed that this is as easily done as the genealogy in Luke traces our Lord's pedigree back to Adam and so to God. This assumption we propose to examine somewhat before we have done. I shall try to show that while we do not make an essential of antiquity, we can claim as great an antiquity as any other Church. We do not deprecate discussion on these points; indeed, we are thankful rather that the opportunity has arisen to throw light on subjects that were somewhat dark heretofore. We rejoice in the interest that is awakened, and it is earnestly to be hoped that it will be kept up until all are decently well informed in the history of the Churches.

Let it be distinctly understood that this is no strife between those that trace their ancestry to the Church of Scotland on the one hand, and those that trace their ancestry to the Church of England on the other. At all events, we do not make that the battle ground. If there be any that make it that, it is not our fault. We have very great respect for the Church of England.

We can never forget the worth, the piety and the scholarship that are in that Church. We who are ministers owe much to the scholarly leisure that is the privilege of that Church. We use their works every day. Men like Alford, and Ellicott, and Stanley, and Lightfoot, and a host of others, have done much in the exposition of God's Word. We have no quarrel with the Church that possesses such men. We may differ on some points from what they say, as we differ from the polity of their Church Government, but if their polity works so well with them, we do not exclude them from fellowship on that account. If some of them are inclined to exclude us from fellowship, they do not harm us so much as they harm themselves. In the growing spirit of toleration that characterizes our age, the best men of that Church will come to see, as many of them see now, that exclusiveness is as unmeaning as it is unchristian. Moreover, the monopoly of scholarship is not nearly so much in the hands of the Church of England divines as it once was. Their enormous wealth and learned leisure gave their divines privileges that the other Churches were not blessed with. We take pride to ourselves, and we do it honestly, that Scotchmen and their descendants with all their poverty, with so little leisure, were able to do so much for Biblical as well as other learning. Considering their opportunities they have done more and are now doing more in that field than any other people in the world.

Coming now to the main question—what is the source of authority? What is it that alone is the sure

foundation? We say the Word of God. And here all evangelical Churches agree with us. Here at least is true Catholicity. I will have something to say by and by of the misuse that is made of the word Catholic; just here it is sufficient to say that there is Catholicity among evangelical Churches as to the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures. The Westminster Confession of Faith puts this as follows: "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequences may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men." When I speak of the Westminster Confession and quote from it as our chief standard after the Bible, and as subordinate to the Bible, let me say in a word that it is not a Scotch production, it is a product of England. It was drawn up by the Assembly that sat for years in Westminster, in London. It was not imposed by Scotchmen on the English, for of that large Assembly there were but four Scotch ministers, and my impression is that the Scotch delegates were no more than what we call consultative members, that is, they debated, but did not vote. Be that as it may, the Assembly was an English Assembly, and the Confession is of English origin. Now let me quote from the Sixth Article of the Thirty-nine, which occupies a place in the Church of England similar to that which the Westminster Confession occupies in the Presbyterian Churches:

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor be proved thereby is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” There is no difference between these two statements, and Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists stand on the same ground; all agree in giving the Scriptures the place of supreme authority.

The next question that turns up is as to how a Church is to be defined. And here there is no great difference between us and the Church of England. We define the Church in this way: “The visible Church, which is Catholic or Universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before, under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God.” I put side by side with that the definition found in the Nineteenth Article of the Thirty-nine of the Church of England: “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.” Now there is not one of us that is not ready to accept the definition of the Church of England. We may criticise it somewhat ; we may say it is not definite enough, but so far as it goes we have not a word to say against it.

So far we and the Church of England travel on pre-

cisely the same road, and I dwell with pleasure on the things on which we agree, for they are immensely more important than the things wherein we differ. We give the Scriptures the same supreme authority, and we understand the Church in very much the same sense. Moreover we teach the same plan of salvation. We say the same things about sin and its remedy, about the birth and incarnation of Christ, His life and work, His death and resurrection, His glorious ascension, and the need of repentance and holiness of life. Now we come to Church officers, and even here the difference is not so great as at first sight it appears to some. They lay stress on a threefold order of the ministry, namely, bishops, presbyters and deacons; we also have ministers, elders and deacons, so where is the difference? We say that ministers are the same as those they call bishops, and the Church of England interpreters of Scripture support us there. It may seem in these sentences as if I were playing on words, and perhaps I am, in a sense—in a sense, I am not. The battle has often raged around the question as to whether the New Testament bishop be one order and the New Testament presbyter be another order, or whether the words bishop and presbyter be not different words for expressing the same office. We hold that they mean the same office, but in a way expressing different phases of that office. The word bishop expresses the oversight over the flock more strongly than the word presbyter or elder does. A very brief reference may be made to the Scriptural proof of our position. In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, the

apostle Paul is represented as sending for the presbyters or elders of Ephesus to come and meet him at Miletus, and during the course of the address that he gave them, he speaks of these same elders as bishops. In the same way the apostle, in writing the Pastoral Epistles, which are acknowledged to be the latest written books of the New Testament except the Revelation, uses the two terms as interchangeable. The tenor of the Epistles is wholly in favour of the theory which we hold, for while we in one place find bishops and deacons, and in another, presbyters and deacons, we in no place find bishops, presbyters and deacons. This position as regards the teaching of the New Testament books is not disputed by the best and the most candid scholars of the Church of England. Men like Alford and Lightfoot and others freely concede it. It was conceded in the letters that lately appeared in the newspapers. That is all we ask to fortify our position ; we having that testimony on a safe and sound foundation ; we rest on the impregnable rock of Scripture.

Before going further, let me call attention to a term that is in use, and because of its ambiguity it leads to needless controversy. The term I mean is Episcopate. The churches that make so much of bishops, that seem not to be able to exist without bishops, reproach us because we are destitute of an Episcopate. Now we beg to say that such a contention is wholly an error ; it is based on an ambiguity. Our Churches are Episcopal Churches ; we have the Episcopate. Our pastors, being overseers of the congregations over

which they are set, are New Testament bishops, and we say so. Possibly we have not been persistent enough in saying so; we have not laid sufficient emphasis on it. The word bishop at the time of the Reformation had come to be used in a sense very different from that in which it was used in New Testament times, and was, therefore, a word of ambiguous meaning. It was, therefore, dropped out of use by most of the Reformers. It had come to mean the bishop of a diocese with many congregations under him, and presbyters as the pastors of these congregations. This is not the New Testament sense, which was simply the pastor or overseer of a single congregation. We shall see before we have done that the scriptural sense did not pass out of use before the ninth or tenth centuries, and very likely not until much later. You will therefore be particular to note that a bishop in the New Testament sense is one kind of officer, and a bishop in the diocesan sense of later times is a very different kind of officer. To be accurate, we should call the latter a diocesan bishop, or perhaps the word prelate would be better. If such exactness as this were aimed at, there would be less controversy, less of mere logomachy. I will, therefore, use the words prelacy and prelate as I go on, and so endeavour to avoid ambiguity.

The champions of the Church of England, while admitting that at first bishops and presbyters meant the same thing, contend that very soon there was a development into what I have called prelacy. It is alleged that before the first century passed away a

distinction began to be observed between bishops and presbyters, and a strong effort is made to show that the distinction began to be made in a mild form before all the apostles passed away. This position is not always very boldly maintained; there is a doubtful hesitancy, a disposition to assume it rather than prove it. The only semblance of an argument that can be adduced in its favour rests on the ambiguity of the word bishop. They find the word occurring, and they would fain read into it the modern meaning of prelate, whereas it undoubtedly bears the New Testament meaning of pastor or overseer of a congregation. We admit the abuse soon began to creep in, but not in the first century, hardly even in the second century. The earliest writer that speaks of bishops in the prelatical sense is Ignatius, and it cannot be said that any of his Epistles is undoubtedly genuine. The best critics are divided as to whether some two or three of the shorter form were really written by Ignatius, or whether none at all were. Hence the testimony that is borne by that writer is of a very doubtful character. Prelacy entered very gently and grew somewhat slowly, and at length it developed into full-grown Popery. But Popery as we see it took centuries to come to maturity; indeed, it has taken on new phases in our own day; to wit, infallibility. And while prelacy was developing century after century, and passing by an imperceptible process into Popery, the original Presbyterianism of the New Testament continued for many an age to show itself in a vigorous form. Indeed, we have the best of evidence to show that it was

not wholly rooted out until the Reformation, when it put forth new shoots and began a new era of life with the Bible translated into the vernacular and put into the hands of the people.

We may now say a word or two about that word Catholic which has been and still is so often misused. It is a very good word, but it is almost hopeless now to get it put on its proper footing and restored to its true use. Like many other words, it has a history, and we cannot do it justice without knowing its history. It was first used to distinguish Christianity from Judaism. Judaism was particular, that is, for one nation and race; Christianity was Catholic or universal, that is, meant for all men, for every tribe, tongue and people. By and by it came to mean the orthodox Church as distinguished from the sects, from Monotheism, Arianism, Novatianism, Montanism, and so forth. Then when the Church was split in twain over the Easter controversy and the Filioque controversy, there were two Catholic Churches, one western or Roman, the other eastern or Greek. Now we have all these bodies clamouring each to be the exclusive Catholic Church, namely, the Greek Church, the Church of Rome, and the High Church section of the Anglican Church. If the adjectives Greek, or Roman, or Anglican be prefixed or put before Catholic, then Catholic has no meaning at all in the true sense. There is a sense in which all Christians recognize the decisions of the first four General Councils, and so far there is Catholicity. We all in such a sense can say, and we do say, "We believe in the Holy Catholic

Church," and we have the right to say it. That creed, very ancient, but by no means Apostolic, is the common heritage of Christians everywhere, and for any Church to claim a monopoly of it or of the word Catholic is supreme impertinence. I know I am using a strong word, but I do it deliberately: I do it on the best of grounds.

Now for some references to the early history of Christianity among our fathers in the old land. As we cannot tell who first preached the gospel in Rome, and founded a Church there; so we cannot tell who first were missionaries in the British Isles. We find a Church at Rome when the apostle sent a letter there, say less than a quarter of a century after the crucifixion of our Lord. There were strangers from Rome at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, and we may suppose that they carried the good news to the imperial city when they went home, and so the Church was formed. We find traces of Christianity in Britain some time in the second century. The very fact that we have no reliable history of the diffusion of Christianity in either Rome or Britain is instructive in a most important sense. It shows how utterly foolish the position is of those who make everything depend on what they call the Historic Episcopate, what we more correctly call the tactual transmission of prelatial grace or orders through what is assumed to be diocesan bishops. There were no diocesan bishops for generations after, therefore, the tactual transmission of orders so dear to some people is an historical myth instead of an historic episcopate, a mere figment.

There was an early British Church, there were representatives from it said to have been present at councils on the Continent, there were martyrs in the heathen persecutions of those days, the most prominent being Alban, from which we have the name St. Alban's. Our knowledge of that Church is not very definite, the picture presented is shadowy. Whatever there was of it seems to have perished in the Saxon invasion, for when the Saxons came over they were rude worshippers of idols. If anything survived of that old British Church, it disappeared among the mountains of Wales, whither the Britons who escaped extinction withdrew before the war-like Anglo-Saxons. Green says that when Augustine came, sent by Gregory, the very memory of the old British Church had perished. We now refer to another source of Christianity, that with which Patrick is connected, and through him, Columba, who founded the institution of Iona. Here, too, as in what is now called England, there is much that is shadowy. Legends have gathered around the early narratives, and it is impossible to separate accurately the fictitious from the real. We are not sure of the birthplace of Patrick, whether it was Scotland or France. He was taken captive when a lad and enslaved in Ireland for a time. He herded cattle in what is now my native county. There is a conical mountain in full view from the house of my birth and early years, and it was around that mountain that the days of his slavery were spent. Having gained his liberty he fitted himself for being a missionary to the people of the land where his slavery was

spent. His father was a deacon, and his grandfather a presbyter, so he was of Aaronic descent in days when celibacy of the clergy was not prevalent. Indeed, Patrick and his mission and the Church of Ireland for centuries after that had nothing to do with Rome. The Roman supremacy was not completed much before the time when the whole island was handed over by the Pope to Henry the Second in the twelfth century. This, however, is anticipating. It is not probable that Patrick was the first to preach Christ in Ireland; he was the first to reduce the whole people from heathenism to Christianity. His labors were most abundant, the difficulties to be overcome were very great, but by the blessing of God his efforts were crowned with success. Ireland became not only Christian and civilized, but it became the greatest centre of missionary zeal in the then Christian world. The Irish missionaries went everywhere, to Great Britain and the Continent of Europe, and made great conquests in the cause of the gospel. Religious houses were established in many localities, and some of these became famous. Here again I have to guard you against identifying these religious houses with the monasteries of later times. The inmates of them were not separated from the world; they were not required to take a vow of chastity; there is evidence of some of the residents being married. In some cases the offices of Abbot passed from father to son for generations. The chief characteristic of these houses, as of Iona, of which we will speak further on, was that they were seats of learning, colleges, as we would say, where

young men were trained for the sacred office. The heads of the establishments are called by later writers Abbots and Senior Monks or Presbyters, but if we use modern terms to apply to them it would be much more suitable to call the Abbot the President, and the Senior Monks Professors in the seat of learning. They were not lazy idle monks that were found in those houses, but hard-working teachers or professors. We need not doubt that part of their time was spent in working with their hands, whether on the lands that were around the buildings, or in such trades as were useful and profitable.

The accounts that are given of the number of bishops appointed by Patrick are very puzzling to the modern advocates of prelacy, and great efforts are made to lessen the value of such testimony as has been handed down regarding that point. You have seen the allegations that were put forward to destroy the force of the argument that rests on the large number of bishops. There is only one writer, we are told, that mentions that, Nennius, who lived several hundred years after the event, and therefore untrustworthy. It is a legendary account, and no reliance is to be placed on it. If in the eighth or ninth centuries a man was disposed to exaggerate the number of bishops, it is a proper question to ask, what motive was there for doing so? Was that an age when Presbyterian principles were popular? Was Nennius one that wished to manufacture evidence in favour of bishops of the New Testament order? Why, the motive was all the other way. If facts were to be shaped so as to support a theory, then

the shaping would have been in the direction of lessening the number, rather than of increasing it. The whole trend of events in that age was in the direction of prelacy, rather than in favour of the identity of the presbyters and bishops. But he does not stand alone as alleged. There are other proofs in favour of a large number of bishops being in the country. There is a catalogue of the saints of Ireland first published by Archbishop Ussher, and supposed to have been written not later than the middle of the eighth century, and the following words are found in it: "The first order of Catholic saints was in the time of Patrick, and then they were all bishops, famous and holy, and full of the Holy Ghost, three hundred and fifty in number, founders of churches." Philip Smith, himself belonging to the Church of England, so far as I know, in his *Students' Ecclesiastical History*, and all the Smith series of books are regarded as of high standing, says in a note, part of which is a quotation from Burton: "The bishops consecrated by St. Patrick in Ireland were reckoned by hundreds. One of the most moderate of the estimates makes them 365, one for each day in the year. When Ireland was subjected to the Papacy, these were converted into rural deans." There are other witnesses that might be brought forward, but what we have put on the stand are enough. It is a notorious fact that for centuries after bishops were numerous in Ireland, and as the Papacy gradually acquired control of the Church the efforts that were strenuously put forth were to lessen the number and

bring them more and more into the position of diocesan bishops, which they were not before, but were over single congregations. Even Dr. Reeves, himself one of the most noted of the antiquarians among the prelates of Ireland, confesses that the territory under a bishop in Down was more like a parish than a diocese. That our friends in the late controversy were so desperate, I might almost say unscrupulous, in discrediting the statement of Nennius, shows how much importance they attached to such a fact. Whether Nennius was reliable or not was of trifling importance with me. As we base our doctrine and polity on the Holy Scriptures, I had nothing at stake, but it seemed to be a matter of life and death with them. You see, therefore, how his statement is corroborated by several others, and that by witnesses who would fain have it otherwise.

The inferences to be made are obvious. These bishops of Patrick's time, and for centuries afterward in the Irish church, were bishops of the New Testament type, not prelates or diocesan bishops, as bishops have been in later times. They were pastors of congregations, and each had a number of presbyters, or elders, under him. Thus we have a testimony that cannot be overthrown by any cross-examination in favour of the continuance up to that time of the New Testament polity of bishops and presbyters being interchangeable terms, as we shall see it was far from being a solitary instance of that early polity. We will find the same in Scotland, and the same is found in France, where it is possible Patrick came from.

You will also notice that the Church of Rome has no claim whatever on Patrick and the work done by him and the church that he established by the blessing of God. It was centuries after that before the Church of Rome got a footing in the Island, and the struggle that the Irish Church made to maintain its independence was long and fierce. How long are we of the Reformed Churches by our silence and inaction to allow the Church of Rome to monopolize the patron saint of Ireland? Many, it is to be feared, do not know the facts of the case as I have stated them very briefly here, and many others are careless to inquire. This should not be so. We should take pains to acquire and diffuse information of this kind, and be ever asserting our rights. We should never let an opportunity slip of declaring what we believe to be the true history of the early Irish Church, and of Patrick in particular.

We now go on to tell of the missionary labours of the followers of Patrick, and particularly of Columba and the Collegiate institution he set up in the Island of Iona, a mission that was the means of spreading the Gospel all over North Britain and even into the northern parts of England. He is better known to many by the name of Columbkille. He was born in County Donegal, and after he was forty years of age, he with twelve others set sail for Derry in a rude boat of the time, and reached Scotland, where in some way the Island of Ii or Iona was given him for a settlement. Here was the centre of his labours for the rest of his life, and for many generations it was a great

centre of learning and of Gospel light for far and wide. The religious house which he founded was not a monastery as monasteries were known at the time of the Reformation, but of the kind I spoke of as abounding in Ireland. The inmates were not bound by vows of chastity, and they could go and come as they pleased. It was simply a college of the kind suited to those primitive times, and numerous youths were trained in it, and sent out to evangelize among the Picts and Scots, and to act as ministers or bishops of the apostolic kind. The presbyter-abbot and his monks ordained, and many bishops were under the jurisdiction of the college, or as we would call it in modern times, the college faculty, with the abbot as the president or principal. Other institutions of the same kind were founded in various parts of Scotland, the following being but a few of the places that might be mentioned: Abernethy, Dunkeld, Brechin, Dunblane, St. Andrews and Aberdeen. Some of these survived until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There was a great conflict before they were reduced under the authority of the Church of Rome. There are many testimonies that might be given from Roman Catholic writers bearing on the purity of the character of the Culdees, as they came to be called. As regards the doctrines that were taught, and their persistent opposition to Romish influence, so much opposed were they to the Roman emissaries, that presbyter-abbots who were bishops of the New Testament type, and were often called so, refused even to eat at the same table with the clerics that the Pope sent.

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As in Ireland, so in Scotland, the heads of the Culdee houses were given preferment in the Church, in order to win them over. They were not wholly suppressed until within a measurable distance of the Reformation itself, and there is no doubt that the teachings of the Culdees had some influence on that great movement, and especially on the thoroughness with which it was effected in North Britain. The missionaries from Iona were the first to win the Saxons of the north of England to Christ, and the first bishops of that region got their ordination from the presbyters of Iona. When it was suggested in the late newspaper controversy that Iona gave bishops to England, it was very sturdily denied, but the evidence from many sources is too strong to admit of its being questioned. Even Lightfoot, the late Bishop of Durham, which is the region where Aidan, Colman and others from Iona laboured, admits it. There has been no prelate in England for generations of greater rank in scholarship or even judgment and sagacity superior to Bishop Lightfoot. They who deny the facts of history here referred to, show either their ignorance or their prejudice in favour of a theory to which they are wedded. Here again we have incontestable evidence that the establishment at Iona and all her daughters and missionaries were irreconcilable in their opposition to Rome. I cannot do better here than quote Lightfoot's own words on this point: "The independence of the Celtic missionary is a patent fact, and stands out in strong contrast to later evangelistic movements in western Europe. Rome neither initiated nor con-

trolled these Celtic missions. The missionaries owed allegiance not to the bishop of Rome, but to the presbyter-abbot of Iona. There is no evidence that they sought or accepted any authoritative directions from the Roman mission in the south of England. Their usages were different in many respects from the usages of Rome. When these came under discussion, and it was a question between allegiance to Iona and allegiance to Rome, they unhesitatingly chose the former. It is probable, indeed, that if asked they would have granted a certain precedency to the great patriarch of the west, the bishop of the world's metropolis, though of this there is no evidence ; but it is quite plain on the other hand that in their eyes he had no constitutional right to command them. Roman direction is treated as absolutely valueless by them ; Roman wishes are disregarded. Sooner than abandon the traditions and customs of Iona for those of Rome, they retire altogether from the field, leaving the rich fruits of their labours to others at the very moment when the harvest is fully ripe. The abbot of Iona, the successor of Columba, is their acknowledged ruler, the ruler even of bishops, though only a simple presbyter, their superior in ecclesiastical office, though their inferior in spiritual functions. From him they receive their commission, though not their consecration ; and to him they render their account. The bishop of Rome is in no sense their master." You will see that in these latter statements the impartial scholar and historian is subordinated to the Churchman who is wedded to prelacy. There is not the slightest

evidence to show that they did not receive their consecration from Iona ; all the evidence is in the opposite direction, as we shall now see. Here again you will see fresh illustration of the fact already alluded to that Rome had nothing to do with Patrick and the founding of the Irish Church, and can claim no credit in that good work. The establishment of Iona was by a child of the Irish Church. Columba went from Ireland, and the date of his crossing over in the rude coracle boat was about a century after the death of Patrick. Columba's labours continued for about thirty years, and the account that we have of his death is touching and pathetic as well as beautiful. It is in these words that Professor Mitchell, of St. Andrews, describes his end : " The day before he died, ascending the hill which overlooked the monastery and its little farm, he stood surveying it for some time, and, lifting up both his hands, bestowed on it his parting blessing. Returning to his hut, he resumed his daily task in transcribing the Psalter, and proceeding to the place where it is written, ' They that seek the Lord, shall not lack any good thing,' ' Here,' he said, at the close of the page, ' I must stop : what follows let Baithene write,' indicating him apparently as his successor. After some time he lay down to rest, but when the bell for matins rang, he hastened to the church, and, ere the brethren could join him, he had fainted before the altar. Unable to speak, he made a feeble effort once more to raise his right hand to bless them, and with joy beaming in his face, passed to his rest and reward."

We now come to discuss the question as to whether

the presbyter-abbot of Iona and the seniors of those that were associated with him, the professors as we have called them, exercised the right of ordaining, and as our friends would say, of consecrating. In modern times, both in the Anglican Church and in the Roman Catholic Church, nobody can ordain but a bishop, and at the consecration of a bishop there must be three other bishops present. That, as I understand, is the rule. Now if the abbot and his seniors not only ordained but consecrated, it was a serious irregularity. According to the notions of some, it was more than an irregularity ; it was something that is not to be borne. It was outside of all law and order ; it was not an order of the Church at all. The body that suffers such a thing is only a body ; it cannot, according to our friends, be called a Church. We often hear the statement made, "the stream can rise no higher than the fountain," but on the other hand, facts are facts, and they may not be changed or manipulated to bring them into harmony with a theory. The theory may be very fine and beautiful, it may be even indispensable, or seem to be so, but the facts, according to scientific order, must take precedence of the theory. All admit that bishops were under the jurisdiction of the presbyter-abbot. There is no dispute there. The dispute is that while the abbot ruled over them he did not ordain or consecrate ; he kept a bishop in the establishment to lay hands on the young men, and transmit the episcopal grace. When asked to furnish proof of the presence of a bishop in Iona, there is not a particle of evidence forthcoming. There is a clear, definite

statement made by an old writer that there was no bishop at Iona. Of course the statement was made in that form in an age when bishops were thought of in the diocesan sense, that is, as bishops are regarded in the Anglican and Romish Churches. In the simple, unaffected age when Columba lived, and on until emissaries from Rome came on the scene, the presbyter was regarded as possessed of all the rights and privileges which in later days belonged exclusively to prelates. They speak as a matter of course, as if it were an every-day occurrence when the abbots and elders ordained and even consecrated, if we are at liberty to use two such words of the usages of those times. To ordain a priest and to consecrate a bishop is the language that is used now in some quarters. The strong presumption is that at that time but one term was used, and that was appoint, or designate, or ordain; the word consecrate, as it is used now by prelatical churches, was unknown to the professors of Iona and the Culdees that came after. And the bishops themselves who were appointed and sent forth to be missionaries, so far as we have any traces of their writings, always speak of having come from the elders of Iona, and when their work is done, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, they go back and report to the college of elders, no reference being ever made to a bishop that consecrated them, or to whom they report as being lords over God's heritage. The bishop, if there was one in the diocesan sense, is uniformly ignored; he is kept in the background. The fact is, there was no such bishop, and so there was no need to

speak of him, to make any reference to him. And mark the force which the testimonies of later writers have, a force that they themselves never dreamed of, and therefore it is all the more telling ; in fact the more we study it the more overwhelming it is. The later writers, Henry of Huntingdon and others, lived in days when prelacy was all but universal, when, except in out-of-the-way places, there was nothing else, and in their simplicity and straightforwardness they speak of the facts they record as being strange. As early as the time of Bede we are told that for an abbot to have jurisdiction over bishops is a very strange custom. It is something he cannot understand, and of which he can give no explanation. It was not so very strange, however, if his knowledge of things in neighbouring countries had been wider. The custom of earlier times had not died out in France, for instance, when Bede lived. But strange as the custom was, he sets it down, when, if he had had his will, the custom would not have been allowed to continue. He would fain have had it otherwise, but he does not hesitate to put down what he knows, and so far as he knows it. And so with others. There is no attempt to manipulate facts to fit in with theories. No, such a thought never entered the minds of the men of that age. They give no hint of a bishop that was kept for the purpose of consecrating or ordaining, and the reason why no reference was made to such a bishop is the best reason that can be given : there was none. If in the ninth or tenth centuries there had been any of those troublesome fellows, the Presbyterians, those obstinate, self-

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willed fellows that are as blind as not to see any particular grace in the touch of prelates' hands, those that make up bodies, but not worthy of being called churches, then they might have been charged with making such history as we have in these matters, especially as to the absence of a bishop at Iona. Well, there were some Presbyterians even then—they bore the title of Culdees—but the witnesses that are brought forward are not of that class. The witnesses are Bede, who was a good Catholic, as some of our neighbours would say, the writer of the Saxon Chronicle who was the same as Bede, and Giraldus Cambrensis, who was made a prelate in Wales in the twelfth century. And still another, John of Fordun, testifies that, "The Scots had as teachers of the faith, and administrators of the sacraments, only presbyters and monks, following the custom of the primitive church." At a later age a prelate was very angry with Fordun for saying so, calling him a "dreaming monk." It was the same monk that wrote that "Columba was held in such pre-eminence among the inhabitants of Ireland that he is said to have confirmed and consecrated all the Irish bishops of his time."

In conclusion, let me refer in a word or two to a strange doctrine that was set forth in a letter that appeared in one of the papers a few days ago. It was assumed that as there are hundreds of sects, and all of them appealing to the Bible, we might as well give up the notion of making it a standard of doctrine and life. And what is it that he will substitute as a standard which he assumes will produce agreement?

Why, history ; of all things in the world, history ! I have two good and sufficient reasons for not acceding to the proposal. The first is that we are not ready yet to abandon the Scriptures as an authority—I have no intention of doing that—to the law and the testimony. That is my main reason. The second is that there is not the slightest reason to expect that history would produce any more unity than at present. Is history free from bias ? The best of our histories are full of the men that write them, and they cannot be otherwise. The historian does his best to represent facts, but he also puts his impress on them. And I might add a third reason. The gentleman who puts forth this panacea for all the ills of division in religious matters has appealed to history, and his theory is not much helped by it yet. His security, on which he laid so much stress, is not any more secure than it was. I fear it has suffered somewhat in the controversy. Let us cultivate a spirit of fairness in all that we do ; let us give facts their due place and due importance, and pray for heavenly aid ; and while we may differ in some things, we will, as regards essentials, reach, as indeed we have reached, a far greater degree of unity than many suppose.

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LECTURE SECOND.

CHURCHES: THEIR ORIGIN AND CLAIMS.



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IN my former lecture I began by proving that the polity of the Church to which we belong is founded, as to its main features, on the Word of God. An essential of that polity is the equal rank of ministers, and in favour of the scriptural authority of that position we appeal to the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament. We have seen that those writings give no uncertain sound as to the identity of the presbyter and bishop. The best scholars of the Church of England are at one with us as to Scripture teaching on that point. Alford, Dean of Canterbury; Lightfoot, the late Bishop of Durham; Jacob, one of the latest writers on Ecclesiastical Polity, and many others support us there. When we are told that, on appeal to Scripture on such a point as that, we are treading on stale ground, we think that a strange and unwarrantable statement to make. Is Holy Scripture and what is plainly taught there ever to be called stale? That might be language to be expected from unbelievers or even sceptics, but when it comes from a minister of a Christian Church, it is hard to give it a just characterization. The Bible and the Bible alone is the reli-

gion of Protestants, so a well-known divine of the Church of England said, and we endorse that. There is no dispute then, as we have seen, as to that point. What is disputed, but not to any very serious extent, is as to when prelacy took its rise and what character it bore. In other words, when did people begin to make a distinction between bishops and presbyters, and what was the nature of that distinction? To what extent did the rank of a bishop exceed that of a presbyter? It is admitted by all whose opinion is worth regarding that there was no difference when the era of inspiration ended; in fact, one of the proofs given by Bishop Lightfoot of the identity of the two officers we have named is taken from Clemens Romanus, who was of the generation succeeding the apostles. It is claimed, however, that the Episcopate in the later sense, began to take on some "rudimentary" forms before the first century passed away, at least in the Jewish part of the Church, but not at all so early as that among Gentile Christians. Where a difference of that kind began in a sort of imperceptible way, and the growth was slow, it is impossible, as all can see, to fix down a date and say absolutely that before this there was no trace of it, but after this, and from this point, there are rudimentary traces to be discerned. As regards the growth of what we may call the prelatical idea, it could not well be put better than it is done by Bishop Lightfoot. There is hardly a word that he says on the subject of the growth that we need hesitate to endorse. He speaks of three stages clear and marked that lie between the rudimentary beginning

and the full-blown prelacy as it showed itself. These three stages are represented by Ignatius, Ireneus, and Cyprian respectively, and two generations of time separate these men in each case. In the first stage, the bishop was no more than a *bond of unity*; he was the first among equals, a sort of permanent moderator, the idea being that such superiority would give more coherence to the system in the face of persecution from without and threatened divisions from within. In the second stage the bishop, as distinct from the presbyter, was the representative of what was alleged to be *apostolic teaching*, what might more directly be called apostolic tradition. In other words, there was added to the rule which Ignatius represented an authority in matters of doctrine, and of this step forward Ireneus is the representative. The third stage, represented by Cyprian, two generations further on in time, is quite a stride further forward, when the bishop becomes so pompous and important a person as to claim to be *Christ's vicegerent on earth*. It is not alone apostolic order and apostolic teaching that are claimed, but the power of Christ Himself. Here is not only prelacy, but the bud of Popery itself, and so we might follow up and discern the steps that led to Popery. We need not wait to discuss the need for a prelate, the necessity that was in the stress and strain of the times for something different from or a development out of the primitive order of Paul and those that were associated with him. There we are dealing with what is of human authority and human expediency, and all that is in contrast with the inspired writings, or may

in a sense be a sort of development out of what Paul and other apostolic men laid down. Our position is that we go back behind the fathers and their surroundings and dangers, and plant our feet on the inspired Word of God. Scripture is sufficient for us, and it is the only sufficiency and only surety. If so then we may be asked, why refer to history at all? We reply that we never appeal to history as an authority ; we appeal to it as history, nothing more. But for what purpose? As illustrative of two things. First, we see an illustration of how men, when they resort to expediency and mix up human philosophy with the gospel, depart far from primitive order and primitive doctrine. The spectacle presented is largely a painful one. But, secondly, history shows that, in spite of the prevailing and growing conceptions, there were for many centuries clear traces of New Testament simplicity and order. There came soon, it is true, a difference to be recognized between bishops and presbyters in some places, but by no means in all places. The apostolical practices were continued, especially far from the great cities, where the ambitions of proud and grasping churchmen were so conspicuous. So we trace the primitive practices and teaching in the early Irish and Scottish Churches, in the Culdees, in the Lollards, in the Bohemians, in the Waldenses, on down to the Reformation, when men were led by the Spirit of God to go back to the Word of God again, that Word that had been buried under a heap of traditions and man-made authorities. All this we use as illustration, but when we speak of authority we go to the Word of

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God, and so does our sister Church, the Church of England, so do all the Reformed Churches, and their daughters. Let that always be clearly understood, that however much we may say of history our foundation and only foundation is the Word of God ; that and that alone is the rule of faith and manners.

And now, having given our own position, and the ground on which it rests, let us turn to an examination of the position of the other side, and the ground on which it rests. You will remember at the outset that when we base our polity as well as our doctrine on the Word of God, we do not even then propose to occupy exclusive ground ; we do not monopolize the benefits that are supposed to lie in the Church and its ordinances ; we unchurch no other Church. We welcome to fellowship and to brotherly kindness all that rest for salvation on Jesus Christ, even though they may not see eye to eye with us on minor matters. In contrast with that attitude we have the attitude of others who declare us to be no Church, who reject with contempt our ministry, who question the validity of the sacraments that we administer, and yet, with a glorious inconsistency, say that those who are baptized by us are, in some way or other, Christians. Our Christianity is very irregular, but somehow or other it is Christianity. We have some comfort after all. But we are constantly reminded that our Christianity is of a very inferior kind, hardly worth possessing, and we ought to be very grateful to these superior persons for the permission allowed us by them to call ourselves Christians in that irregular way. We now come to

see what they do say as to their own position. Dean Hook is one of the champions of this phase of teaching, of these enormous assumptions, and we will let him speak. In a sermon, entitled "Hear the Church," preached more than half a century ago, he speaks in this way of the claims that that party puts forth: "The prelates who at the present time rule the churches of these realms, were validly ordained by others, who, by means of an unbroken spiritual descent of ordination, derived their mission from the apostles and from our Lord. This continued descent is evident to every one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the catalogues of bishops, ascending up to the most remote period. Our ordinations descend in a direct, unbroken line from Peter and Paul, the apostles of the circumcision and the Gentiles. These great apostles successively ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement, bishops of Rome; and the apostolical succession was regularly continued from them to Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalianus, who ordained Patrick bishop for the Irish, and Augustine and Theodore for the English. And from those times an uninterrupted series of valid ordinations has been carried down the apostolic succession in our churches to the present day. There is not a bishop, priest or deacon among us who cannot if he please trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul." As we read these words, we have this to say: It would be difficult in all the range of theological literature to find such an array of unsupported assumptions as are in the quotation we have just made. There is perhaps not one

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affirmation made that has historical facts to support it. There are in that chain of transmission of orders many links that may be challenged. Let us examine some of them. I have seen a list of the archbishops of Canterbury from the present back to Augustine, who is set down as the first who held that office. For 900 years these prelates were Popish, some of them, indeed we may say all of them, noted for their devotion to the Romish See. Some of them were far more Romish than English. To take pride in tracing descent through such a succession is not what many of us would be proud of if we had anything else to choose from. There is no disputing about tastes; but let that pass. We have got as far back as Augustine, that is, to the beginning of the seventh century, and any one to be sure, as some of our friends speak of surety, would have to examine every link before he could be certain, and there is reason to believe that some of them are shaky enough. I certainly would be very loth to pin my salvation to the validity of these links. We have still many centuries to go before we get back to the apostles. Augustine got his consecration in France some time after he came to England as a missionary. It is assumed that a succession may be traced back to the early days of Christianity at Rome. There are lists no doubt given, but how far those lists rest on genuine historical evidence is another question. I have no interest in verifying the steps, even if I were able, but if I were dependent on that for security I would have to do it, or else exercise an amazing amount of credulity in

other men whose historic evidence, to say the least, is of a somewhat doubtful character. We go back, however, to the beginning of the second century and the latter part of the first, and there are several links there, and especially that which joins on to the apostolic part of the chain, if there be an apostolic part, and there is an utter absence of certainty. Even Mr. Spencer himself is uncertain here. It "may be," "it is probable," there is a "possibility," there is a "bare possibility." Who can affirm without the shadow of a doubt, that Paul was a bishop of Rome; that even Paul laid hands on a bishop of Rome? Who is prepared to give historic evidence that Peter was bishop, or ordained or consecrated a bishop, or that he ever was at Rome? Is it to be wondered at if respectable English scholars scout the idea of an apostolic succession? There is not one scholar or historian of note ready to stake his reputation on such a figment being capable of proof, and even if it were proved what is it worth?

If we turn to the channel of the old British Church, there is an equal want of solid ground to stand upon. Green, a most reliable historian, who, if he had an axe to grind at all, it would be one that might be used in favour of succession, says that when Augustine came, the memory of the British Church was lost in what we call England. We have an account of a conference that Augustine had with the Welsh bishops or teachers, in all likelihood bishops of the primitive order, but the Welshmen would have nothing to do with Augustine. When at a later date hundreds of

the Welsh monks were murdered by the Saxons, it was looked upon as a just judgment on them because they did not submit to Augustine, and it was regarded as in accord with a prophecy of Augustine at the time. So much for succession from that quarter. Freeman's testimony is of the same nature as Green's. He regards the Church of England as even more the child of Rome than any Church on the continent of Europe. And then supposing that the succession from the old British Church could be proved, there would be a difficulty of the same kind, if not greater, to connect the historical steps of conversions in Britain with the apostles. The thing is utterly unhistorical. What does Bishop Lightfoot say of the first bishops of Rome, as some call them, or the first Popes, as others call them, and the historical basis on which they rest? As regards discrepancies in lists that are presented by early writers, he says "they may be explained by assuming two distinct Churches in Rome—a Jewish and a Gentile community—in the first age; or they may have arisen from a confusion of the earlier and later senses of *Episcopos*" (that is the word which is translated bishop). Further on he says: "With the many possibilities of error, no more can be safely assumed of Linus and Anecletus than that they held some prominent position in the Roman Church. But the reason for supposing Clement to have been a bishop is as strong as the universal tradition of the next ages can make it. Yet, while calling him a bishop, we need not suppose him to have attained the same distinct isolated position of authority

which was occupied by his successors, Eleutherus and Victor, for instance, at the close of the second century, or even by his contemporaries, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna. He was rather the chief of presbyters than chief over the presbyters. Only when thus limited can the episcopacy of St. Clement be reconciled with the language of his own epistle, or with the notice in his younger contemporary Hermas." When commenting on other names that follow, coming to near the middle of the second century, he says: "With Pius the next in order, the office, if not the man, emerges into daylight." That is to say, the links of tactual transmission in the judgment of Bishop Lightfoot have no clearness for at least seventy years after the death of Peter and Paul, and what is essential to the theory of such transmission is not into daylight even then. It is only the office, not the man that is in the light, so even here we are far from being on safe ground. If that be surety to rest on, we do not envy those who find consolation in such surety. I am confident those who are present here, as well as thousands of others in this city, find a better surety in the Word of God, and it is at the same time simpler and more easy of attainment than the search through such doubtful lists. But I have not done with what writers of the Church of England have to say on the matter. This is what Jacob says: "If from the consideration of the conclusive argument, derived from the absence of all scriptural authority, we turn to matters of fact and historical experience, we may see some who profess to have this apostolic succession, teaching vain

traditions and gross errors instead of apostolic truth : and some, who make no pretensions to it, and are not even episcopally ordained, altogether sound in doctrine and in practice, and with as true seals of their ministry among their people as St. Paul had of his apostleship among the Christians at Corinth." "Of an apostolic succession which is not commanded by the apostles, nor mentioned in the New Testament, which professes to transmit powers, never, as far as we know, by the apostles either received or given, which secures no soundness in the faith, but lends itself to error, as readily as to truth, which can exclude the best as well as include the worst of ministers, and which would leave every Church in doubt about the validity of its ministrations and very existence ; it is surely not too much to say that it "is a fond thing vainly invented," and grounded on no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." These are a very few of the testimonies that may be adduced from the very best of Church of England divines in regard to the apostolic succession, and they prove two things which I ask all to note carefully and remember hereafter when talking with neighbours, namely : first, that the theory is utterly baseless, an imagination, a figment, a delusion ; and, secondly, it is not a doctrine of the Church of England. Although our neighbours presume to speak for that Church, they do not speak for it ; what they teach is repudiated by a multitude of the best men in it and by the authoritative standards of that Church.

Here, as is the rule in other cases, one error

leads to other errors. Back of the theory of the succession lies sacerdotalism, which means that, instead of a Christian ministry whose work it is to declare the counsel of God, we would have a priesthood that would stand between the people and God. I am aware that there is a comparatively harmless use of the word priest, while there is a use of the word that is revolting to all true Christians, and ought to be. In the Church of England the words presbyter and priest are used as interchangeable terms, and etymologically they are the same word, but the word priest, as used by an evangelical member of a prelatical Church, has one sense, that is, as differing nothing of any importance from what we mean by a minister, while it is used by one ritualistically inclined in a very different sense, that is, as a priest in the Old Testament sense, a man who comes between the soul and God, and represents the laity, so called, before God. In other words, the priest in the latter sense is a man who offers sacrifice and burns incense. That is the position that the full-blown ritualist assumes, such men as we have had to deal with in this controversy. I do not hold the Church of England or any of her daughters directly responsible for this, that is to say, any further than that Church has passively permitted such sacerdotalism to be practised within her pale. Whether the prelatical Churches were justified in allowing such an abuse to go on under the shelter of their wings, it is not for me to say. I prefer to leave such questions to be settled by these Churches themselves. I am aware of the difficulties that are in the way, and I know how faithfully

many individuals of those Churches, both of the clergy and the laity, raise their voices against the evil. According to the best authorities of the prelatial Churches themselves such priestly functions were not assumed by the Christians of at least the first two centuries. According to Lightfoot, Tertullian was the first to put forth openly such a claim as may be called priestly, and he was not converted until the last decade of the second century. The same writer ascribes the evil leaven to Greek influence, in other words, to heathen importation, but Jacob is inclined to think "it was in part, at least, Jewish in its origin." Wherever it came from, it was subversive of the true spirit of Christianity as it is now when taught and practised by those of the ritualistic school. All who hold Christianity dear should be careful to resist in every way in their power the introduction of a priest between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a leaven is fatal to the New Testament idea of salvation, and to the teaching that all the people of the Lord now are a spiritual priesthood. If the priesthood be sanctioned, the confessional and absolution are not far off; and, indeed, in some quarters are not in any way disguised. Where is the man that has anything of the man in him, that will for a moment think of having his wife or daughter or sister pass through the cesspool of a confessional? You will all hold up your hands in protest against such a practice. The apostolic succession, the priesthood, the confessional are never far apart from one another. Let each be treated as a part of an organized whole that embraces all and a great deal more than I have mentioned above.

Having disposed of the claim as to apostolic succession, we may be permitted to say a few words as to the claims of antiquity which some people of the Church of England make as compared with that of the Church of Scotland. Let it be understood that we are not very anxious to count the number of grey hairs that are on our venerable mother's head—I mean the Church of Scotland—we did not raise the question. It is when a slight is attempted to be put on us in that connection that we are inclined to resent it, of course in a playful way. If some of those who pretend to speak for our sister church were not so inclined to take airs to themselves because of their age and aristocratic pedigree, we would hardly think it worth while to say a word. At any rate the aristocratic feeling in the matter of Church relations might be allowed to rest. We thought that the writer of the Epistle of James had settled such a question as that long ago. There are people in this world that set a great deal on tone, as it is called, as regards Churches, but when it comes to the great day of account it is very doubtful, or rather, it is not at all doubtful if tone will count for much. The aristocracy that is so large in the eyes of some here will be very small in some cases there. Well, then, what is to be said on such an important topic, now that it is forced upon us? We have heard in letters that we have read that a certain institution is nearly 1900 years old, and that a perfect identity has been maintained all that time. "Men may come and men may go, but I go on for ever." We are just the same as we were nearly 1900 years

ago. We were called Popish for some centuries. We gave a good deal of adulation to Rome ; we for centuries sent a good many pence to the so-called vicar of Christ there, and then we were called Protestants, but that is a misnomer ; people spoke of a Reformation, but that is a word which we repudiate ; at least, we do not like it, we do not speak often of it, and we would be glad if you did not say much of it. There was, of course, a Reformation on the Continent, and there was one up north there in Scotland among those half-barbarians, with their unspeakable Scotch lingo, but in England there was no revolutionary Reformation ; a little change only, a ripple on the surface, that was all. Lanfranc was in Canterbury, so was Cranmer, and so on with the others that were before as well as after that nasty man whose name we do not want to name, Henry the Eighth. But seriously, there must be lopped off a little from that 1900 years that have been dinned into our ears. I do not want to be anything but courteous, but I do not feel disposed to go further back than Augustine, and I concede a good deal when I do that. We'll say, A.D. 597, that is, in round numbers, thirteen centuries instead of the nineteen. But the Church of Scotland on the same principle has as good grounds for going back to the settlement of Columba in Iona, and beginning her age then. In that case we are older by more than thirty years. Columba's settlement dates from 565. We are quite willing to have this question adjudged for us by impartial and unprejudiced umpires ; we are prepared to leave it to arbitration. What is there that can be said of the claims of the one, to begin with

Augustine, that cannot be said of the claims of the other, to begin with Columba? The Church of England is the legal heir of the status, buildings, income, and so forth, of the Church that was in the country before the Reformation; in like manner the Church of Scotland is the legal heir of the Church that was in the northern part of the Island prior to the Reformation. It is true the wealth of the northern Church was very much diminished at the Reformation because of greedy and grasping nobles who laid unholy hands on a part of it, and we are sorry for it; that, however, was not the fault of the Church, though it was her misfortune. That cannot be held to affect the succession, however, and here we are not speaking of the succession that consists in tactual transmission of episcopal grace; it is altogether another kind of succession we are speaking of. If those who advocate the claims of the southern Church point to a succession of men who in dark days were more or less evangelical in their preaching, and who were resolute in their endeavour to limit the foreign ecclesiastical domination, those that speak for the northern Church can point to no less, but more, of the same kind; they can take pride in the Culdees and the Lollards who, up to the very eve of the Reformation, were more or less loyal to Gospel truth and resolute in their resistance to foreign ecclesiastical tyranny. In all modesty, we think that the claim we make for being fully the equal of our sister in antiquity is successfully made out, and we move the court of arbitration for judgment on our behalf. As regards those thirty odd years that are in our

favour, we promise that we will not put on too many airs, we will be a modest sister, no more. But remember, there are to be no more disownings of us as in time past; no more of that arrogance which was as unmannerly and ill-timed, as it was ill-founded. We stipulate that no more coy advances be made towards Italy or Constantinople, for you have been snubbed enough from those quarters, and it is true our sister should know and recognize a rebuff when she receives one from creatures that are of none the best of character. With such lovers, pure maidens, even though they be somewhat advanced in life, should have no dealings whatever.

When we come to look at the Reformation in the two countries and make, as we may make, a candid, friendly and frank criticism of what in the providence and grace of God was actually accomplished, we have this to say, at least, that what came out of it in England cannot be affirmed to be superior to what came out of it in Scotland. In north Britain the principle that the Reformers set before them was to cut off and uproot all that Scripture did not positively warrant, while in south Britain everything not positively forbidden was allowed to remain. Consequently, the work was much more thoroughly done in the north than in the south. There were in England many that were disposed to go a great deal beyond what was done; men that were represented afterwards by the Puritans. This large section were heart and soul with the Reformers on the Continent and their brethren across the border, but they were restrained by the Crown. The intolerant and

bigoted obstinacy of the Tudors, and at a later date of the Stuarts, was such that the free action of the reforming party, the party that was really leavened with the Gospel, was hampered, and the progress was arrested when they had gone little more than half way. The legislation that was effected put a yoke around the neck of the Church, and it has in large part hung there to this day, to the wounding of many both within and without the Church of England. If the tolerance of later days had been understood and practised, if the Puritans had been retained instead of driven out, and at one time very little would have sufficed to keep them, what a blessing it would have been for the country at large as well as for the world? If the leading churchmen had only been of the temper of Archbishop Ussher, and the ministers of the Crown, or even the sovereign himself, had been different, the schisms would have been avoided. In that case the two tendencies would have reacted on one another, and the Church of England would not have had the bitter foe she has to-day in the powerful and influential body of Dissent that is in the land, and that is more and more a great factor in legislation. As the Church is so much the creature of parliament, the punishment of former sins tells all the more on her. When all this is considered, our neighbours, instead of assuming superior airs should be humble ; instead of unchurching others, they should be very thankful that they are not unchurched. If we stood on stepping stones with her and remembered the persecutions our fathers endured at the hands of their fathers ; if we called to mind the

twenty-eight years of the "killing time," we would have nothing to do with them for their fathers' sake. That we are willing after all to acknowledge her as a sister ought to elicit a response of a very different kind. That we do so should encourage them to aim, at having the remaining shackles of an irksome kind stricken from her limbs, so that she may stand forth in true freedom as a spiritual Church, no longer leaning on the crutches of Acts of Parliament. A Church, we think, should legislate for herself, and not be dependent for legislation on an assembly of men, many of whom are hostile to her, and some of whom are not believers in the Christian religion.

Another phase of the history of the two Churches is seen in the character of the secessions that have gone out from them. As we look at these secessions in the one country and the other, may we not reach conclusions which bear both on the characteristics of the two peoples, and the extent to which in each case the people were leavened by the principles of the Reformation? The secessions that took place in England are represented by such Church bodies as the Congregationalists, the Baptists and the Methodists. We need not here refer particularly to the Presbyterians, though in Wales there is a strong, numerous and influential Church of that persuasion. In Scotland there are such secession Churches as the Free Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and a number of smaller Churches of the same order. Now mark the relation in which dissent stands in each country towards the national Church. In north Britain those that dissent are no

less Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in government than the national Church is, but more ; at least the claim that they make is that they are more than the mother Church from which they broke off. In breaking off from the State they believed, and their descendants now believe, that there is a better opportunity to work out both doctrine and polity in Free Churches than when hampered by State control. Of course, I am not concerned here as to whether they were right or wrong in the view that they take as to the State and its influence. The point that I want to make is that the Scotch people show no disposition to break off from Presbyterian polity ; those that are out of the national Church, with but few exceptions, are as warmly attached to the doctrine and polity that John Knox and others set up, as founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, as those that are within the national Church. Contrast that with the state of things in south Britain. In not one of the dissenting Churches is prelacy retained. Whether the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Methodists and others were right, or whether they were wrong in casting from them that feature of polity is not what we are discussing now. That they did cast it off is the fact that is before us, account for it as we may. What seems to be the case is this, that the English people of the Reformation, as soon as they broke off from State control and State restrictions, were determined to be wholly free from every rag and remnant of Popery, of whatever would remind them of the bondage to Rome that sat on their fathers as a night-

mare for centuries, say, from the beginning of the seventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth, nine long centuries. When they went out they shut the door behind them, and showed a stern resolve not to go back to what they at least regarded as beggarly elements. These contrasts between the two countries and the people that live in them and the trend of religious thought, as well as of the forms of Church life, are remarkable, are well worthy of study, and if they can be accounted for in a philosophical way, let an attempt be made to do so. I take it that in this there is suggested the strongest possible presumption that if the people of England had been free to act in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, if the free action of the people had not been blocked by the arbitrary intervention of the Crown, the outward form of the Reformation in that country would have conformed more closely than it did to the shape it took in the Continent of Europe generally and in Scotland in particular. Whether that on the whole would have been a greater good or a greater evil, it is not our province at this moment to discuss or attempt to determine.

We may conclude this lecture with an examination of the idea of the Church put forward by our neighbours in the course of this controversy. Here, indeed, in a way we get down to the root of the whole matter. As we look at the statements made, not in a veiled way, but broadly avowed, we cannot help saying that the position taken up, as well as the arguments brought forward in support of it, is essentially the position that

Rome takes with regard to the Church. All Protestants hold that there are two aspects of the Church, one that we call invisible, and the other visible. It is to the invisible only that the promises absolutely apply. To no visible Church can these promises of Christ's presence and absolute protection apply. The Scriptures properly understood do not endorse the claims that Rome or any imitator of Rome makes. Churches have erred, and may err, and they may err to such an extent that the Lord Jesus Christ may spew them out of His mouth. Here is where Romish theologians make a mistake in claiming for the visible Church the promises that are made to what we call the invisible Church. So with her imitators who lay so much stress on orders and successions. You would think, to hear these people speak, that the Church existed for the bishops, priests, and deacons, whereas the bishops, priests and deacons exist for the Church. The Church is made up of individuals who believe in Christ, that is the essential thing. When you have men who are in loving union with Christ you have the Church. Some order is necessary, but that order is merely an incidental thing; the spiritual union with Christ is the main thing. If you have what is essential, it is of but little moment what kind of office-bearers you have, and what name you call them. What is called ordination, or what is called consecration, are matters not worth fighting about, unless insufferable exclusiveness and intolerance be associated with the theory that is put forward. What Dr. Jacob, himself a minister of the Church of

England, says, is so well put, that I quote it here :
“ The authority of the Christian minister in any place is given to him by the Church in which and for which he acts, and this authority is apostolic if his teaching is sound in apostolic truth ; this authority is from Christ, if His Church is a legitimate Christian community formed in obedience to Christ’s command.” We can all endorse such teaching as that, and nothing else is either conformable to Scripture or to common sense.

We may very well test a theory by demanding how it will work in certain cases that are quite supposable in the world’s experience. You cannot have a church without bishops, we are told ; you cannot have valid sacraments without apostolic order in the transmission of episcopal grace ; you cannot be sure of the position wherein you stand in relation to the salvation of the soul. Very well, we say ; we grant that to be an hypothesis for the moment, let us see how it works in certain cases. Here is an island in a remote part of the world. The people that dwell on it were not long ago heathen, without the knowledge of God or of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. In some way or other the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue fall into the hands of these idolaters ; they read those Scriptures ; they are touched by what they read ; by the blessing of God’s Spirit they come to see Jesus Christ the Son of God as in some measure we see Him, and they trust in Him. Their lives are changed step by step. They turn from their former sinful courses and their lives, as a rule, are marked by the purity that the Bible enjoins. By and by the best informed

among the converts are in some rudimentary way set apart as ministers, and ordinances are observed, the Word is preached, prayer is offered in public, and the sacraments are administered. Men and women among them die rejoicing in the Saviour, whose blood redeemed them. Dare any man say that there is a truer Church on earth than the community of believers on that island? Let us say that when a generation passes away a bishop comes along of the modern kind, and he confirms the converts there and ordains presbyters over them, is there a higher kind of holiness as the result of that episcopal visit? Do those that die after that have any more joy in Christ, and look more confidently for a resurrection than those that died previously? When we look at the picture, which is by no means overdrawn, and ask what is essential to a Church, and what is merely accidental or incidental to a Church, what is the answer that any reasonable, impartial person will give? Will the answer not be that the salvation of souls is the main thing, and that office-bearers are but incidental? Or suppose another case which possibly is a more common thing than what we have just referred to. Supposing that it was not a copy or copies of the Holy Scriptures, or, at all events, nor these alone that in God's providence and grace came in the way of the people on that island; supposing, say, that in a shipwreck, or on board a castaway, a sailor with his Bible was thrown on that island. He himself is an humble Christian, and without intending to be a missionary, he by the force of circumstances becomes one. As he read his Bible and prayed over it for years in the fore-castle, and his spiritual life uncon-

sciously developed, he never dreamed of the work that was before him. Had anybody suggested such a destiny, he would have shrank back in horror from the undertaking. He was of slow lip and stammering tongue. Here, however, he is cut off from all the world he knew and prized. He begins to learn the tongue of those among whom he is cast, and as he and they come to understand one another he communicates to them in the smallest of morsels what he knows and can express of the Christian religion. After a time, and very slowly, the truth begins to tell. The belief in idols gets shattered ; the practice of idolatry is given up. A different kind of life from what used to be common begins to be lived ; the faintest buddings of a pure Christian life begin to appear, and these are ever more and more manifest. The leaven spreads, and before that shipwrecked sailor ends his days the moral and spiritual wilderness is blossoming as the rose ; the desert has become a fruitful field. Is that community of believers not a Church, a true Church, a Church planted and nourished by God Himself? The means were very humble. It may be that generations pass away before the boldness is assumed of administering the sacraments ; but whether they are administered or not there are saved souls there, and that is the main thing ; and if, after much thought and amidst much trepidation, some do at length venture to baptize in the name of the Triune God, and to break the bread and pour out the wine, and to hand it to the disciples in the name of Christ, as emblems of His death, who will say that such an observance is less valid in the sight of God than a sacramental observ-

ance in St. Paul's, London, or in the Minster in York, where all outward order is observed as it has been for centuries? I ask again, as we study this picture, what is essential to a Church, what is it without which a Church is an utterly empty thing, a mockery? Is it not that souls be saved, that lives be purified, that natures be sanctified? If such fruits be present, you have all that is needed to make a Church of the living God. On the other hand, you may have office-bearers from the Pope himself, with all his pretensions to be vicegerent of Christ, down through an endless grade of office-bearers, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deans, priests, and deacons, down to acolytes, and if there be any humbler than that put them as if you please, and be destitute of the presence of the Spirit of God with His converting and sanctifying power. I say it is possible to have this, though I trust such emptiness of real spiritual power is not often found, and if so, what then? May I not say everything in its order, and that order the order of importance in God's sight? What is of most importance is surely that which all evangelical Churches have in common; what is of least importance is that wherein good men differ. But is there a sillier thing to do than when one Church proceeds to unchurch all others, not because of doctrines that are essential, but because of mere orders? Can a more contemptible thing be thought of than that men who profess to be followers of Jesus and the apostles should dare to tell other men, "Except ye have the apostolic order as we understand it, and we claim to have it, ye are not a Church at all, and your chances of salvation are very slight?"

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