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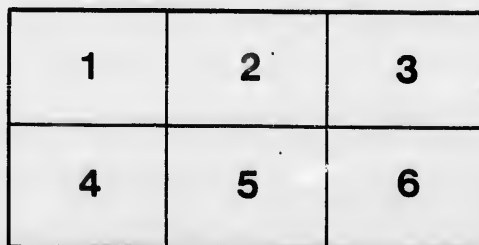
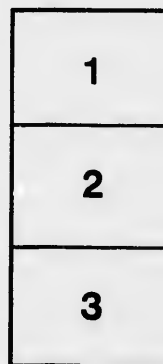
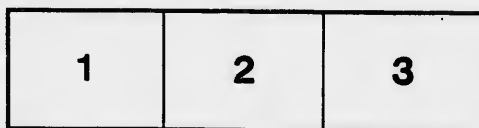
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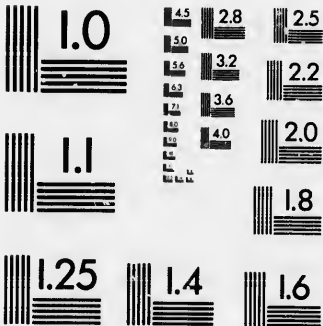
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BY

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Synopsis.

PRELIMINARY.

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ERRATA.

- Page 17, line 19 from the top, for "possessed," read "professed."
Page 22, lines 1, 2, for "of Laodicea," read "of the Laodiceans;"
and after "Ephesus," in lines 2, 3, 4, for "of," read "in."
Page 42, the last marginal reference should be numbered "9," not "2."
Page 115, last line, for "in," read "with."
Page 147, line 25, for "rebuked," read "rebuke."
Page 153, line 21, last word, for "the," read "them."
Page 154, lines 25 and 30, for "John and Mark," read "John Mark."
Pages 155 and 156, in each marginal reference, write "—" for "·";
Page 254, line 24, for "mutual law," read "mutual love."
Page 277, line 11, for "elective," read "elicitive."

Introduction.

IN the same chiliad appeared the two races and agencies, Jewish and Grecian, that have most remarkably, powerfully and beneficially influenced mankind. The Jews have been the depot and vehicle of religious truth and culture; the Greeks of civilisation or secular improvement. God selected the first people to be his great national receptacle and instrument of spiritual benefit; he has employed the second to be his great national receptacle and instrument of secular benefit. "Salvation is of the Jews;" civilization is of the Greeks. The actual development and issue attest this view, while the vocation of the Jews is matter of revelation. Abraham, the believer and the friend of God, became the head of a remarkable family and an illustrious race. Of this race, Egypt, the primary seat of postdiluvian civilization, became alternately the nurse and the oppressor but still the sphere, until the strength and expansion requisite for nationality in Canaan were attained, and then Moses was chosen to be the national leader and head. Under

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e Laodiceans;"
in."
1 "9," not "2."

John Mark."
" for " ; " .

him the nation was liberated and organized, and its civil and religious system, the communication of God, was matured and written. Under his successor the national territory was conquered and occupied; and then the Jews began that important national career which has been, still is, and always will be, pregnant with the best and mightiest influence on mankind. Among them the oracles of God, the most precious of the divine gifts and deposits, were faithfully preserved and transmitted; and after various lapses and chastisements, the cardinal verity of Jehovah's spirituality and sole godhead was unswervingly recognized and avowed. Illustrious names adorn the Jewish annals, as Moses, the national liberator and legislator; Joshua, the national planter; Samuel, the seer; David, the warrior-king and lyric poet; Solomon, the wise and wealthy, the student, proverbialist, and temple-builder; Elijah, the heroic prophet; Isaiah, the evangelical prophet; Daniel, the statesman and religiousist, sagacious and inflexible; with other names renowned and revered. The greatest name of all, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, David's son and lord, to whom every other name is tributary, and to whom the world is subject, appears towards the close, to wind up the national drama and prepare for a better era,—preceded by John the Baptist, his harbinger,—and succeeded by twelve disciples, his selected and suitable agents, his apostles or messengers, the germ and nucleus of his church, to form and extend his kingdom among men,

in its final and perfected institutions, records, and rules. Then the collective national existence terminated by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and by the dispersion of the people. But the race still exists, monumentally and miraculously, and is probably reserved for some ulterior function and for an appropriate consummation.

To Greece was providentially assigned the noble though secondary task of secular improvement: "The Greeks seek after wisdom." How eminently that task has been fulfilled, let Grecian poetry, oratory, logic, geometry, philosophy, history, architecture, sculpture, painting, civil government and heroism declare. Homer, Euripides, Sophocles, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Miltiades, Epaminondas, Zeuxis, Apelles, Polygnotus, Phidias, Praxitiles, and Archimedes are a very few of the names which the world will never let die. Grecian architecture, sculpture, poetry, eloquence, and geometrical science are still the study and model of mankind. The science, literature, and arts of Greece are exerting a still mightier and more extensive influence in the world, and will never cease to stimulate and mould the enlightened minds of our race. Whoever wishes to appreciate the beautiful must turn to the memorials and monuments of Greece.

How wonderful have been the fortunes and the fates of those two nations, the Hebrews and the Hellenes!

They arose together; the one on the south side, the other on the north, of Earth's central sea. One is the spiritual teacher of mankind, the other the secular. From Palestine flows the stream of religious influence; from Greece issue the waters of civilization; and, in Christendom, these converge and co-operate for the world's amendment. The Greek language embodies the treasures of both; for it is not only the language of Homer, Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Aristotle, but also the language of the older inspiration, in the Septuagint translation, and of the later revelation, in the Hellenistic New Testament. Greece poured its waters of civilization into the Roman empire; Judea emptied her river of life into the church of Christ; and beneath the permeating purifying power of Christianity, the spiritual and the secular have become effectively confluent in Christendom, and are destined to fertilize every portion of our globe. Judea was not uncivilized, but pre-eminently religious, for true religion invariably ensures civilization; Greece was not wholly irreligious, but pre-eminently civilized, for Paul recognized the Athenians as "very religious;"¹ yet it is Jewish religion, not Jewish civilization, and Grecian civilization, not Grecian religion, that are influencing mankind. Wherever scriptural christianity prevails, we find the spiritual life

¹ Acts xvii. 22. "The best critics, for the last two centuries (and of the antient ones Chrysostom), have been pretty much agreed that *θεισιν* must here have the *good sense*."—Bloomfield's *Recensio Synoptica*, *in loc*.

of the consummated Jewish religion and the secular refinement of Greece; the first in the church, the second in the nation, both together in society at large. The church is the primary organism. Under the stimulus and control of Christianity, human society has excelled "all Greek, all Roman fame;" nations have attained a combination of freedom and security which erst the world never knew; secular science and art have become wonderfully progressive and productive; and as the church conveys more widely and faithfully the means of religious liberation and life, the prospects of our race brighten into visions of universal purity and peace.

In accordance with these views is the apostolical distinction of "Jew and Greek." Both are equally fallen.¹ To the former first, with obvious propriety, the gospel was sent.² The latter seeks after "wisdom," and, in the pride of his refinement, deems the gospel "foolishness."³ But to both alike and without distinction, on believing, the gospel is appropriate and effectual.⁴ Both are distinguished from the church of God.⁵ Retribution will be dealt to both, without respect of persons.⁶

The contemplation of mankind, past, present and

¹ Rom. iii. 9.

² Rom. i. 16.

³ 1 Cor. i. 22, 23.

⁴ Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 24, and xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11.

⁵ 1 Cor. x. 32.

⁶ Rom. ii. 9—11.

The distinction or contrast, in some of those passages, is concealed by the translation of "Gentile" instead of "Greek."

prospective, forces into view that mightiest and most magnificent of all societies, the church of Christ. It is characterized by lofty aims, large resources, long duration, wide extension, simple mechanism, growing power, and glorious destiny. The world has never known a spiritual equal or a secular parallel. No kingdom, state, or association has lasted so long, struck so deeply, and spread so widely, especially with such a small beginning and such simple means. The nations of antiquity present no secular parallel. In modern times, Great Britain's power and progress make the closest approach, yet fall far below, and besides have partly sprung from Christianity,—from its recreating, animating, consolidating, fostering influence. For a spiritual equal we shall look in vain. Mohammedanism contains no such religious association; it incorporates the spiritual with the secular, and promotes the latter by means of the former; and it has neither attained such an age nor acquired such extension and influence as the Church. Paganism has never produced such machinery for embodying and extending its influence and, as a spiritual power, is but the deepening and development of man's moral deterioration. Paganism has endured and spread by concurring with the evils of humanity and by ceaselessly ministering to them: the Church has denounced and attacked those evils with relentless hostility, and proclaimed an humbling cure for them; and yet, without secular helps and

appliances, with the smallest origin, against the best-devised and best-defended systems, it has grown up into a majestic fabric, an immense and universal power. The church may have been and may now be obscured, retarded and perverted; but always in opposition to her purpose and principles and by the misconduct or treachery of her professed friends and members, and always "to emerge and rise again" with renovated strength and splendour. It always has been and still is, and by its scriptural constitution always will be, the friend and companion of human improvement. Wherever the church has no existence or has acquired as yet no adequate influence, we find either savage debasement or secular inferiority, in combination with spiritual darkness and death. Following in its wake or treading by its side, we find literature and science, the progress of art and the achievements of civilization. The church is the symbol, associate, help and pledge of the highest hopes, the dearest interests, and the noblest exertions of the human race. If from the utmost obscurity and feebleness, it has risen and expanded into its present stature and strength, what must be its potency and progress, in realizing its divine destiny, throughout future ages! The church is in every division of the globe, almost in every island of the sea; her messengers and servants traverse every ocean and explore every continent; her principles are spreading and prevailing; and her obvious aim and destiny are the conquest of the

world. Who can avert his eye from such an institute, or gaze on it unmoved? Who can contemplate with indifference a form of such size and symmetry, such divine sanction and success, radiant with celestial light, possessing and distributing the choicest gifts of Heaven, seeking and approximating universal empire? It is open to our inspection and challenges at once our scrutiny and regard.¹

The science of the church is always important and attractive but peculiarly so now. It is the science of the times, because it involves all the great questions that are now occupying and agitating human society. The primary errors of the day are Egoism and Societarianism. According to the first, which obtains in both philosophy and religion, the highest kinds of knowledge and excellence are but the development of the subjective, the operation and aspect of self. According to the second, the individual must be lost in the society and all the elements and fruits of religion be comprehended and controlled by a spiritual hierarchy. Egoism obscures and depreciates the objective to exalt self; Societarianism obscures and depreciates self to exalt society. The religious development and form of the latter is sectarianism, which exaggerates and distorts the church, and

¹ Months after the above was written, the author, for the first time, saw in one of Dr. Arnold's letters to Archbishop Whately, a recognition of "the course of Providence" in "communicating all religious knowledge to mankind through the Jewish people and all intellectual civilization through the Greeks."—Arnold's Life, sixth ed., p. 328.

practically metamorphoses the church into the disease and deformity of bigotry, caste, and confederated clericalism.

The proper remedy for error is the exact and thorough appreciation and exposition of the theme that is misapprehended or distorted. Egoistical philosophy is best corrected by sound and thorough self-science; and the depreciation or undue exaltation of the church is best counteracted and cured by exact and comprehensive church-science. The latter will serve to expose and resist sectarianism and sacerdotalism—the religion of externalism, the form of godliness without or above or against the power.

What is needed always, but now particularly, is the *science* of the church,—not conjectural estimates, transcriptive teaching, or desultory description, but analytical and logical appreciation; the *biblical* science of the church, not patristic or post-patristic theology—either individual or collective, not estimate and measurement by uninspired creeds, catechisms and canons; and the *comprehensive* science of the church, not partial aspects or sectional researches. “The Bible only is the religion of protestants,” and each portion of the bible is of *personal* though not *peculiar* interpretation.¹ No involved or previous question in this science should be left unsettled; no portion should be examined *in massa*, no conclusion reached *per saltum*, and no co-existent

¹ “No prophecy of the scripture is of any *peculiar* interpretation :” *idias*, separate, detached, peculiar.—2 Peter i. 20.

element overlooked ; from no sectarian stand-point and through no sectarian veils and lenses should the church be surveyed ; but in the spirit and attitude of devout and diligent inquiry, of severe and searching scrutiny, and in the light and atmosphere of inspiration, should this mightiest and most magnificent of all institutes be contemplated and studied. We want to know the church of Christ, not the church of the Fathers, of the Councils, of the Schoolmen or of the Reformers, by law established or by dissent determined ; and to find this church we must simply search the scriptures.

The Author of this volume was so little identified with anything sectional or sectarian, in committing his thoughts to press, as to be in the most favourable circumstances for dispassionate and impartial inquiry ; and his mode of inquiry harmonized with his position, because he sought for the science of the church in the scriptures alone, and studiously and entirely abstained from the perusal of any denominational work, that probably concurs with the current of his own thoughts and with the conclusions he has reached. For some years past he has felt and occasionally intimated the desirableness of a thorough analysis and assortment of scriptural ecclesiastical teaching ; and in the month of May, 1850, in the mountains of Jamaica, his convictions became so strong as to impel him to search and write with persevering earnestness, but without any purpose of publication. Cherishing and applying the results, as great practical

principles and guides, according to the nature and use of all truth, he sundered the ecclesiastical ties of twenty years, indeed of his whole religious life; sacrificed his ecclesiastical status, with all its involved and resultant advantages, spiritual and financial and conventional; and left a beloved land, and also endeared acquaintances and friends, to avow and practise, in a strange country, his religious and ecclesiastical principles. In the land he has left and in the ancestral land of his present and purposed residence and labours, there are several friends who can corroborate this avowal of the rise and progress of his inquiries and the circumstances of their maturation and development. The opinion of judicious and intelligent friends has coincided with his own inclination, in the preparation and publication of this volume. The views it embodies of the correlations of Church and State are the result of abstract and independent study, at St. Jago de la Vega, in "the isle of springs;" they are the reverse of long-cherished preferences and conjectures, and different, he thinks, from the usual methods of discussion and description. Upon the great question of Education, too, they will be found to have a direct and determinate bearing.

Partial elements and aspects of the church have been diligently studied and ably exhibited, as the Polity of the church, its Pastorate, its Relations to the State, and its Unity; but the author knows no extant attempt at comprehensive and consecutive and analytical scriptural

delineation. The various constituents of the church are so interlinked and interdependent that one of them cannot be comprehended without another, and that the study of all is necessary to the due appreciation of each. The great *desideratum* among Christians now is a systematic analysis and exposition of New Testament teaching concerning the church. We should seek to know what the church is, whence it has come, in what position or relation it stands, what it does or should do, and what futurity awaits it or what destiny it must accomplish. Unity, though involved in these aspects, will be distinctly and duly considered in this delineation.

The Author writes under the auspices of no sect or association whatever, but merely from the felt necessity for some scriptural and systematic analysis of spiritual society, and with the single aim to seek and tell the truth. He sees and feels and therefore speaks, rather courting than deprecating the severity of just criticism. Whatever is true and just and good will live for ever, while the chaff and stubble of error and evil must utterly disappear before the wind, and vanish in the flame.

Egham, Surrey; May 29, 1852.

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PART I.

The Nature of the Church.

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NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

THE CHURCH may be described, generically, in its resemblance to other institutions; specifically, in its divergence or difference; and particularly, in its individual elements and aspects. Generically, it is Society; specifically, it is Christian Society; particularly, it is Local Christian Society.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH IS HUMAN SOCIETY.

1. MATURE man is individually complete. He is not only organically undetached, in contrast with plants and adhesive animals, but is endowed with ample capabilities for his sustenance and security. But though individually complete, he is not naturally and contentedly alone, or in solitude thoroughly improved and developed. His very existence is derived and, for its primary period at least, dependent; and is never continuously seclusive, (except in rare and morbid instances, if any,) without great reluctance and suffering. Hence man is a social as well as an individually complete being; and, accordingly, the science of humanity consists of idiology and sociology, or privacy and publicity, systematically accounted for and estimated.
2. GREGARIOUSNESS, partnership, and care-taking are the three elements of human society. The first denotes

oneness of residence and resort; the second, mutual labour; and the third, rightful care or wardship. The earliest, lowest and most widely-extended is gregariousness, or, according to the derivation and literal import of the term, conviviality or convivialism, living or dwelling together. Such is the society of flocks, herds, and shoals, and the joint occupancy of the same cave, tent, or house. The members of such a society subsist upon a common stock, as the herbage of the plains and fields, the vegetation or prey of the same woods and waters, the furniture, provisions, and funds of the same inmates. Gregariousness or convivialism may be continuous, as that of a mother and her infant children; or intermittent, as the members of a family who are together during times of refreshment, recreation, and repose, but separated during seasons of labour. Intermittent convivialism may be natural, like that of a family; or concerted, like voluntary periodical concourse; or contingent, like the accidental and occasional meeting and intercourse of friends.

3. **COPARTNERSHIP** is a plurality of persons, labouring for one another and together, or separately, or together and separately by turns. It is mutual labour, and may be denominated co-operation, if by this term be meant not only joint labour but joint profit or fruit. The partners may be coequal or otherwise,—contributing means of the same kind or value to the common fund and the common weal, and receiving coequal resultant benefits,—or varying in contributions of materials, labour, and skill, and sharing the profits accordingly. The former may be denominated equipartnership, the latter either partnership or copartnership. The partnership may be a natural one, as a family, whose members, with natural ties and relations, co-operate for the common interests; or a concerted one, a voluntary one, as of husband and wife only, or as a commercial company or literary or scientific association.

4. CARETAKING is different from gregariousness and partnership, and may also be denominated curatorship,¹ wardship, or guardianship. It denotes the right and the act of controlling, with the desire and effort of benefiting; and implies that the author and object of care dwell together, either continuously or intermittently. God takes care of the universe; parents take care of their children; rulers of their subjects; guardians of their wards; teachers of their pupils; pastors of their flocks. The caretaker and the persons cared for form a society, either constant or occasional, but not a partnership. A man cannot be at once the curator of another and the copartner of another, as respects the same specific ends and means or the same specific interests; but to achieve one result they may be partners, and to achieve another they may be conjoined as caretaker and care-receiver. The right to control and the obligation to obey are correlative; there cannot be the one without the other; and, therefore, the admission of the one is truly and virtually the admission of the other. Their foundation and reason will be shown in the sequel and at the proper stage.

5: There can be no human society without one or more of these elements, these three relations, concurrence, copartnership, and curatorship; just as there can be no material existence but as an element or as a combination of two or more elements. The various combinations of these societarian elements, with each other and with the varieties of individuality, constitute the various kinds and forms of human society.

6. A family comprehends the three elements of general society. Its members live together and labour for each other, and the parents are the caretakers of the children. A nation exemplifies the third, for rulers are, or ought

¹ From *cura*, care, and thence *curator*, caretaker.

to be, the guardians of the people, desiring and endeavouring to benefit them, by due direction and control ; and it exemplifies the second, because it involves co-operation. The Christian Church exemplifies them all, for it involves concurrence, co-operation, and care. Because Christianity is adapted to man, it is both private and social in its means and influences. Contemplating man as an individual, directly and momentarily related to God, it provides for his restoration to God and produces in him the beauty and blessedness of Divine imitation and intercourse. Contemplating him as a social being, directly related to other men by concurrence, co-operation and care, and through them, or indirectly, related to God, it teaches him to conform to the rights and to promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures. It endues him with love, the great social bond and impulse ; guides him, among men, by a golden social rule ; and incorporates him with a peculiar society, called **THE CHURCH**, which is to be at once the means of his social and spiritual progress and the sphere and channel of his spiritual usefulness.

7. Absolute privacy belonged only to God without creatures, and is predicable now of no being in the universe. What is usually denominated human privacy is really man's membership in universal society, his subjection to the universal curatorship of God. Taking, therefore, the most comprehensive views, every element and aspect of man are social ; but considering human society only, man is both individual and social, both private and public.

8. Sociology is the science of human society, the science of human convivialism, copartnership, and curatorship, separately or in their various combinations among themselves and with personal facts and phases. It presupposes idiology, the science of man as a physical, mental

and moral being; comprehends many of the facts and truths of this previous science; and, hence, it occupies a very advanced stage in the scale of human knowledge and improvement. Sexual distinction and affection originate Domestic society, or the Family. Territorial attachment, ownership and distinctiveness generate Civil society, or the Nation. And the local operation of Christian principles and precepts—love of Christians and love of Christ—creates Ecclesiastical society, or the Church. Sexual and procreative relations chiefly characterise the first form of society; secular and territorial the second; and spiritual and Christian the third. And to each and all belong moral distinctions and aspects.

9. There cannot be the relations of secular and territorial co-operation and care without rights and obligations, or, in one word, without justice, whose synonyme is righteousness; because territorial ownerships and distinctions and the government that conserves them involve rights; and justice is simply voluntary and intelligent conformity to rights. Hence political science (Choriology¹) is the science of territorial and secular justice, the justice that springs from secular and territorial relations, and which is practised and promoted by the men who sustain these relations, and who, accordingly, co-operate.

10. There cannot be the sexual and procreative relations of the family, both or one, without moral distinctions, the distinctions of both benevolence and justice. Benevolence is voluntary and intelligent adaptation to the happiness of others. The science of domesticity (Oikiology²) is the science of the goodness and justice of the house, or of sexual and procreative and cognate relations. Politics include only justice, the justice of territorial relations, which are purely secular. Domestic

¹ From *Χωρίον*, country, region, and *λογος*, a discourse.

² From *Οικίος*, house, and *λογος*.

life comprehends both goodness and justice, but only in household affairs, only in the relations of husband and wife, and the relations thence arising or naturally there-with cohering.

11. There cannot be the operation of Christian principles and precepts, on two or more in a locality, without convivialism, copartnership, and caretaking, according to the New Testament; and there cannot be these without both morals and religion. Morals are the voluntary and intelligent actions that spring from the relations of men to each other's happiness and rights: Religion is the voluntary and intelligent action that springs from the relations of men to God, either direct as individuals, or indirect as socials: both considered in their causes, composition, criterion and consequences. Christian morals are morals conformed to Revelation, and, therefore, comprehended in religion. Christian religion is religion originated and regulated by Revelation. There can be no human society without morals; and there can be no Christian society, truly and distinctively considered, without Christian religion and its essential element, Christian morals.

12. The term church itself denotes sodality. "Church" or "kirk" is derived by some from "circle," by others from *kyriakos* (κυριακος¹), "belonging to the Lord." A Christian circle denotes concourse, and those who belong to the Lord are subjects of his gracious care. The Greek name, which alone is of real consequence, is *ecclesia* (εκκλησια), formed from *ek* (εκ), "out of," "away from," "from," and *kaleo* (καλεω), "I call;" and, accordingly, the members of the Church are often denominated, in the New Testament, "the called," that is, ecclesiasts, churchmen, because they are at once called out of the world and into the fellowship of Christians and of Christ. In

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 20. Rev. i. 10.

the New Testament, the term *ecclesia* (almost always rendered "church,") denotes either a society or an aggregation of societies, and always, at least, the element of society denoted by the term assembly or concourse.

13. The Church, then, is human society. This is its generic character. It is human, not angelical, not celestial or ultramundane; and it is society, not an enumeration of unassociated individuals. As human, it is necessarily *visible*. The phrases, "mystical Church" and "invisible Church," should be banished from theological language, as wholly unsuitable and misleading. The Head of the Church is invisible, but not the Church itself. To individual Christians belong mystical or invisible qualities or characteristics, but these must not be confounded with ecclesiastical constitution and operation. Nor should we confound the Church with figurative illustrations of real believers. The body of Christ may signify either all true believers or all professed and associated believers. The spiritual house or temple of Christ is not identical with the Church of Christ. All members of the Church ought to be saints, and may be addressed as such, but, in reality, they are not such; and the true distinction is not between a visible Church and an invisible, but between nominal and real saints, between professed and actual believers or Christians. The Church is society; and an invisible human society is either a secret society or an absurdity, a verbal contradiction. There may be mystical or invisible beings and invisible human states and regulations, but not mystical or invisible human societies, except as secret or concealed. The Church is not secret or concealed, according to Scripture and to fact. Human society is a sensible, visible institution, whatever be its purpose and process or the character and obligations of its members; and the moment we begin to distinguish

and divide it by invisible qualities, we wander from the right apprehension of it, into the region of cloud and mist.

14. Because the Church is human society, it is *terrestrial* as well as visible. The distinction of "church militant" and "church triumphant," is un-scriptural and improper. To any ultramundane, non-terrestrial, or celestial society, the term church (*ecclesia*) is never applied in the New Testament. "The general assembly and church of the first-born, whose *names* are written in heaven," should not be misunderstood, as if *itself* were in heaven,—supposing "heaven" here to be literal and not figurative. The society of paradise, or heaven, is quite distinct and different from the Christian society of earth. It differs in its composition, character, operation, and circumstances. Only below does the Church exist and operate; above there is a nobler and more durable society, consisting of men and angels, exempt from all terrestrial ills and liabilities, and exultant in perfect and perpetual felicity.

15. It appears, therefore, that he who has no visible, or formal, or practical connection with the Church, has no connection at all. He may be connected with Christ, by the invisible bonds of faith and hope and love; and, because connected with the basis and bond of the spiritual temple, he is connected with the temple itself,—with the believers in Christ Jesus; but he is not, on that account, connected with the Church; his connection is not with Christ, as the head of the Church, or with Christ's servants, as the Church itself. Just as sympathy with the members of a political or literary association, or private friendship with its president, or intercourse with them in the common walks of life, does not constitute membership, so faith in Christ, as the Saviour of the world, or sympathy or occasional converse with his servants, does not constitute or involve inclusion in his Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH IS CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

HUMAN society is of various sorts and names, and may be specifically distinguished according to its origin, its objects, or its operation. The Church is Christian society as well as human. What this specific name imports we should carefully ascertain.

1. The term Christian denotes **BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY**. Humanity, the world, and the universe consist of two elements or subsistences, spirit and matter. Waiving the question respecting spirituality in inferior creatures, it is sufficient for our present theme and purpose to observe, that by a spiritual being we mean a being exclusively spiritual, as God is and as angels are often supposed to be, or a being predominantly spiritual, as every man ought to be and as every good man really is. Such was the spirituality of the Apostle Paul, who said—“I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.”¹ Scriptural spirituality is also the predominance of the Divine Spirit in the human: “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”² Spirituality among men generally is the subjection of the body to the soul; and Scriptural spirituality is also the subjection of the soul to God, and is tantamount to Christian religiousness. Christian religion is voluntary.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27. ² Romans viii. 9.

and intelligent conformity to God's revealed rights or to God's revealed will, which is the index or expression of his rights. *Scientific* spirituality is the distinction of the substance spirit from the substance matter. *Moral* spirituality is the predominance of the spirit over the body. *Religious* spirituality, which may also be called Christian or Scriptural, is the predominance of the Divine Spirit over the human, or man's conformity to the revealed will of God.

2. Theocracy, or Divine government, is adapted to its basis and subject, creation; and is, therefore, both secular and spiritual. As secular creation is subservient to spiritual, so is secular theocracy to spiritual. Both these are conjoined in the government of man, because his nature is both secular and spiritual and because he is related to both secular and spiritual beings. Christ rules the world both secularly and spiritually, for "all power in heaven and earth" is given to him, and he is not only king of saints but king of sinners. The great social index and instrument of his spiritual sovereignty is the Church; of his secular, the nation; and hence he is "head over all things to the Church" and "King of kings and Lord of lords," king of men in both their spiritual and secular combinations. His spiritual sway may be denominated Christocracy, or Christianity; its record and rule is the Bible, which also refers and alludes to God's secular government of man and inferior creatures, without fully developing it or formally and extendedly revealing its processes and laws. Secular and spiritual theocracy are usually distinguished as "Providence" and "Grace."

3. The Church, then, is Christian, that is, spiritual and Scriptural, not secular and not merely providential. A society may be spiritual or religious, and yet not be Christian, because not Biblical, not Christ's; and a

society may be Christ's, as domestic or civil society, and yet not be ecclesiastical, because not purely and distinctively spiritual. But to be a spiritual or religious society, to be such Scripturally and comprehensively, by Christ and for him, are the specific difference between the Christian Church and every other sort of human association. The Church is spiritual, not secular; Scriptural, not rationalistic or traditional; Christ's creation and instrument, not man's.

4. The Church is spiritual, because it is a constituent of spiritual theocracy. It is an element of Christ's kingdom of grace, an instrument of his redeeming power. Christ's personal ministry among men was intended to prepare for the final era of his kingdom, which he proclaimed to be "at hand," and in which his Church was intended to perform a most conspicuous and important part. On three separate occasions, he declared the spirituality of his kingdom, and, therefore, of his Church. First, when he was solicited to interfere for the partition of an inheritance, he said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"¹—thus disclaiming, in his human and adventual capacity and in relation to the government for which he came to prepare, all secular jurisdiction, or interference with the civil authorities. Secondly, when a seat at his right hand and left, that is, exalted office and honour in his kingdom, was sought for two of his disciples, by their anxious and ambitious mother, he said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even

¹ 1 Luke xii. 14.

as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."¹ Participation in his kingdom is a ministration, a service, modelled after his own, which was purely spiritual; and such participation as was sought is conferred by Christ upon those alone who are prepared of his Father. Thirdly, on the solemn occasion of his arraignment before Pilate, our Lord avowed himself a king, and intimated the nature of his kingdom: "My kingdom is not of this world [either in origin or nature]; if my kingdom were of this world, [secular, coercive,] then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom [in its origin and nature] not from hence. Pilate, therefore, said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest [i.e. idiomatically, thou sayest correctly] that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that [as a king] I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,"² as one of my subjects. Language could not more explicitly indicate and distinguish the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and, therefore, the spirituality of his rectoral corporation and instrument, the Church. Christ came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, to save sinners, to destroy the works of the devil; in other words, he came to restore mankind to the knowledge and love of God, and he constitutes, commissions, and employs his Church accordingly. "Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it; [not that he might secularly aggrandise or secularly employ it, but] that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, [not on account

¹ Matt. xx. 25—28.

² John xviii. 36, 37.

of the possession of secular wealth, dignity and power, but by] not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."¹ The Church, with its mystery of Jewish and Gentile inclusion and equality, was not intended to subserve secular purposes or to be distinguished by worldly wealth, policy, or conformity, but to illustrate the Divine character: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God."² Nothing becomes the Church, nothing should be found in the Church, or be conjoined to it, but what consists with and subserves man's spiritual interests and the Saviour's glory. Everything else, everything repugnant, should be discountenanced and discarded. Christ in heaven reigns spiritually and with subservient secular but imperceptible sway; but Christ on earth, and by his Spirit and Word, and in his Church, operates only spiritually, and therefore declares—"My kingdom is not of this world."

5. The Church is spiritual because its laws are spiritual. The law of the Church is the law of God in his Word; and "we know that the law is spiritual,"³ "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."⁴ "This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."⁵

6. The Church is spiritual because its proper members are spiritual. They are required to be "of the truth," and to hear Christ's voice. The first Churches consisted of baptised communicants; and both baptism and the eucharist are ordinances of spiritual import.⁶ The three thousand, added to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, are described as

¹ Eph. v. 25—27.

² Eph. iii. 10.

³ Rom. vii. 14.

⁴ Rom. vii. 12.

⁵ Ezek. xl. 12.

“they that gladly received Peter’s word and were baptised.”¹ It was “the saved” who were afterwards added to the Church daily. The first Gentile members, or the first baptised Gentiles, were those that received the Holy Ghost, in the house of Cornelius. Paul addresses the Church of God at Corinth, as “sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints;”² and couples “the Church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints which are in all Achaia.”³ Writing “unto the churches of Galatia,” he says, “Ye that are spiritual;”⁴ and he commences a discourse on ecclesiastical matters with this exordium—“Now concerning spirituals, [not ‘spiritual gifts’ but *των πνευματικων*, spiritual things or spiritualities,] brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”⁵ “He that is spiritual judgeth all things.”⁶ The sacrifices of Christians, that is their worship and service, are “spiritual,” and acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”⁷ Their resources, their means of defence and triumph, are spiritual. They fight not with carnal weapons but with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Christ distinguishes his Church from “heathens and publicans;” and it is frequently contrasted, in its membership, with the irreligious, who are characteristically of the world or secular, for “they mind earthly things.” Ecclesiastical persons, as such, should neither seek nor accept secular office, honours, or titles.

7. The Church is spiritual because its benefits and penalties are spiritual. “Silver and gold have I none,” said Peter to the applicant for alms, in harmony with his Master who came in lowly guise, who had not where to lay his head, and whose Gospel is preached to the poor. Religious ends and interests are those alone which the Church should contemplate and pursue, and those

¹ Acts ii. 41. ² 1 Cor. i. 2. ³ 2 Cor. i. 1. ⁴ Gal. vi. 1.
⁵ 1 Cor. xii. 1. ⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 15. ⁷ 1 Peter ii. 5.

alone which all who belong to her, or join her, should require and expect. It is not the office and design of the Church to minister to men's secular wants, to found and endow hospitals and asylums, to furnish physicians, and to promote secular education or secular prosperity, directly and formally. Her noble sphere and function is to minister to the soul's health and welfare here, and to its preparation for heaven hereafter. Christians, in their extra-ecclesiastical capacity, are to do good of every kind, but in their corporate spiritual capacity they ought to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. So, also, the only penalties which the Church can inflict are spiritual, as "admonition," "reproof," "rebuke," "cutting off," or excision from the society. To claim, exercise, invoke, or allow secular power and penalty, on behalf of the Church, or even to connive at secular penalties for spiritual or ecclesiastical offences, is to imitate the blindness and error of the disciples who possessed to call down fire from heaven on those who rejected them, because then they knew not of what manner of spirit, distinctively and emphatically, they should be.

8. Because the Church of Christ is spiritual it is voluntary. Spiritual and moral action is voluntary conformity to the rights or voluntary adaptation to the happiness of others. Birth, or baptism in infancy, can confer ecclesiastical membership only for the years of childhood, if at all. Membership in manhood is purely voluntary, whether it be the consecution of juvenile membership or original ecclesiastical entrance. All spiritual excellence is voluntary action or its result; and as the Church is a purely moral and spiritual institute, all connection or co-operation with it, in years of manhood, must be voluntary. To make citizenship and Church-membership coincident and inseparable is to confound the Church and the nation,

the secular and the spiritual, and to corrupt and destroy the Church of Christ. The religious society that employs physical force, invokes it, or connives at its exercise, for religious ends, to maintain or increase ecclesiastical membership, dishonours itself and offends against its Head. No man or number of men has either the right to force persons into the Church, to keep them there perforce, or to punish them for alienation or dissent. God has conferred no such power in his Word; it is no man's birthright; it belongs not to the State, whose province is wholly secular; it is altogether discordant with the nature of Christianity and the Church; and it is wholly inappropriate to man, because no one is competent to pronounce unerringly or authoritatively on points of religious controversy. Biblical interpretation, by which all religious truth is obtained and tested, is a personal process; no official or ecclesiastical interpretation is entitled to reception but by the voluntary scrutiny and rational conviction of the person addressed, or can rightly be promoted in the Church but by purely spiritual means; and no extra-ecclesiastical person is entitled to take judicial cognisance of any purely religious opinion or action.

9. The term *ἐκκλησία*, (*ecclesia*,) church, is used, in the New Testament, to denote the spiritual society of Christ, in its completeness or *totality*. "I will build my church;" "head over all things to the church;" "might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God;" "unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus;" "Christ is the head of the church;" "as the church is subject unto Christ;" "Christ also loved the church;" "that he might present it to himself a glorious church;" "even as the Lord the church;" "I speak concerning Christ and the church;" "God hath set some in the church, first apostles;" "he is the head of

the body, the church ;" "for his body's sake, which is the church ;" "in the midst of the church I will sing praise unto thee."¹ The Church of these passages is Christ's social spiritual Institute, from its rise to its close, and throughout its whole extent. To us this Church is historical, extant and prospective. This only is "the Church" or "the Church of Christ," generally and comprehensively.

¹ Matt. xvi. 18 ; Eph. i. 22 ; Eph. iii. 10, 21 ; Eph. v. 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32 ; 1 Cor. xii. 8 ; Col. i. 18, 24 ; Heb. ii. 12.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH IS LOCAL CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

THE Church of Christ consists of local societies, and till we ascertain what is meant by one of these, we cannot adequately appreciate and define the ecclesiastical institute.

1. A church is a LOCAL society. There cannot be society, even in its lowest element of gregariousness, without place ; and there cannot be systematic co-operation and care, without fixity of place. When the kingdom of heaven was opened, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were "all with one accord, in one place."¹ At a subsequent time, "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together"²—associated or congregated as a church. A church should be composed of so many persons only, resident in such localities, and provided with such a place of concourse, as to be able to meet altogether, for Christian communion and co-operation. Paul, writing to "the Church of God which is at Corinth," says—"When ye come together into one place ;"³ and supposing a case, for the illustration of a question, he says—"If the whole Church be come together into one place ;"⁴ implying the local and particular completeness of a church and its complete assemblage in one place, not assemblage by

¹ Acts ii. 1.

² Acts iv. 31.

³ 1 Cor. xi. 20.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

detachments or fragments, at successive times, and in several places.

A church should be *locally denominated*. Only from the place of convocation, not human names or parties, is a particular church ever designated or distinguished, in the New Testament. "The church of the first-born" is the only apparent exception to this rule. The term "church" (*ecclesia*), in its application to Christian society, has but two significations in the New Testament; and these are the *general* or comprehensive one already mentioned, in the fourteen passages quoted, and the *particular* or individual one, now under consideration. In other words, the term "church" denotes, in the New Testament, either *all* Christ's spiritual society or *a local part*. The term "churches" denotes any plurality of local parts, which the inspired writer has occasion to indicate together. The command, "Tell it unto the church,"¹ refers to the local church to which the discordant parties belong. Only a local church can receive a report of disagreement and cognosce it. The church to which daily additions were made,² and on which great fear came,³ was the church soon afterwards described as "at Jerusalem,"⁴ for it was then the only church. "A whole year they assembled themselves with the church," "and gathered the church together," in Antioch.⁵ "Every church"⁶ is every local Christian society. "The church" of which "Saul made havoc,"⁷ and which he persecuted,⁸ was the church at Jerusalem, for this was the only church in existence when his persecution commenced, and to any other church his persecution, though projected, was not allowed to reach. Besides the church at Jerusalem, we read of

¹Matt xviii. 17. ²Acts ii. 47, ³v. 11, ⁴viii. 1. ⁵Acts xi. 26, xiv. 27, and xv. 3. ⁶Acts xiv. 23, 1 Cor. iv. 17. ⁷Acts viii. 3. ⁸Phil. iii. 6, 1 Cor. xv. 9, Gal. i. 13.

the church "at Antioch,"¹ "at Babylon,"² "of Laodicea,"³ "of the Thessalonians,"⁴ "of Ephesus," "of Smyrna," "of Pergamos," "of Thyatira," "of Sardis," "of Philadelphia,"⁵ and "at Corinth;"⁶ and of the church "that is in their house," the house of Priscilla and Aquilla,⁷—"which is in Nymphas' house,"⁸—"in thy house,"⁹ the house of Philemon. Thus, by either a domestic or an urban locality, a Christian church is Scripturally denominated and distinguished. In other passages of Scripture history, besides those we have referred to, "the church" alone is proved by the context to mean a local or particular church.¹⁰ The same rule of exegesis applies to the Epistles.¹¹ We have considered ALL the passages in the New Testament, in which the word *ἐκκλησία* occurs, in its Christian appropriation, and referred to them in the margin, except the plural form, which will be subsequently considered; and we find that, as already stated, the meaning is invariably either ecclesiastical totality or ecclesiastical individuality, and that this individuality is always local, and that the locality is always either urban or domestic. Either no purely rural church had been formed when the New Testament was written, or, if formed, the inspired writers had no occasion to refer to it. To towns and cities, as the great points of human confluence, and centres and sources of human influence, and therefore affording peculiar facilities for audience and promulgation, the Apostles and their assistants seem to have habitually resorted.

2. A church is a CONVOCATIONAL Society. Convivialism, the lowest social element, is, in its periodic form, a con-

¹ Acts xiii. 1. ² 1 Peter v. 13. ³ Col. iv. 16, Rev. iii. 14. ⁴ 1 Thess. i. 1, 2 Thess. i. 1. ⁵ Rev. ii. iii. ⁶ 1 Cor. i. 2. ⁷ Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. ⁸ Col. iv. 15. ⁹ Philem. 2. ¹⁰ Ac. xi. 22, xii. 1, 5, xv. 4, 22, xviii. 22, xx. 17, 28. ¹¹ 1 Cor. vi. 4, x. 32, xi. 18, 22, xiv. 4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35, xv. 9, 2 Co. i. 1, Rom. xvi. 1, 23, Philip. iv. 15, 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15, v. 16, James v. 14, 3 John 6, 9, 10, Heb. xii. 23.

stituent of a church. The members of the model church were "together," or collected, as well as coequal; and their convocations were frequent and regular: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." "Continuing daily, with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."¹ The eighty-fourth psalm is a striking and instructive account of the sentiments and practices of pious Jews, periodically congregating in the city and temple of their God; and it should remind Christians of their privileges, obligations, and proper manner of spirit. To these precedents of the former and the latter days, we must add Christian precept: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, [assembling and exhorting,] as ye see the day approaching."²

Ecclesiastical convocation implies an *edifice*; though no particular sort of building, style of architecture, or ceremony of preparation, is essential. "An upper room" in Jerusalem, the abode of the eleven,³ is the first-mentioned place of Christian convocation. The place of Pentecostal concourse is not exactly mentioned, but is called "a house." Afterwards, the Christians met in the temple, probably for public worship; and celebrated the eucharist or broke "the bread," "in the house,"⁴ which is, probably, the "upper room" and the Pentecostal place. "The Greek word *κατ'οίκον*, used in this passage, and rendered in our translation 'house to house,' may be interpreted like *ἐν οἴκῳ*, 'in the house;' and we find it so rendered both by the Syriac and Arabic, and

¹ Acts ii. 42, 46, 47. ² Hebrews x. 25. ³ Acts i. 13. ⁴ Acts ii. 46.

likewise by the New Testament in other places, Rom. xvi. 3—5, 1 Cor. xvi. 19, Coloss. iv. 15, Philemon i. 2."¹ Perhaps it was in the same place in which the eleven abode, that the Pentecostal assemblage was held, that the eucharistic bread was broken, that the deacons were installed, and that the Apostolic council was held, and which was "shaken" in answer to prayer. The Apostles, "in every house, ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."² The kingdom of heaven was opened, admission into the Church of Christ was given to the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius.³ Thus, the most memorable events of the Christian Church, the baptism or ecclesiastical incorporation of both Jews and Gentiles, marked by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, occurred in private houses. Both "publicly and from house to house," Paul "taught" the Ephesian Christians,⁴ not merely pastorally visited, as is often supposed. "Paul dwelt two whole years [in Rome] in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him,"⁵ on any such ground as that it was not an ecclesiastical or consecrated edifice, or that it was not ecclesiastically or civilly licensed, or on any other ground. The error and folly of such prohibition belong to later ages and to persons called Christian, either exclusively or *par excellence!* The Philippian jailer appears to have been baptised in the prison; not without (*sub dio*), as some suppose, for it is not likely that the washing of Paul's and Silas's stripes, as well as the baptism, took place in the open night air; not in the part of the prison where Paul and Silas had been confined, for the jailer "brought

¹ Townsend's New Testament, *in loc.*

² Acts x. passim. xi. 12, "the man's house."

³ Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

⁴ Acts v. 42.

⁵ Acts xx. 20.

them out," before washing and baptism; not in the jailer's own house, for it was after the washing and baptism that the jailer "brought them into his own house and set meat before them;" but probably in a distinct apartment of the prison.¹ Thus we find that in a private house occurred the institution and Gentile enlargement of the Church, baptismal and eucharistic celebration, and Apostolic preaching and teaching, as well as ecclesiastical prayer and praise. Distinct and suitably constructed houses, for ecclesiastical purposes, are greatly to be desired and preferred, but the free and plastic power of Christianity is not to be restricted to them. Our Master was restricted by no canonical laws or customary methods, as respects either time, place, or manner of instruction. The synagogue or the temple, the seaside, the vessel's deck, the mountain's slope or summit, the dreary desert, the private house, the festive table, or the vicinity of the public well, was fitting place for him when an opportunity of doing good occurred. And "the disciple is not above his Master, or the servant above his lord." Paul preached in an "upper chamber," in Troas, "till midnight;"² and, on the Tyrian shore, kneeled down and prayed, with the disciples and their wives and children.³ The stilted, helpless formalism, or enchained servitude, that cannot teach or preach, pray or praise, baptise or commune, except in canonical times, places and forms, is not in harmony with the Primitive Church or the Church's Head, or with the true spirit of Christianity, that has a message of mercy for "all the world" and for "every creature."

Ecclesiastical convocation or assemblage implies *time* as well as place. "The day of Pentecost," so glorious and memorable to Christians, the initial epoch of the

¹ Acts xvi. 23—34.

² Acts xx. 7, 8.

³ Acts xxi. 3—5.

Christian Church, the fiftieth day from the Passover, must have fallen either on the Jewish or the Christian Sabbath; but to determine which is not material, as either was sacred and suitable, to consummate the old dispensation and commence the new. "Daily," afterwards, with one accord, the Christians continued in the temple.¹ "Daily" the Lord added to the Church.² "Daily" the ministration of the Church to the widows took place.³ "Daily," after the settlement of the controversy concerning circumcision, "the churches increased in number."⁴ "Daily" the noble Bereans searched the Scriptures respecting what they heard.⁵ "Daily" and "by the space of two years," Paul disputed in the school of one Tyrannus.⁶ "Daily in the temple, and in every house, the Apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."⁷ "Daily" Paul directs Christians to exhort one another.⁸ And "daily" Christ "sat teaching in the temple,"⁹ in conformity with his own avowal—"I must be about my Father's business." Surely all these passages teach us that the assemblies and services of the Church should be more than weekly. The welfare of the Church and the wants of the world still demand daily biblical study, prayer, praise, preaching, and exhortation. Nor need these, as certainly they should not, be so conducted or continued as to interfere with private and domestic duty and devotion. Nor should they be allowed to depreciate the great Sabbath services: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day."¹⁰ "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."¹¹ Instead of making an Apostolic visit the occasion of "a great collection," Paul wished the Church to accumulate the necessary contributions

¹ Acts ii. 46. ² 47; ³ vi. 1; ⁴ xvi. 5; ⁵ xvii. 11; ⁶ xix. 9; ⁷ v. 42.

⁸ Heb. iii. 13. ⁹ Matt. xxvi. 55. ¹⁰ Rev. i. 10. ¹¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

quietly, regularly, and beforehand; probably to prevent financial matters from diminishing the spiritual efficacy and pleasure of his visit. The Sabbath is a proper time for ecclesiastical financial appropriations, as well as ecclesiastical solemnities, as it was "made for man," and is not now Jewish but Christian. But the presence and blessing of our Head are not periodically or canonically restrained. His gracious assurance to his people is—"I am with you always."¹ Paul cherished and evinced a corresponding spirit: "Remember," said he to the elders of Ephesus, "that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears."²

3. A Church is a CO-OPERATIVE society. Its members labour together and for each other. The faith of Paul and the Roman Christians was "mutual." Christians are commanded to love one another. The members of a church are members one of another, and are commanded to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another, and to be of the same mind one toward another. They are commanded to edify each other, to receive one another, to admonish one another, to salute one another, to serve one another, to bear each other's burdens, to forbear each other in love, to submit to each other, to comfort one another, to consider one another, to confess faults one to another, to pray one for another, to be hospitable one to another; and they are prohibited from judging each other, from lying one to another, from speaking evil one of another, and from grudging one against another. And they are commanded to strive together for the faith of the Gospel. Such principles and precepts as these constitute a broad and deep foundation for ecclesiastical co-ope-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

² Acts xx. 31.

tion. A church is more than a casual crowd, an unorganised assemblage, or a periodic convocation; it is a copartnership, an agreement for joint spiritual labour and joint spiritual benefit and usefulness. It contains the second element of society, as well as the first. A church is an *equalitarian* society, or an equipartnership. Its spirituality makes it such, for it is to the same Divine rights, indicated by the same Revelation, that every man in Christendom owes conformity. In domestic society, the parents, as procreators and proprietors, are naturally superior to their children. In civil society, there is variety of wealth and territorial possession. But in ecclesiastical society, all the members are required and supposed to be spiritual, equally related to the Divine Head, and, therefore, to each other. Hence they are coequal. All men are equally fallen, "for there is no difference;" and all believers are equally accepted, for "God is no respecter of persons" and makes "no difference, purifying their hearts by faith." The Church has but one Head, one record and rule, one function, one glorious destiny. God has made of one blood all nations of men; and Christ imparts to all believers one life. To each and all Christ is alike the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and for all that love him he has prepared one glorious home, to which he conducts them by one and the same pathway. Spirituality is the common characteristic of Church members, and of its varieties and mutations God is the only perfect and authoritative discerner and judge. The conditions of ecclesiastical communion can never be anything but external acts, for short-sighted man can discern nothing more; and so long as these are fulfilled, there is, towards man, or in human society, no imperfection of membership and no reason whatever for inequality.

The fact that Christianity recognises the distinctions of sex and nonage is quite consistent with these views.

Divine government perfectly harmonises with Divine creation; and, therefore, the ecclesiastical province of females is appropriately distinctive. Womanhood is constitutionally unadapted to man's distinctive work, and childhood is incapable of it. "The head of the woman is the man,"¹ agreeably to the Divine announcement to Eve—"He shall rule over thee."² Teaching and governing in the Church are not allowed to females, but this disallowance creates merely a functional not an organic distinction; an operative, not an ordinal diversity. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, [respecting what they see and hear in the church,] let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."³ "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."⁴ But females are not forbidden to take part, audibly, in the *devotions* of the Church, for Paul speaks expressly and without condemnation of a woman "praying or prophesying."⁵ These words must be harmonised, hermeneutically, with the previous quotations, which are perfectly unequivocal; and, therefore, as they cannot denote any didactic act, they must be understood to denote devotional acts. They may not mean devotional leading, but simply devotional participation. Voting, too, in Church meetings, cannot be construed into a usurpation of authority or a feminine impropriety.

A Christian Church is a community, a combination of equals, a society of common rights, privileges, and interests. Wealth, rank, learning, acuteness, eloquence, or

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 3.

² Gen. iii. 16.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 5.

any kindred peculiarity, can be no ground or reason of ecclesiastical diversity; because they are secular not spiritual distinctions, and perfectly subordinate to the objects and operations of the Christian Church. The only just and essential diversity is that of the Head and the Body. The only organic superiority is Christ's; and he is superior in both nature and office. Naturally he is superior, as "God over all;" officially he is superior, as ecclesiastical creator and king. But in the Church itself, there is no organic and original superiority whatever, in law and right. Any such actual superiority is a sinful imposition, on the part of those who claim it, and a base submission, on the part of those who allow it. Christ forbids, among his disciples, any such distinctions as those of the nations or of civil society. The Apostle James disallows "respect of persons," in conjunction with "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ;" says expressly, to Christians, "be not many masters;" and especially censures peculiar respect, in Christian assemblies, to the wealthy and well-attired. All secular distinctions are foreign and subordinate to the Church; and all proper ecclesiastical distinctions are not organic, but functional; not original, but created; not of caste, or class, or order, but of office; not of constitution, but of operation. In the Church, there can be no lordship, no masterhood, no fatherhood, no primedom, no aristocracy, either in name or in reality, without violating the plainest commands of Christ, without trampling on the constitution of the Church, and without despoiling and dishonouring the members of the Church. Emulation, pride, and ambition should seek some other scene of contest and display than the Church of Christ, which is not intended or permitted to be a theatre or arena for the rivalry, ostentation, and passions of mankind, but a fold for the flock and a vehicle for the truth of our Saviour and Lord.

The original, essential, constitutional equality of ecclesiasts, or churchmen, can scarcely be inculcated and enforced with too much labour, frequency, and emphasis; because it is primary and permeative, and cannot be at all overlooked in the right apprehension and service of the Church; and because the neglect of it has ineffably obscured, degraded, deranged, and impeded the Christian Institute.

In Scripture style and sense, a church is a brotherhood, a commonwealth, a fellowship, whose members, consequently, are coequal. Brethren are of one parentage and one blood. Members of a commonwealth have common obligations, rights, and privileges. A fellowship consists of fellows or equals. The members are called fellow-disciples,¹ fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,² fellow-heirs and of the same body,³ fellow-servants,⁴ fellow-soldiers,⁵ fellow-workers,⁶ fellow-dwellers,⁷ fellow-partakers,⁸ and are habitually recognised as brethren by the inspired writers. They vary in sex, age, and proficiency, yet thus but circumstantially. The fulfilment of the Divine will is their common characteristic, and precludes among them all pre-eminence and constitutional gradation. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."⁹ Christ forbids his disciples to exercise "lordship," "dominion," and "authority," like the princes and great ones of the nations, that is, like civil rulers; and directs that whoever aspires to be great should minister, or to be chief should serve, in imitation of his own ministration.¹⁰ "The greatest," in his kingdom, is illustrated by the

¹ John xi. 16. ² Eph. ii. 19. ³ Eph. iii. 6. ⁴ Matt. xxiv. 49; Col. i. 7, iv. 7; Rev. vi. 11; xix. 10; xxii. 9. ⁵ Philipp. ii. 25; Philem. 2. ⁶ Col. iv. 11. ⁷ Eph. ii. 6. ⁸ Eph. iii. 6. ⁹ Matt. xii. 50. ¹⁰ Matt. xx. 20—28.

character and conduct of childhood, not by the assumption or acceptance of titles and honours, and not by the usurpation or exercise of lordship and authority.¹ The Church formed in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, is the Mother Church and Model Church; and in one most precise and pithy sentence, its constitution and character are embodied: "All that believed were together, and had all things common."² This means that ALL the primitive ecclesiasts, or Christians, were COLLECTED AND COEQUAL, or were A COLLECTED COMMONWEALTH. "All things common" do not mean, as is generally supposed, absolute secular equality, but absolute ecclesiastical equality. This expression relates entirely to ecclesiastical matters, as appears from the notice of private secularities in the verse following: "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." This verse describes the *individual liberality* of the first Christians, and the preceding verse describes their *ecclesiastical equality*. Secular equality is not at all affirmed of the first Christians, but merely the spirit of enlarged benevolence which prompted them to sell their goods and possessions and to bestow the proceeds on the necessitous. Subsequently, we are informed that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need."³ In the second chapter of the Acts, we

¹ Matt. xviii. 1—4.

² Acts ii. 44.

³ Acts iv. 32, 34, 35.

are informed of the liberality of believers, individually and directly; in this chapter we are informed of the munificent contributions of believers to the funds of the Church and the ample supply thence afforded to all the needy, so that no believer lacked. The rights and the reality of private property are expressly recognised by Peter, in his address to Ananias: whilst the land remained unsold, "Was it not thine own? and after it was sold, Was it not in thine own power?"¹ At first, each believer ministered to his brethren's need; afterwards the Church acted as almoner, and each believer, according to his ability, contributed to the Church's treasury. These contributions were most promptly and heartily and largely given, without talking of private rights or selfishly adverting to considerations of ownership and economy. The first Churchmen were not secular communists, but they were ecclesiastical communists. Their real estate was "their own," and their personal estate was "in their own power;" yet they most generously and adequately contributed to the finances of the Church; and, in the Church itself, there was perfect equality, as respects both the spiritual and temporal things of the Church, for "*ail* that believed had *all things* COMMON." Accordingly, to Christians and Churches belong a "common faith" and a "common salvation."² The distinctions of secular policy, peculiarity, prejudice and class, are altogether alien to the Church: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, free; but Christ is all and in all."³ "Ye are all one [all equal] in Christ Jesus."⁴ As human equality is denoted by oneness of blood, so Christian or ecclesiastical equality is denoted by oneness or sameness. To ecclesiasts belong oneness

¹ Acts v. 4. ² Titus i. 4. Jude 3. ³ Col. iii. 11. ⁴ Gal. iii. 28.

of body and bread;¹ oneness of husband, head and master;² oneness of Lord, faith, hope, and baptism;³ oneness of labour, accord, spirit, and mind.⁴ They are not only members together but members of each other, members interpenetratingly, thoroughly incorporated and equalised: "We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."⁵ Their diversities are not of ecclesiastical membership or rank, but of Divine gifts and endowments and of ecclesiastical appointment and operation. "All members have not the same *office*," and all have "*gifts* differing according to the grace that is given" them.⁶ The diversities of the Church are not composite but operative, not ordinal but official, not vital but practical, not essential but circumstantial. Variety of personal gifts results from variety of Divine endowment. Of wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues, the Apostle tells us that "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."⁷ As personal variety is the gift and operation of God, so ecclesiastical variety is the gift and operation of the Church. A Church is a society of equals, admitting to its fellowship the same beings, men; on the same terms; by the same methods; and to the same position and privileges. Its members are coequal priests and citizens, forming "a royal priesthood, a holy nation."⁸ All Jews were not priests, but all Christians are, in the sole and secondary sense in which priesthood is at all predicable of mere man. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only proper priest in the universe; and under him all Christians are

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13, x. 17. ² 2 Cor. xi. 2, Eph. v. 23, Matt. xxiii. 8.
³ Eph. iv. 4, 5. ⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 8. Philip. i. 27, ii. 2. ⁵ Rom. xii. 5.
⁶ Rom. xii. 4-6. ⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 8-11. ⁸ 1 Peter ii. 9.

coequal priests. Teaching and caretaking, not sacerdotal office and service, are the peculiarities of Christian ministers; and these peculiarities, as will be proved, are not aboriginal but acquired, not orders but offices, not self-perpetuating but ecclesiastically created and conferred. In few words, the members of a church are essentially equal and circumstantially diverse; a church is equal in its composition and unequal in its creations, one in membership but diverse in the representative office and authority which itself confers.

Significant Scripture facts illustrate ecclesiastical equality. "When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, 'Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them.'"¹ Nothing like condemnation of this style of opposition to the foreman of the Apostles is intimated; the fact is recorded as a matter of course; and Peter defended himself, not by an assertion of prerogative and power, but by a statement of facts and of their kindred principles. The opponents of Peter were wrong in their theology, but right in the exercise of their freedom and fraternity. The contrast of modern ecclesiastical dictation and despotism is most apparent and striking.

Inequality in the Church is, in one instance, recorded as the claim of *a malicious prater*, and is predicted, in others, as *a foul apostacy*. "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church."² The love of pre-eminence and the practice of expelling are thus naturally conjoined.

¹ Acts xi. 2, 3.

² 3 John 9, 10.

The claim of pre-eminence, in a society of equals, occasions an opposition that nothing can conquer but the practical pre-eminence of the claimants or the expulsion of the dissidents. "The Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."¹ The carnal Jews expelled from the synagogue; the ambitious and intolerant Diotrophes expelled from the Church; and of both, whose spirit is one, there have been, and still are, too many imitators. "The man of sin," "the son of perdition," is prophetically described as one "that exalteth himself."² The mystic whore sits proudly enthroned, on many waters.³ The mystic Babylon sits as a queen, and glorifies herself.⁴

There is one passage in the New Testament which alone is sufficient to prove, and ought to be sufficient to secure, Christian co-ordination, and which may well be styled the canon of ecclesiastical equality: "ONE is your MASTER, CHRIST; and ALL YE are BRETHERN."

4. A Church is a CURATORIAL Society. It implies kind caretaking as well as concourse and co-operation, because it is not founded and formed by selfishness or mere justice, but by benevolence and brotherly love. The members are commanded to love one another, to be kindly affectioned one toward another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another, and to be of the same mind one toward another; and, in these precepts, much more than co-operative justice or equitable partnership is meant. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's."⁵ "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."⁶ "The members should have the same care one for another."⁷ A bishop should know how to "take care of the church of God."⁸ Ecclesiastical care is both common and

¹ John ix. 22. ² 2 Thess. ii. 4. ³ Rev. xvii. 1. ⁴ Rev. xviii. 7.
⁵ 1 Cor. x. 24. ⁶ Philipp. ii. 4. ⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 25. ⁸ 1 Tim. iii. 5.

special, because it is exercised between all the members, and between the official members and the others.

The distinction between a church and a congregation is plain and palpable. A church is not a mere congregation of professed believers, to whom the word of God is preached and "the sacraments are administered;" but a co-operative, curatorial society of equals. There may be an assemblage, periodically or occasionally, for either secular or spiritual purposes, to receive instruction, to promote some policy, or to realise some pleasure; in other words, there may be a public congregation, without the formation or existence of a society. A congregation is a gathering or crowd, under no engagement to re-assemble, without enumeration, without recognised correlation, principle, or policy; a co-operative society is a definite plurality of persons, pledged to conjoint purpose and process, continuously existing, with fixed convocations and the fellowship of sentiment, salutation, and labour. A church is not mere gregariousness. There may be a congregation of Christians, for Christian worship, where no church has been formed, or in some other capacity besides that of a church. If a congregation, in a Christian edifice and during the time of Christian worship, be a church, the most sceptical and immoral attendants on public worship may be members of the church by the mere fact of their attendance; and when the congregation is dissolved, the church ceases. Such is not the Scriptural account of a church. It was not a collection of mere congregations that Christ determined to build upon a rock, but well-organised and continuous association. The word *ecclesia* simply, though it signifies assembly, is not conclusive and sufficient. The concourse of the idolatrous Ephesians, both tumultuous and lawful, bears this name;¹ but its Christian meaning, its specific appropria-

¹ Acts xix. 39—41.

tion in the nomenclature of Christianity, must be obtained by a collection and induction of its Scriptural uses. It is not against mere congregations that the gates of hell are vainly arrayed. It is not to the cognisance and control of a mere congregation that Christians are to submit their undeterminable disputes. It was not to a mere gathering in the upper room, the synagogue, or the temple, that the daily additions of the saved were made. It is not among mere congregational attendants that mutual salutation, labour, love, honour, sympathy, and care are to be observed, but among definite and known associates. Hence the church is named, in several places, a *koinonia*,¹ (κοινωνία) which signifies society, fellowship, communion, participation.

Such a society as we have proved a church to be, evidently and necessarily implies *registration*. The rights, duties, and interests of a large number of co-partners cannot be secured, without the most exact and careful registration of each and all. Those who esteem, love, and honour each other, and who truly care for each other, must be able to distinguish and recognise one another; and they cannot do this without an accurate catalogue of the society which they constitute. The enumeration and enrolment of the primitive churches are noted in the New Testament. The Apostles were twelve; several disciples awaited the day of Pentecost, "the number of whose names together was about an hundred and twenty;" the Pentecostal additions were "about three thousand souls." After the healing of the lame man, "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." Subsequently, "multitudes, both of men and women, were added to the Lord." The number of the

¹ Acts. ii. 42; 1 Cor. i. 9; Gal. ii. 9; Philipp. i. 5.

first deacons, in the first church of Jerusalem, was seven. Afterwards, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Again, we are told that "many thousands of the Jews" believed. "Two or three" can constitute a church; for, in connection with the command—"tell it unto the church"—and with the ecclesiastical power of binding and loosing, Christ has promised that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The wisdom and goodness of the Head of the church are apparent, in thus conferring on the smallest plurality of his associated disciples the privileges and benefits of his Church. When a church increases, the amount of its membership should be influenced by convenient distance from the place of assemblage, the capacity of the ecclesiastical edifice and the practicability of its enlargement, the ability of the pastor, and the interests of Christianity, considered in their various aspects. A place of worship should be of such a size only as comports with the general audibleness of the preaching, praying, and praising. The extremes of swelling the ecclesiastical ranks, by the admission of members from inconvenient distances, or beyond the power of ecclesiastical oversight and care, on the one hand, and of weakening an original church by creating small and feeble offshoot churches, on the other hand, should be avoided with enlightened and religious prudence.

Ecclesiastical registration implies *names* as well as numbers. The name of "the first-born among many brethren," the name Jesus, is primary and pre-eminent, for it is "above every name." Next to him, in the catalogue of the church, are the names of the twelve Apostles: "Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James,

the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas, the brother of James," and last of all, as "of one born out of due time," "Saul, of Tarsus, who is also called Paul." Following these is "Mary, the mother of Jesus."¹ Those who constituted the germ or nucleus of the church were appellatively as well as numerically registered, for "the number of the names together was about an hundred and twenty." "Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mathias," were put in nomination for filling up the vacancy in the duodecimal testimony to the Saviour's resurrection; and "the lot fell upon Mathias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." "Joses, who, by the apostles, was surnamed Barnabas," is recorded for his liberality to the church, and for his zealous labours. Ananias and Sapphira are the chronicled instances of mendacity and consequent sudden death. The first deacons were "Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost," the first martyr, "and Philip and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch." The name of Simon has become the opprobrious and permanent indication of his sin, by whomsoever imitated. Ananias is associated with Paul's conversion. Eneas was miraculously cured of an eight-years' palsy. Dorcas, miraculously restored to life, has become the standing designation of charitable associations for clothing the poor. The gospel was first preached and the church was first opened, to the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius. There are other honourable names in the church's inspired records, that must appear at subsequent stages of our ecclesiastical research.

Next to the honour of registration above is the honour of registration in the church below. It is the fault of

¹Acts i. ix.

ecclesiasts themselves if the two registrations are not coincident. The names of the general assembly and church of the first-born are written in heaven. It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to be enrolled in the church; and it is the duty and interest of every church to keep accurate catalogues of its members' names, and a careful record of every admission, exclusion, transfer, or withdrawal.

5. A church is a **CONDITIONAL** Society. Every voluntary society implies conditions of connection, if it mean anything more than a congregation or crowd. A society cannot admit persons indiscriminately and informally, without sacrificing its distinctive interests and existence. If the church admit the world, as such, within its pale, the church and the world must soon become one, and the former, consequently, entirely cease. Those who were added to the one hundred and twenty, on the day of Pentecost, are described as first inquiring—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—and, secondly, as gladly receiving apostolic truth; for, "then," after Peter's answer to the inquirers and without further delay, either in examination, prayer, or preaching, "they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added three thousand souls."¹ It appears, then, that addition to the one hundred and twenty, that is, entrance or admission into the church, took place by baptism, and that the condition or prerequisite of baptism was professed belief of the truth. They that were baptized are described simply as they that asked and accepted Peter's teaching; and their baptism constituted their addition, for the statement of the latter follows immediately the statement of the former. Professed faith, therefore, is the *condition* of

¹ Acts ii. 37—41.

ecclesiastical admission, and baptism is the *mode*. So, also, the first ultra-Jerusalemite church was formed among the Samaritans, consisting of professed believers, ecclesiastically incorporated by baptism. "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon; himself, believed also; and, when he was baptized, he continued with Philip."¹ This passage, too, is precedent and authority for the baptism of females. The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized after instruction, which he sought and, probably, professed to receive;² we say probably, because the 37th verse is doubtful, if not decidedly spurious. Saul of Tarsus was baptized after conviction, a message of mercy to him from Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, implying faith on Saul's part.³ The first Gentile members of the church were received by baptism, after apostolic teaching and the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴ Lydia was baptized after her heart was opened, "that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul."⁵ The Philippian jailor was baptized after earnest inquiry and apostolic direction.⁶ About twelve of John's disciples were united to the church by baptism, after Pauline instruction.⁷ In Corinth, baptism was administered to believers: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."⁸ Thus did the Apostles, with their fellow-labourers, fulfil the commission of Christ to teach and baptize.⁹

The *continuance*, as well as the commencement, of ecclesiastical membership, implies conditions. The con-

¹ Acts viii. 12, 13. ² Acts viii. 26-38. ³ Acts ix. 1-18. ⁴ Acts x. 5
⁵ Acts xvi. 14, 15. ⁶ Acts xvi. 27-33. ⁷ Acts xix. 1-5. ⁸ Acts xviii. 8.
⁹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

tinuance is as voluntary as the commencement, and should be as suitably spiritual, and for the same reasons. It is as inconsistent with the character and interests of a religious society to tolerate evil, originating within, as evil introduced from without. The *profession* of truth received is, as we have seen, the condition of admission; the *practice* of that truth is the natural condition of continuance; and as *baptism* is the ordinance for *originating* ecclesiastical communion, the *eucharist* is the ordinance for *continuing* it. The members of the church are obliged, by their very position, to be spiritual persons, and their spirituality consists in conformity to the laws, which, as we have seen, are implied in Christian society. They profess to receive these laws as a part of Christian truth, and the church accepts the profession in baptism. They profess to practise these laws by receiving the eucharist, and the church accepts the profession by sharing the eucharist. The eucharist is fitly denominated "the communion,"¹ because it indicates communion with both the church and its Head. Immediately after the Pentecostal baptism, it is said—"And they *continued* stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."² The original, *τη κλασει του αρτου*, should be rendered, "the breaking of the bread;" that is, the eucharistic or communion bread. Ordinary social eating is referred to in the following verse: "And breaking bread in the house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."³ Thus the communion or fellowship of the apostles, *κοινωνια*, is connected with their doctrine or teaching; and both these are connected with the eucharist and with prayers. Just as the three thousand commenced to be members of the church

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.² Acts ii. 42.³ Acts ii. 46.

by baptism, so they "continued" to be members, or formally continued in the apostolic communion and truth, by continuing in the eucharistic and devotional services of the church. Regarding the eucharist as the expression or formal avowal of Christian fellowship, the apostle says—"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."¹ He prohibits eating and drinking to satisfy the appetite, in their ecclesiastical assemblies; explains the nature of the eucharist, which they came "together into one place" to celebrate; and says "if any man hunger let him eat at home."²

Baptism, then, is the rite of ecclesiastical adhesion,—the door of the church,—the badge, mark, sign, or token of admission. The eucharist is the rite of ecclesiastical continuance and communion,—the badge, mark, sign, or token of ecclesiastical fellowship. Baptism ecclesiastically initiates; the eucharist ecclesiastically recognises. Baptism distinguishes those that enter the church from those that remain without; the eucharist distinguishes those that remain within from those that return without. Baptism is the formal expression of ecclesiastical incorporation; the eucharist is the formal expression of ecclesiastical efficiency. To appreciate them, in their ecclesiastical import and use, it is unnecessary to digress by examining their symbolical sense, which belongs to another stage of systematic theology; and to advert to the agents or methods of baptismal and eucharistic celebration were needlessly and inconveniently to anticipate.

It is important to note and remember that nothing can be either rendered or received, between man and man, as a term or condition of fellowship, but ACTS. Acts are *indicative*, as the orally or writtenly professed belief

¹ 1 Cor. x. 21.

² 1 Cor. xi. 20—34.

of the truth ; acts are *executive*, the fulfilment of intention, as the various actions that achieve and develop either good or evil purposes ; and every voluntary action, whether oral, pedal, or manual, is both indicative and executive, because it is the development and fulfilment of some intention ; but oral acts, pre-eminently, fulfil the office of indication. Words are indicative acts. We cannot know any man's thoughts, feelings, or intentions, and can, therefore, reasonably require or receive no term of co-operation but some act or acts. Hence the danger of rooting up the wheat, in attempting to gather up all the tares ; and the very great importance that churches should most carefully ascertain the acts which constitute Scriptural terms of communion. To require more than such acts is usurpation and arrogance ; to require less is latitudinarianism and unfaithfulness. Every candidate for church-membership must judge for himself what terms he can Scripturally accept ; and every church must judge for itself what terms it is authorised to impose, and bound to maintain. By all parties it should never be forgotten that the only permissible and proper terms are such acts as Christ, in his word, requires.

It ought to be a maxim, in all churches, that NOTHING CAN BE SCRIPTURALLY ESSENTIAL TO FELLOWSHIP THAT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION ; OR, THAT NOTHING CAN BE SCRIPTURALLY ESSENTIAL TO FELLOWSHIP WITH MAN THAT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. The end of Christianity is man's salvation, and to this end the church can be nothing but a means. Means are necessarily subordinate to ends ; and, therefore, though the conditions of fellowship may underlie, they cannot transcend, the conditions of salvation. A less end cannot demand or imply greater means ; and hence, admission to the church cannot imply more or greater conditions than admission to

heaven, or acceptance with the church be more difficult than acceptance with God. These views are as Scriptural as they are rational, for the apostle teaches us that churches should receive those whom they have reason to believe God himself has received; and receive them, too, in a correspondent manner: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye . . . for God hath received him."¹ "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."² Scarcely anything can be more presumptuous and impious than the reverse of these precepts. How dare any church reject those whom it believes God has accepted, by either refusing or withdrawing its fellowship? Shall the servants thus insult their Master, and oppress each other? If so, let them remember the reckoning and the retribution.

It is time that such substitutes for Scripture, such practical rivals and obscurers of Scripture, as human articles, creeds, and confessions, should, as standards, be dismissed by the churches of Christ. Let every church interpret for itself, and as occasion requires, the Scriptural terms of communion; and let every individual do the same. It is high time, too, that terms of communion should be not only substantially but simply Scriptural. The broad charity of the gospel should characterise every church, and embrace every truly *Christian* candidate for communion. It is not dogmatic or circumstantial uniformity that churches should study and seek, but Christian vitality and fidelity. Strength of faith is not the test of ecclesiastical membership; for "him that is weak in the faith receive ye." Luminosity of faith is not the test; for the primitive churches comprehended Jews, who clung to their antiquated forms, and could not clearly see

¹ Romans xiv. 1—3. ² Romans xv. 7.

the simple and superior beauty of the latter covenant. No church has a right to demand perfection or uniformity of faith, as a condition of communion; or either to withhold or to withdraw its fellowship on account of mere feebleness, cloudiness, circumstantial diversity, or circumstantial error, of belief. "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded (*ἑτερος φρονεῖτε*) God shall reveal even this unto you."¹ If in anything ye differ from the perfect, ye are not to be shunned, denounced, or discarded, but encouraged to ask and expect Divine instruction. Happy is the church in which this noble and god-like spirit prevails; and happy the day when it permeates all the churches of Christ.²

The apostolic distinction between perfection and heterodoxy is equivalent to the distinction of essential and circumstantial. The distinctive line cannot be drawn for all, as it is moral and individual. What is essential in one case, or in one set of circumstances, may not be essential in another. Each church and each individual must judge for themselves, in each particular case. It is scarcely possible to condemn, in too strong terms, the bigotry that repudiates the distinction itself, or the audacity that draws the distinction for all, as if it were mathematical and not moral.

¹ Philippians iii. 15.

² See Rev. R. Hall "On Terms of Communion."

CHAPTER IV.

ECCLESIASTICAL DEFINITION.

DEFINITION always presupposes inquiry, whether it precedes or follows delineation. It is always last in the thinker's mind, though often first in the author's method. Finality, in both respects, befits the present undertaking. We have seen what the church is, generically, specifically, and particularly; let us endeavour to distil into definition our researches and results.

Ecclesiastical definition depends upon the two distinct senses of the term "church," as aggregate and as individual, or as comprehensive and as local. The genus, society, belongs to another department of human knowledge, though introduced into this inquiry, to develop the ecclesiastical basis and to illustrate the building. The Biblical sense of the term "church" is twofold, and is coincident with the logical or scientific distinction of species and individual.

1. The church of Christ, from its rise to its consummation and throughout its whole extent, may be defined according to its origin, relations, and composition, as the spiritual society created by Christ, through his Apostles, in the city of Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards amplified in the house of Cornelius, to serve as the great social and final instrument and development of his redeeming sway. Or, it may be defined more briefly,

as Christ's spiritual and final social institute; or, as Christ's new-covenant spiritual society.

2. The totality is more easily described and less disputed than the particular. But it is important to describe both, to know both *the* church and *a* church. A church is not merely a spiritual or religious society, for it is easy to conceive of a religious society which Christ will never recognise as his own. A church is not merely a Christian society, for there are several Christian societies which are not churches, either ostensibly or really, as the Bible Society, the Religious Tract and Missionary Societies, and the Evangelical Alliance. What, then, constitutes the spiritual or Christian society called a church? Is it the offices or official ministrations of bishops and deacons? Certainly not these, for it has been shown that ecclesiastical society is equalitarian, and cannot consist in any internal superiority or peculiarity; and it will be shown, in the sequel, more formally and fully, that such offices are the creation or efflux, not the constituents, of a church, and imply the church's prior existence; and, besides, it is obvious that though a church may lose its pastor or its deacons, by resignation or decease, its own existence as a church does not cease, and is not suspended in the interval of two pastorates or two diaconates. Is it Biblical teaching that constitutes a church? There is this in a Bible-class, which yet is not a church. Such teaching is the operation of a church, not the essence. Is it the celebration of baptism and the eucharist? If so, all the societies of the Friends or Quakers are out of the pale of the church. Besides, baptizing and communing, like teaching, are not ecclesiastical elements but functions; they are not what the church is but what the church does. Is it succession, either ecclesiastical or clerical, either prelatical or presbyterial? If so, historical reading, research, and skill, on a most

extended and operose scale, are essential to the discrimination and identification of a Christian church; and the great mass of Christians, who cannot be accomplished genealogists and historians, must live and die without any assurance of their inclusion in a true church. Christianity is not so ponderous, so unadapted and impracticable as this; and it is not deficient and dependent, as the successional hypothesis makes it, not reliant on history or tradition for its ecclesiastical evidence and efficiency, but complete and self-sufficient in its biblical record and rule. Besides, on the successional supposition, a few unofficial Christians, cast upon a remote and desert island, could not form a church, and could not, as a church, claim the obviously ecclesiastical and gracious promise of Christ's presence with two or three of his assembled disciples. The true distinction of a church is not that it is *consecutive* to the primitive churches but **CONFORMED** to them, in constitution and operation. A church is a society, constructed and conducted in accordance with the whole New Testament. It is not a society that merely seeks to circulate the Bible, like the Bible Society; or to embody Biblical teaching and triumphs in circulated tracts, like the Religious Tract Society; or that merely sends forth and sustains Christian messengers, like a Missionary Society; or that seeks to promote the communion and combined action of various churches, like the Evangelical Alliance; but it is a local society, aiming and endeavouring to be and to do **ALL** that Christ requires. Its distinctiveness, its peculiarity, its stamp and mark, consist in the completeness of its actual or attempted conformity to the word of God. We may call it a New Testament local society, or an apostolical local society; though these expressions are not wholly unambiguous, since they are used in various senses. In the course of this inquiry,

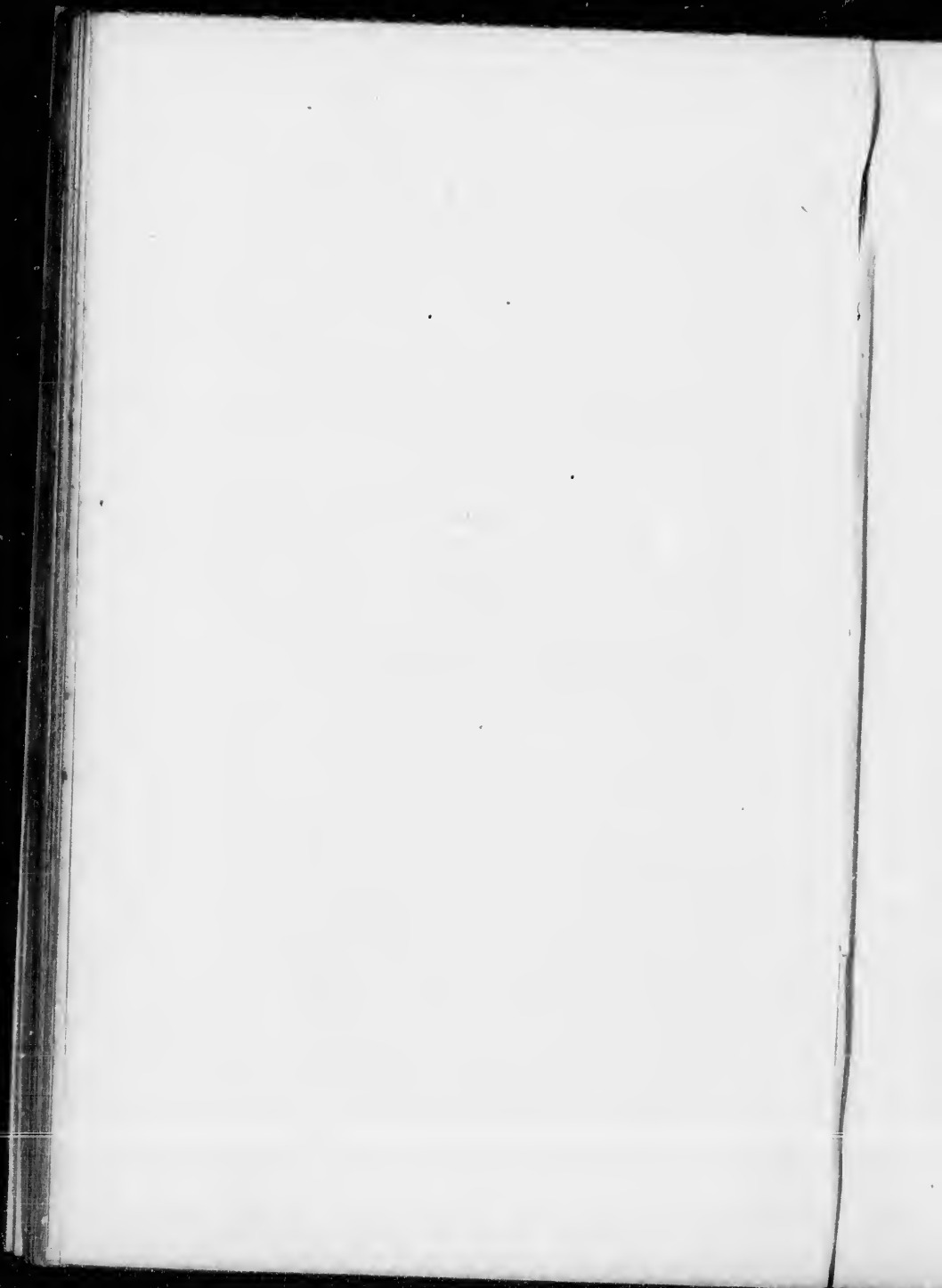
we have seen that a church is a Christian society, local, convocational, co-operative, curatorial, and conditional; but the bare mention of these characters is not satisfactory, since it does not specify what is of prime importance—the conditions of communion. The description which, we think, best combines brevity and perspicuity is to say that a church is A LOCAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTED AND CONDUCTED IN CONFORMITY TO THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT. This conformity is probably only approximative in all churches; greater in some than others; and substantially and truly obtaining in every society that really desires and endeavours to know and do the whole will of Christ. Of this conformity, every church must judge for itself; and every individual also must judge of it for himself, in accordance with the fact that religion is a personal possession and process, if he desires to select his own home among the variety of churches. How far a society can deviate from the New Testament, without unchurching itself, or how far it must approximate the New Testament rule and model, in order to be a church, it is not competent to any man absolutely to say. Conformity to the New Testament, on the part of both societies and individuals, is a moral process, that comprehends perceptions, feelings, and intentions, as well as actions, and that admits of variety of circumstances, either helping or hindering; the only competent and rightful judge of all these, in relation to all churches and individuals, is God; but each man must judge of them, in relation to himself, in order to be personally conformed to the revealed will of God. Just as idiological science is presupposed in sociological, so individual conformity to the Scriptures is presupposed in ecclesiastical. No local aggregation of spiritually dead men can make a church. There must be personal piety, the life of God in individual souls, or else the best-concerted theological

scheme and the best-constructed ecclesiasm will but resemble the valley of bones, in which the osseous materials were probably bleached, as well as numerous, but "very dry." A Scriptural church is not a machine but an organism, vital, spiritual, divine; a residence of the reigning Redeemer; a local, convocational, co-operative, curatorial society, seeking full conformity to its revealed record and rule, in its communion and its conduct, and thus both being and becoming "a glorious church." The foundation of such a church is in the holy hills; its walls are salvation and its gates praise; God dwells in it, as its light and life, and sends forth thence the rod of his strength.

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PART II.

The Origin of the Church.



ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

THE proper course of inquiry is from nature to origin, from genus to genesis. The study of composition precedes the study of cause. We first ascertain and assort phenomena, and then account for them. This order is both customary and philosophical, and quadrates with the instinctive impulse of every man to ask, first of all, *what* is this? and then, *whence* is it?

It is not idle curiosity that prompts us, in this order, to the study of causes; but the love of truth, and natural desire for the value of causational knowledge. To avoid or obtain the repetition of a change, we must know the cause; and, in many instances, to appreciate a change or a structure, we must know the origin. To be able to account satisfactorily for phenomena is one of our highest gratifications, and one of our greatest mental helps. To know the origin of an institution, as human or divine, as good or bad, as noble or ignoble, materially aids in the right apprehension and use of it. The inquiry respecting the origin of the Church of Christ is peculiarly momentous and interesting, on account of the Church's nature, age, operations, and claims.

The origin of any institution comprehends author and instrument, time, place, and manner of formation. The

church is of Divine or Messianic authorship, by apostolical instrumentality, of Pentecostal and Palestinian rise, and of corresponding method of formation. The subject of investigation is not the origin of an ecclesiastical section, part, or party, but of the ecclesiastical institute generally ; not of *a* church, but of *the* Church ; not of an individual specimen, but of the whole species.

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CHAPTER I.

EFFICIENT ORIGIN.

THE CHURCH IS DIVINE, BECAUSE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CREATED IT.

GOD alone is able to devise and construct such an institute as the Church. It has neither rival nor parallel among human institutions, because it is not human but divine. Its permanence, progress and prospects are evidences of its celestial origin. In its combined simplicity and sufficiency, its obscure rise and glorious development, its secular unattractiveness and spiritual success, it bespeaks the wisdom, power, and goodness that introduced it among men, to be the choicest social instrument of light and life, of benefit and blessing, to our lapsed and ruined race.

The Church is divine because it is an element or constituent of divine government, of God's restorative spiritual kingdom. God's book, the Bible, which is its only record and rule, denominates it "the church of God,"¹ because God created it. Nothing is ever said to be "of God" but on the ground that God is the universal creator and proprietary ruler. Men may acquire property by exchange, and dominion by force and fraud; but Divine propriety and dominion arise solely from origination. Paul describes Christian society as "the

¹ Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. i. 2; x. 32; xi. 22; xv. 9. Gal. i. 13. 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15.

house of God, which is the church of the living God ;" as if to suggest the fact, elsewhere enunciated, that "every house is builded by some one [*τις*, not some man]; but he that built all things is God."¹ So, also, we read of "the churches of God,"² as if to intimate that, both particularly and generally, this association is a divinely formed and governed institute. Christ is the builder of the church, because he is God, and because "he that built all things is God." He avows himself the builder. To his disciples he said, "On this rock I will build my church."³ He is the sustaining rock, the ample and enduring basis, because he is the divine creator and owner. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."⁴ He claims the churches as his own, by avowing himself, in his apocalyptic communications, as "the first and the last;" by walking among the candlesticks as his own; by grasping the symbolic ecclesiastical stars as his property; and by addressing them in the style and tenor of a supreme and original Lord. The church is the only species of purely spiritual society that he has created; and, in its nature and relations, it is clearly Messianic. To whom can such a spiritual element and instrumentality belong but to the spiritual and restorative Ruler of mankind, to whom "all power in heaven and earth" is given? Its rite of initiation was appointed by him, for he said to his disciples, "Go and baptize." Its right of communion was instituted by him, for "the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake and said, Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."⁵ Its record and rule are his, for "the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" and also the pro-

¹ Heb. iii. 4.² 1 Thess. ii. 14.³ Matt. xvi. 18.⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 11.⁵ 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

mised inspiration of the new covenant writers. The church itself is Christ's, for "ye are Christ's;" and what is Christ's is divine, for "Christ is God's."¹

The agency of Christ, as creator of the church, is twofold; his personal and preparative agency, while on earth, and his invisible and accomplishing agency, from his mediatorial throne in heaven. Indicating this distinction according to the residence of the agent, we may call the first species of agency *terrestrial*, and the second *celestial*; or, according to the nature of the agency, the first *preparative*, and the second *performative*; or, according to the method of the agency, the first *adventive*, because developed during the time of Our Lord's advent, and the second *pneumatical*, because developed in the operations of the *Pneuma*, the Holy Ghost.

Rightly to appreciate the terrestrial agency of Christ, we must accurately distinguish his offices. They are twofold, not threefold, not prophetic and sacerdotal and regal, as is generally supposed, but sacerdotal and regal only, and these together mediatorial. Messianic prophecy is but a branch, operation, or species of mediatorial rule. Christ is not prophet and king, but, as a king, he prophesies or teaches; he is a prophetic king. The mere biblical titles of Christ will not determine the proper classification of his offices, because sometimes one of them is comprehensive of all, or they indicate variety of official aspects only, or they are substantially synonymous; and hence we find him called mediator, prophet, counsellor, angel, apostle, shepherd, bishop, witness, prince, priest, and king. We must justly distinguish the ends and means of his mediation, considering the passages of Scripture that indicate such distinction. Christ has become a mediator to legalize and to realize human

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 23.

salvation; as priest he removes the legal hinderances to our recovery and happiness, as prince he removes the practical. Sacerdotally, he makes salvation possible; regally, he makes it actual. No other operation, agency or office, is either requisite or conceivable. Such, too, is the teaching of the Bible. That prophecy or instruction is but a species or operation of his kingly agency, Christ himself intimates: "Thou sayest [idiomatically, 'thou sayest truly'] that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that [as a king] I should bear witness to the truth."¹ That very truth, or truth-communication, or truth-testimony, which is usually assigned to a specific office, called the prophetic, is, in these words, assigned to Christ as king, and is elsewhere biblically indicated as regal and as regally-warlike. Truth is described as the two-edged sword of Christ in his martial attire, girt on his thigh, grasped in his hand, issuing from his mouth; it is "the sword of the Spirit, the word of God," wielded by him and by every Christian. Christ was humbled as a priest, self-sacrificing; and is exalted as a prince, gloriously rescuing. As a priest, he was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death; as a prince, he receives glory and honour. Sacerdotally, he was crucified; regally, he is crowned. He himself intimates his twofold office, in telling us that he gave his flesh for the life of the world, or, that, as the world's high-priest, he might make human resuscitation possible and lawful; but it is as prince, by his Spirit and Word, that he quickens dead souls, for "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."² As our priest, he was delivered for our offences; as our prince, he was raised

¹ John xviii. 37.

² John vi. 63.

again for our justification.¹ Because, as priest, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted him, as prince, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is lord or sovereign.² "When he had by himself [by the priestly sacrifice of himself] purged our sins, he sat down [as our redeeming sovereign] on the right hand of the Majesty on high."³ "Though he were a son, yet learned he [as a priest] obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect [sacerdotally, when he said, 'It is finished,' and died], he became [regally] the author of eternal salvation unto all them that [as his subjects] obey him."⁴ "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son [making reconciliation legal], much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his [royal] life;"⁵ that is, by Christ's sacerdotal death the way of salvation is opened, and by his regnant life we are actually saved. Christ is now, as Zechariah declared, "a priest upon his throne,"⁶ a reigning priest, a mediator who sacerdotally legalizes, and rectorally realizes, human salvation. He came "with the water" or purifying power of his principedom, signified by the water of baptism; and "with the blood" of his priesthood, symbolised by the eucharistic rite.⁷

SECTION I.—*Preparative Agency of Christ as Ecclesiastical Creator.*

THE object of Our Lord's advent was twofold; that, as the world's restorative ruler, he might prepare for the fulness and finality of his kingdom; and that, as the

¹ Rom. iv. 25.

² Phil. ii. 6—11.

³ Heb. i. 3.

⁴ Heb. v. 8.

⁵ Rom. v. 10.

⁶ Zech. vi. 13.

⁷ 1 John v. 6: *dia, with, not by.*

world's high priest, he might suffer and die. His kingdom, in its fulness and finality, is distinguished by his Church, as the vehicle of his truth. Christ bore his rectoral testimony to the truth in person, and by training and preparing others to bear it, as his servants and messengers, on his behalf. His whole public life below, or ministry on earth, was spiritually regal, though shrouded to all and especially to the unbelieving; it was a preparation for the full development and final era of his kingdom. The day of Pentecost is the initial date of the Christian era or the latter days, of the full, formal, and final development of Christ's mediatorial reign; and, therefore, it is the initial date of the Christian Church. This final era is characteristically ecclesiastical; and the right view of our Lord's personal terrestrial ministry is that it was *ecclesiastically preparative*. He lived and laboured that he might prepare for the formation of his Church, the great social development and instrument, the characteristic institute, of the final era of his gracious reign; and he lived, also, that he might die. He lived as a king to prepare for his full and final triumphs; he died as a priest to consummate the legalization, the juridical basis, of his benign kingdom. Personally and by his apostles, he at once consummated the national or Jewish era, prepared for and began the ecclesiastical. Judaism, wound up and dismissed by him, went out in a blaze of glory. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former,"¹ on account of Christ's personal appearance and ministrations. Judaism ceased, as an extant divine institute, on the day of Pentecost, and then became, in the divine government, a mere subject of recollection and record; but rejecting and resisting this truth and claiming divine continuity, it became an

¹ Haggai ii. 9.

obstacle and an enemy, which the Roman eagles swept away for ever.

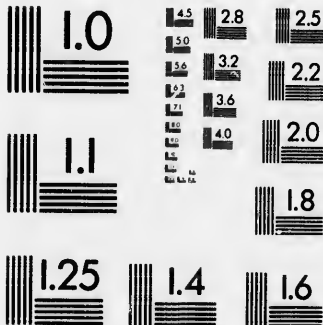
The view thus taken of Christ's personal ministry is amply intimated and verified in the New Testament. Christ came and lived, not ostentatiously or formally but practically and spiritually, as a king, terminating one era of his reign, and preparing for the higher and ultimate: "a Governor that shall rule my people Israel."¹ He was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel,"² because Judaism and its blind adherents fell by him, and the coming era and its recipients rose by him. Even at the age of twelve he was about his Father's business, by hearing the doctors and asking them questions; and, by his understanding and answers, furnishing a pattern of truth-seeking and truth-telling.³ He "came unto his own [house or people, to prepare them for a nobler economy, to promote them from the dispensation that had waxed old and was ready to vanish away], but his own [generally] received him not."⁴ His personal ministry was characterised by the "grace and truth" that distinguish his whole restorative reign, from man's Edenic fall to his resurrectional recovery, that prepared for his perfectly developed kingdom, and are contrasted with the inferior antecedent, the law given by Moses.⁵ Because Judaism was about to terminate, John the Baptist declared that the axe was laid to the root of the trees, so as that all who rejected the coming economy should, with the old one, be utterly exterminated,—“hewn down and cast into the fire;” that God's purposes were not to be frustrated by the Abrahamic origin and covenants of the Jews, for God of the stones could raise up children unto Abraham, to replenish the kingdom that permanently consists of Abraham's

¹ Matt. ii. 6.² Luke ii. 34.³ Luke ii. 46—50.⁴ John i. 11.⁵ John i. 17.



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spiritual seed; and that Christ was about to fan his Jewish floor and gather the wheat into his ecclesiastical barn, while, by the unquenchable fire of his Roman visitation on Jerusalem, he would burn up the chaff.¹ Suffer now, said Christ, applying to John for baptism, this apparent impropriety, for it is the fulfilment of righteousness; in other words, it was the fulfilment of a Divine arrangement for his formal initiation and recognition, as the Head of the Jewish nation, consummating the old economy, and preparing for his creation of the new.² John baptized and recognized him as the Messiah; God himself baptized and recognized him as the Messiah, for he baptized him with the Holy Ghost, and proclaimed him to be his Son. Christ's circumcision fulfilled the righteousness of Judaism, as extant and authoritative; his baptism fulfilled the righteousness of the Harbinger's mission, as the death-bode of Judaism, the preparation for the Finisher's advent, the public, formal initiation and recognition, human and divine, of the true Messiah. To prepare for his personal ministry, Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, and then vanquished the foe whose works he came to destroy.³ He began his ministry by calling his disciples,⁴ performing a miracle at Cana,⁵ and purging the temple.⁶ One great part of the preparation for the church was to select and train its germinant members, its framers and founders; and hence the early selection of disciples to be with Christ "from the beginning," that they might be competent witnesses and duly-qualified instruments. Peter's new name was given in intentional and intimated relation to the coming church: "Thou art a stone, and on this rock I will build my church." Peculiar instruction, as will soon be shown, was given to the disciples, especially

¹ Luke iii. 8, 9, 17.

² Matt. iii. 13—17.

³ Matt. iv.

⁴ John i. 42.

⁵ John ii. 1—12.

⁶ John ii. 13—22.

to the twelve, who were intended to be the chief witnesses and ecclesiastical officers. The initiatory miracle of Cana was an appropriate exhibition and evidence of our Lord's authority and office, to attract attention and induce faith, and was not in vain: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."¹ Nothing, too, could be more appropriate and significant than to purge the temple before he dismissed it, that Judaism might expire as it was born, a holy dispensation of the Holy One of Israel, and that the purposes of all the dispensations might be understood and regarded. Christ did not personally introduce the final era of his reign but prepare for it; and, therefore, he preached its proximity: "The time is fulfilled [the time to wind up Judaism and to prepare for Christianity], and the kingdom of heaven is at hand."² He tells the woman of Samaria that "the hour cometh [not is come, for Judaism was still extant and authoritative], when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father."³ Shortly after, he told his disciples that the Jewish fields were "white already to harvest," ripe for the proximate transfer of wheat to the ecclesiastical barn, and of chaff to the Roman fire. "He that soweth," under Judaism in its wane, "and he that reapeth," in the approaching ecclesiastical harvest, "shall rejoice together."⁴ "The word *κορῖαι*, properly used of manual, severe and exhausting labour, is very appropriate to all such *agricultural* labours as precede the harvest, namely, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, &c. So 2 Tim. ii. 6. . . . Here it is appropriately used to denote the pains bestowed by Jesus in sowing the seeds of salutary doctrine, thus laying a foundation for the churches which

¹ John ii. 11. ² Mark i. 15. ³ John iv. 21. ⁴ John iv. 35—38.

were hereafter to be instituted. Those who reaped are the Apostles, and their [chronal¹] successors, and, through their means, the whole body of faithful followers of Christ."² Availing himself of a message from John, our Lord intimates to the people the combined secular lowliness and spiritual dignity of the Baptist, whom he pronounces unexcelled by any of his predecessors, yet surpassed by the last in his proximate kingdom.³ "Now, I say," says Paul, "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."⁴ The personal ministry of Christ belonged to the old era, not to the new; it was consummatory of the former, not creative of the latter, because it was a ministry of the circumcision.

The difference between the gospels and the other books of the New Testament is fully accounted for by the contents and chronology of the two portions. The contents of the first, the gospels, were *ecclesiastically preparative*, and they were admirably and adequately such. They comprehend all that was proper and necessary to be known by the subjects of an expiring economy and the expectants of another, by the valedictors of a departing era and the normal candidates and originators of a nobler. The contents of the second portion of the New Testament are *ecclesiastically genetic and maturative*, recording the origin and maturation of the church, the full development and the destiny of Christ's kingdom, in its extant, perfect, and final form. The second portion extends from the Acts to the Apocalypse, both inclusive, and bears throughout the impress and evidence of its relation to the full formation and efficiency of the Christian Church. The gospels neither contradict nor supersede the epistles, apoca-

¹ Chronal, relating to time. ² Bloomfield's "Recensio Synoptica," vol. 3, p. 137.

³ Matt. xi. 7-30.

⁴ Romans xv. 8.

lyse, and acts, but prepare for them. The first and second portions of the New Testament, as we have distinguished them, are to each other as the seed sown to the developed plant and the ripening fruit, as gestation to birth and life, as the auroral kindling to the risen sun, as the final lessons for the pupil to the matured understanding and actions of the perfect man.

Christ trained and prepared his ecclesiastical servants by means both public and private, both common and special. The *public and common* training consisted of our Lord's public example, communications, and miracles, which were intended and adapted for the good of the multitude, as well as of his disciples. He exemplified to all, with whom he had intercourse, his own pure and perfect nature, and the spirit of his religion and his disciples, and thus taught them the way of life; he wrought miracles of might and mercy before all, to attest his claims, and to increase the number of his disciples and servants; and he instructed the Jews, in general, respecting his spiritual and heavenly kingdom, by public discourses, parables, and conversations, and by incidental illustrations and allusions. In all this the disciples, as well as the multitudes, participated; and by all this they were taught and prepared to appreciate the coming era, and to promote its operations. A full estimate or even a copious analysis of our Lord's general ecclesiastical preparation, though pre-eminently interesting and edifying, would inconveniently and disproportionately enlarge the consideration of the church's origin.

The *private and special* preparation of the disciples appears in the events which they alone were allowed to witness, and in the communications which they alone were permitted to hear. Such events were the transfiguration, the last passover, the agony in the garden, Christ's appearances after his resurrection, and his ascen-

sion to heaven. Such communications were the expositions of his parables, the predictions of his death and of the destruction of Jerusalem, his paschal discourses, and his tetrarcontal or forty days' instructions. "Without a parable spake he not unto the multitude: and when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples."¹ But the selection and special preparation of the disciples bear so directly and essentially on the rise and progress of the Christian Church, that we must somewhat particularly consider them. Christ first called Simon and Andrew, James and John, appropriately naming Simon, and promising to make them all fishers of men.² He called Matthew from the receipt of custom.³ The calling of others is not specified, but this is sufficient as a specimen; and the selection and appointment of twelve, out of the whole number of his disciples, which are the most important proceedings of this kind, are distinctly stated by two evangelists, and their names are given by three. Christ prepared for the apostolic ordination, by continuing "all night in prayer to God; and, when it was day, he called his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles."⁴ No mention is made of the imposition of hands. The word Mark uses is *εποιησε*, which signifies made or constituted. Luke's word is *εκλησαμενος*, which signifies election or choice. Matthew merely gives the names, and John makes no mention of the transaction. Mark states the object of the selection, "that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils."⁵ Soon after this election, he delivered a sermon to his disciples, which is principally a selection from his sermon on the Mount.⁶

¹ Mark iv. 34. ² Mark i. 16—20. ³ Matt. ix. 9. ⁴ Luke vi. 12—16.

⁵ Mark iii. 14, 15. ⁶ Luke vi. 17—49.

After hearing the parable of the sower, the disciples inquired why he spoke to the people in parables; and he told them that it was not given to the people, but to themselves, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, because the people did not, but they themselves did, rightly use what knowledge they already had.¹ And accordingly, to his disciples, privately, he explained the parables of the sower and the tares, and delivered the parables of the treasure, merchant, and net; thus enabling them to appreciate, and preparing them to publish, the things that pertain to the kingdom of God.² He demonstrated his power to them, by quelling a storm on the lake.³ He took Peter, James, and John to witness the revivifying of Jairus's daughter.⁴ At another time, he called the twelve, gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and sent them forth, by two and two, with due instruction and premonition, to preach the proximity of the kingdom of heaven.⁵ Thus he employed them to do present good, to prepare for the appropriate and beneficial close of Judaism; and prepared them, by practical initiation and application, for publishing to all the gospel of the kingdom. When the disciples were toiling on the lake, against a contrary wind, he walked to them on the water, and saved adventurous Peter from drowning.⁶ He cautioned them against error, as well as taught them the truth, for he warned them against the leavening doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.⁷ In a private interview, after prayer, he questioned them respecting the popular opinion of himself, not for his own information, but as an occasion and means of instructing them; recognised Peter's name as ecclesiastically symbolical;

¹ Matt. xiii. 10—17. ² Mark iv. 10—25; Matt. xiii. 36—52. ³ Matt. viii. 24—27. ⁴ Mark v. 35—43. ⁵ Luke ix. 1—6; Mark vi. 7; Matt. x. 1—5, and 10—42. ⁶ Matt. xiv. 25—33. ⁷ Matt. xvi. 5—12.

avowed his determination to build his invincible church and to entrust Peter with the keys; and prohibited the disclosure of his Messiahship.¹ Afterwards, he rebuked Peter for deprecating his Master's foreshown death, and enjoined on his disciples self-denial, cross-bearing, and obedience, as the only means of securing the precious soul and obtaining judicial recognition and reward.² To Peter, James, and John, by his transfiguration, he demonstrated his glory, his accordance with Judaism, as represented by Moses and Elias, and his own divine authority, as proclaimed in a voice from heaven—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him;" but enjoined secrecy on the witnesses till after his death; and informed them that John the Baptist was the expected Elijah.³ To the disciples he privately explained that their inability to eject the dumb and deaf spirit arose from their unbelief, and intimated that the remedy for this was prayer and fasting.⁴ At another time, as they wondered at his words and actions, he enjoined careful remembrance, and predicted his betrayal and death.⁵ To avoid offence, he directed and enabled Peter to pay tribute money that could not fairly be demanded.⁶ When the disciples contended for superiority, he reproved them; and explained to them the nature of his kingdom, the inconsistency of their pretensions and disputes, the evil of offences, the right method of avoiding and adjusting them, and the duty of forgiveness.⁷ He rebuked them for proposing to invoke fire from heaven on the inhospitable Samaritan village.⁸ To one who proposed to follow him, Christ declared himself homeless.⁹ To another, whom he called, he refused to allow delay for his father's burial.¹⁰ And to another,

¹ Matt. xvi. 13—20. ² Matt. xvi. 21—28. ³ Matt. xvii. 1—13.
⁴ Matt. xvii. 14—21. ⁵ Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 30—32; Luke ix. 43—45. ⁶ Matt. xvii. 24—27. ⁷ Mark ix. 33—50; Matt. xviii. 1—35.
⁸ Luke ix. 52—56. ⁹ Luke ix. 57, 58. ¹⁰ Luke ix. 59, 60.

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Luke ix.
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who proposed to follow him, after a domestic valediction, he declared the unfitness for his kingdom of a reluctant and recoiling labourer.¹ He appointed and deputed, two by two, seventy other disciples to precede him in his visits; to preach, with celerity, the proximity of his kingdom; and to bring peace to every peaceful householder, with whom they should sojourn.² To his disciples he prescribed the prayer which bears his name, as a form of social devotion; and he illustrated the efficacy of prayer by friendship and parental affection.³ At another time, he warned his disciples against offences; inculcated the rebuking of an offending brother and the forgiving of a penitent offender; and illustrated, to the apostles, the power of faith and the unprofitableness of man to God.⁴ In the house, on one occasion, he further explained to them the subject of marriage, on which he had been publicly questioned.⁵ He was displeased with his disciples for impeding the approach of little children;⁶ indicated the evil of trusting in riches;⁷ promised his disciples suitable supplies here, and life eternal hereafter;⁷ and illustrated their duty by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.⁸ He also foretold them, the third time, of his ignominious death.⁹ To the mother of Zebedee's children he declared that a seat, at his right hand and at his left, could not be given by partiality or favour, but to those only for whom his Father had prepared it; and to the other ten he said that participation in his kingdom was not a domination, but an humble ministration, assimilated to his own.¹⁰ At supper, in Bethany, in the house of Simon, the leper, he sanctioned Mary's special preparatory service of anointing his feet, and condemned his disciples' plea of preferring the common and continuous

¹ Luke ix. 61. ² Luke x. 1—37. ³ Luke xi. 1—13. ⁴ Luke xvii. 1—10.
⁵ Matt. xix. 9—12. ⁶ Mark x. 13—16. ⁷ Matt. xix. 23—30. ⁸ Matt. xx.
1—16. ⁹ Matt. xx. 17—19. ¹⁰ Matt. xx. 20—28.

ministration to the poor.¹ On his way from Bethany, he miraculously destroyed a fig-tree, and employed the event to enforce faith on his disciples.² Departing from the temple and seated on the Mount of Olives, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; delivered the parables of the virgins and talents; and foreshowed the procedure of the last great day.³ He celebrated the Passover, with his disciples, shortly before his death; washed their feet; indicated the traitor; instituted the eucharist; instructed and comforted his disciples at length; offered his great intercessory prayer; and, in presence of Peter and James and John, suffered and prayed in the garden.⁴ Betrayed by Judas, he commanded Peter to put up his sword, as the instrument of death, which ought not and could not prevent his self-sacrifice, though he, by other means, if he chose, could easily defeat his enemies.⁵ When Peter thrice denied him in the palace, he rebuked and reclaimed the offender, with a significant look, which reminded him of previous warning.⁶ On the cross, he filially recognised his mother, and provided for her in his own absence, by entrusting her to his beloved disciple, as to an affectionate and dutiful son.⁷ After his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples on several occasions; for forty days instructed them in the things pertaining to his proximate kingdom; commissioned the eleven to teach and baptize; directed them to tarry in Jerusalem for his own spiritual and divine baptism; and, from the Mount, called Olivet, ascended up to heaven.⁸

We cannot appreciate the education and influence, to which the foregoing events and instruction belong, with-

¹ Matt. xxvi. 6-13. ² Matt. xxi. 18-22. ³ Matt. xxiv. xxv. ⁴ Matt. xxvi. 1-46; Mark xiv. 1-42; Luke xxi. 1-46; John xiii.-xviii. ⁵ Matt. xxvi. 51-54. John xviii. 10, 11. ⁶ Luke xxii. 56-62; Matt. xxvi. 75. ⁷ John xix. 25-27. ⁸ Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xx., xxi.; Acts i.

out the deep conviction of their admirable adaptation to the end in view and of their preparatory relation to the origin and formation of the church. Infinite wisdom always adjusts means to ends, and, by either ordinary or miraculous methods, or by both intermixed, trains and prepares its human instruments. It is only ignorance and presumption that despise preparation; and if the result be the best evidence and illustration of means and methods, we shall find abundant proof, in the conduct of the apostles and their assistants, of the excellence of the school in which they had been taught, and of the ample qualifications with which their Master had endowed them.

Our Lord, during his personal ministry, commissioned and employed his disciples, both the twelve and the seventy, to aid him in his great work of ecclesiastical preparation. We must not confound the office and work of the twelve, before the day of Pentecost, with their office and work then and afterwards. Before that day, they assisted in making ready for the church; on that day and afterwards, they acted as the instrumental founders and framers of the church. In both periods they were the chosen instruments of Christ; though acting with various authority and in various circumstances.

SECTION II.—*Performative Agency of Christ as Ecclesiastical Creator.*

The restorative or mediatorial reign of Christ extends from the fall to the resurrection, and is a constant theme of revelation; but the creation or formation of the church, forms an era which began on the day of Pentecost, and is the theme of part of revelation, commencing with "the Acts of the Apostles," which might be fitly denominated "Ecclesiastical Genesis." The operation of Christ in this era, as throughout his whole

mediatorial reign, with the exception of his terrestrial and personal ministry, is celestial and pneumatical, exercised from his throne on high and by the agency of his Spirit. He promised this agency repeatedly to his disciples before his ascension, and indicated its primary aspects. First, as the agency of *conviction*: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter (*Παρακλητος*) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."¹ The Spirit's name, *Paracletos*, is singularly suitable and significant. It is formed of *παρα*, by, and *καλεω*, I call, and signifies the agency by which men are to be called, or, in one word, the *CALLER*. The Greek name of the church signifies, as we have seen, the called, from *εκ*, out, and *καλεω*, I call; and the agent by which the church is formed and continued, for the accomplishment of its end, is aptly denominated the Caller. The correspondence of these and cognate names is most striking and significant. Every member of the church is a *kletos*, one of "the called of Jesus Christ," one called out of the evil world; the agent of the divine creator and ruler of the church is the *parakletos*, who calls out of the world into the church; the primary instruments of the caller were *kletoi apostoloi*, called apostles; and a church is an *ekklesia*, a society of the called of Christ. In four places the Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete,² and in each with prospective reference to the Christian church and era. "If I go not away," after preparing for the church and consummating my sacrifice, "the Caller will not come" and the church will not be instituted. "It is expedient," therefore, "for you," as the appointed instruments of the church's formation, and as

¹ John xvi. 7, 8.

² John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7.

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 "it is expedient for you that I go away." Alone you could never succeed; but the Caller, the calling agency, will accompany you (the calling instruments), and render you successful, by reproving the world, through your word, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and thus inducing and enabling men to quit the evil world and enter my church.

The primary and proper meaning of *parakaleo* (*παρακαλεω*) and all its variations is calling; and according to the varieties of the calling, we have the word variously rendered in our common English translation. Calling upon God is rendered praying;¹ calling earnestly, for a benefit, beseeching,² calling earnestly on a congregation, in religious worship, exhortation;³ calling kindly on the sorrowful or troubled, to repress their grief, or to induce them to receive encouragement, is consolation or comfort.⁴ Sometimes, too, it is rendered desiring,⁵ entreating,⁶ which evidently denote only circumstantial variations or mere phases of calling. A *paracletos* is a caller, inviter, persuader; and *paraclesis* frequently denotes the consolation or comfort, consequent on the persuasion of the sorrowful. Want of attention to the primary meaning of the word "parakaleo" has obscured several passages. "If any man sin, we have a Caller (*παρακλητος*) to the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins."⁷ In these words, Christ is encouragingly represented in his twofold office; making propitiation for our sins, as our high-priest; and, as our redeeming prince, calling us to God for remission and renewal. The preposition, *προς* (*pros*), governs the accusative, *πατερα* (*patera*, father), and signifies "to," or "unto," not "with,"

¹ Mark v. 17. ² Matt. viii. 5. ³ Luke iii. 18. ⁴ Acts xvi. 49.

⁵ Matt. xviii. 32. ⁶ Luke xv. 28. ⁷ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

as in the received translation. In connection with his approaching departure, Christ says—"I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Caller [instead of myself, the caller of yourselves and others], that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth," to instruct and assist you, who are my instrumental callers.¹ "These things," says Christ, in the same discourse, "have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Caller, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name [to call the world through you], he shall teach you all things."² "But when the Caller is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me [in illuminating and succeeding you]: and ye also shall bear witness."³ "And when he [the Caller] is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." In these two last passages, the Spirit's testimony and the Spirit's convictions are perfectly correspondent with the Spirit's name and work, as Caller, but not as Comforter. Nothing can be more consistent and luminous than all these passages, provided we apprehend the Paraclete, not as comforting men but as calling them, from error to truth, from sin to holiness, and from Satan to God.

The Holy Spirit was also promised as the agency of *tuition*. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."⁴ "The Holy Ghost shall teach you, in the same hour, what ye ought to say."⁵ "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, even the

¹ John xiv. 16, 17. ² John xiv. 25, 26. ³ John xv. 26, 27.

⁴ Matt. x. 19, 20. ⁵ Luke xii. 12.

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xv. 26, 27.

Spirit of truth."¹ "The Paraclete, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."² "When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also [as his instruments, my messengers] shall bear witness, because ye have been with me [to see and know] from the beginning."³

The Holy Spirit was also promised, as the agency or *power*. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."⁴ "Being assembled together with [the apostles], he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. . . . Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in all Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁵

The Holy Spirit was likewise promised as the agency of *purity*. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire."⁶ "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."⁷ In the Greek it is "with the Holy Ghost and fire," not with fire, "of water and the Spirit," not of the Spirit; the non-repetition of the prepositions "with" and "of" plainly implying the oneness of fire and Spirit, and of water and Spirit. Fire and water are the appropriate emblems of the Spirit's influence, that cleanses,

¹ John xiv. 16, 17. ² John xiv. 26. ³ John xv. 26, 27. ⁴ Luke xxiv. 49.
⁵ Acts i. 4, 5, 8. ⁶ Luke iii. 16. ⁷ John iii. 5.

purges or purifies the hearts of men ; and so it is said that Christ cleanses the church with the washing of water by the word, that is, with the Holy Spirit whom the washing of water symbolises, and whose instrument of purification is the word or truth of God.

The Holy Spirit was promised as the agency of *life*. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"¹ Here, without doubt, living water, or water of life, is the selected symbol of the Spirit's agency. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."² "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life."³ Spiritual life arises from the co-operative agencies of the Spirit quickening and of man believing, and by the instrumentality of the word or truth of God, which the Spirit uses and man receives; and it is nourished and maintained by the refreshing well or river of the Spirit's influences, plenteously poured through the conduit of faith.

Such is the adequate and glorious agency which Christ promised and bestowed, as the substitute and successor of his personal ministrations. "I will send you," he

¹ John vii. 37-39.

² John iv. 13, 14.

³ John vi. 63.

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said, "another and an abiding Caller." In preparing for my church, I have called men; I have called you to be its primary and formative officers; and I will send you another Caller, who, when my personal calling is accomplished, will create the church by your instrumentality and call men into it. He will convince them of their degradation and danger, in their worldly state; as the Spirit of light, he will relume them, to perceive the way of salvation; as the Spirit of holiness and life, he will revivify and renew them; and as the Spirit of power, he will reinvigorate them. To you, my apostles, as my primary ecclesiastical instruments, and to the persons and churches rightly receiving you, my Spirit will be the Spirit of light and life, of purity and power.

The performance answers to the promise, the event realizes the prediction. Partly and preparatively, before his ascension, Christ inspired his apostles with this agency. "He breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained."¹ The breathing was doubtless symbolical of the whole process of *inspiration*, and was not only presently impartive but promissory and prophetic. Remission and retention of sins denote final and infallible teaching respecting the salvation and loss of the soul. The symbolic promise and prophecy were fully realized on and after the day of Pentecost, and the book of apostolic acts is primarily the instructive and important record. It tells us that the gospel, which had been preached preparatively by Christ, was preached fully and generally by his apostles; that the kingdom developed in and by the church, which Christ had proclaimed as proximate, was by the apostles really instituted; and

¹ John xx. 22, 23.

that the apostolic preaching and ecclesiastical institution became truly operative and effective, for glory to God in the highest and for peace and goodwill among men. The gospel is God's message of mercy and truth to mankind, the instrument of man's salvation and of the church's creation and continuance, the message which the church is to deliver, the law which the church is to observe and enforce. The ecclesiastically-creative agency of the Holy Spirit should be considered in its relations both to the apostles and the gospel, the messengers and the message. A careful consideration of the New Testament will convince us that the Holy Ghost created the church, as the Spirit of light, life, love, and power, by promulgating, authenticating, effectuating, and completing the Gospel. He taught the truth, whose belief is requisite to ecclesiastical incorporation; and he succeeded the truth, in the inward baptism that is essential to individual and ecclesiastical vitality.

The formation of the church is not to be restricted to the day of Pentecost and to the church in Jerusalem, but comprehends the whole period and process of gospel preparation and ecclesiastical institution, by the twelve apostles. The world was to be put in possession of the truth and of the church, and the task was achieved by the agency of the Holy Ghost. Every element and aspect of this gracious agency are related to the church and are illustrative of Christ, as ecclesiastical creator. It was the office and operation of the Spirit to *promulgate* the gospel, and this was done by various processes. The Spirit qualified the promulgators, by inspired knowledge, charity, zeal, and courage, and by the gift of tongues. He taught them, brought all things to their remembrance, and guided them into all truth. He gave them "the spirit not of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind," and a mouth and wisdom which

all their adversaries could not gainsay or resist. On the day of Pentecost, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."¹ "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."²

It was the office and operation of the Holy Spirit to *authenticate* the gospel by miracles. The miracles of Christ were the evidence and authentication of his claims, as the Son of God; and the miracles wrought at the invocation or word of primitive Christians, especially of the apostles, were the ample attestation of their relation to Christ, as his witnesses, messengers, and ecclesiasts: "No man can do these miracles which thou doest, unless God be with him." He who avows himself a messenger of God should either demonstrate himself such, by suitable signs, or be rejected as an impostor and a liar. It is not enough for a man, in such a claimed capacity, to be himself assured of his commission. To insure his reception and authenticate his message, he must prove his

¹ Acts ii. 4. ² 1 Cor. xiii. 7--13.

commission by the testimony of God himself; by the credentials of God's voice, as on Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration; or by the credentials of God's hand, as in the miracles of Christ and his apostles. Accordingly, we find this promise—"These signs shall follow [as auxiliaries and vouchers] them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."¹ "Tongues are for a sign [an evidence or demonstration] not to them that believe, but to them that believe not."² And tongues, together with the word of wisdom and knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, and interpretation of tongues, are all ascribed to the Holy Ghost: "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."³ And all these attesting signs accompanied and characterised the formation of the church, beginning with the "many wonders and signs" of the day of Pentecost.⁴

It was the office and operation of the Holy Spirit to *effectuate* the Gospel. Promulgation and authentication alone will not realise the end of the Gospel, which is the salvation of the soul. Salvation is a moral change, from sin to holiness, and from the enslaving power of Satan to the free and rightful rule of God. This change is effected by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, in them that believe. The Spirit not only held forth and authenticated the word of life, through the apostles and others, but enabled and inclined the hearers to appreciate and obey it, by repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and then created them anew in

¹ Mark xvi. 17, 18. ² 1 Cor. xiv. 22. ³ 1 Cor. xii. 11. ⁴ Acts ii. 4, 43.

Christ Jesus, endowing them with the tempers and tendencies requisite for their appropriate and useful inclusion in the church: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. . . . And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."¹ "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."² Much more than miraculous evidence is meant by such language as this: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."³ Miracles alone may induce belief of the attested facts and propositions, but cannot induce implicit trust in Christ, love to God, and practical godliness; and without these there cannot be a scriptural church. It was not the mere external and visible wonders of the day of Pentecost that caused the anxious inquiry and conversion of three thousand souls, and their consequent fellowship, affection, and joy, but the force of truth, divinely revealed and effectuated. Physically, intellectually, and morally, the Spirit operated to promote the Gospel; physically, in palpable miracles; intellectually, in the inspired knowledge of the Christian preachers, and their consequent arguments and appeals; and morally, in turning man from Satan and idols to the living God. The Spirit poured out upon the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, produced not only the physical and intellectual change of various tongues, but also the moral change of magnifying God, evincing that "God also to the Gentiles had granted repentance unto life."⁴

¹ 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. ² Cor. ii. 4, 5. ³ 2 Cor. iii. 3. ⁴ Acts x. 46; xi. 18.

It was the office and operation of the Holy Spirit to *complete* the gospel, by reminding the New Testament writers of what they had seen and heard in the ministry of Christ, and by revealing to them the whole will of God, for their own specific service, and for the benefit of all men, through appropriate and permanent record. Hence the gospels, the apostolical acts and epistles, and the apocalypse have been written. These are the record and rule of Christ's spiritual kingdom; these are the law by which the church is to be regulated, and the message which the church is to deliver. And all these are *theopneustic*, the fruits and results of the Holy Spirit's operation. "The Caller, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."¹ "The things which God hath prepared for them that love him, he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit." "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."² "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."³ "Jesus Christ made known to me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."⁴ "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith."⁵ "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."⁶ "Unto us the prophets did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."⁷ "The Revelation of Jesus Christ,

¹ John xiv. 26. ² 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12, 13. ³ Gal. i. 11, 12. ⁴ Eph. iii. 1—5.

⁵ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

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which God gave unto him, to show unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."¹ "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."² The apocalypse completes the communications of God to man. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."³

¹ Rev. i. 1. ² Rev. iii. 22. ³ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

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CHAPTER II.

INSTRUMENTAL ORIGIN.

THE CHURCH IS APOSTOLICAL, BECAUSE IT WAS FORMED BY THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST.

THE Divine government of mankind is conducted through material symbols and machinery. "No man hath seen God at any time." Celestial messengers have appeared in material vehicles, for they could not otherwise have appeared at all. The Deity revealed himself on Sinai by fire, blackness, darkness, and tempest, the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. In the fulness of time, he was "manifest in the flesh." And since our Saviour's advent, the communications of God consist of the symbolism of nature and the signs of the Bible. Human beings, incarnate intelligences, are the chief living instruments he now employs to accomplish his designs. During our Saviour's terrestrial stay and ministry, he prepared his human instruments, the apostles, to found and form his church, after his own ascension. It was to them, primarily, the Holy Spirit was promised; on them, primarily, the Spirit descended; and through them, primarily, he operated as ecclesiastical Creator. His light was embodied in their appreciations and utterances; his life and love, his purity and power were concentrated and

developed in their spiritual existence, office, and operations. Through them he promulgated, authenticated, effectuated, and perfected the gospel.

SECTION I.—*The Apostles were the Formative Officers of the Church.*

The apostolical office was *ecclesiastically-formative*. It belonged to the apostles to commence and complete the church's construction. This is the distinction and peculiar glory of the apostolate, which was therefore personal, not transferable, not communicable beyond the definite number; temporary, not hereditary, not consecutive and permanent; special or extraordinary, as related to the special design and work of founding in the world a new and peculiar social instrument, for the accomplishment of Jehovah's spiritual designs. To speak of the apostle's successors is to betray ignorance of the apostolical office. We might as well speak of succession in the founding or erection of a fabric, already built; in the nursing of a child that has become a man; in the marriage of a couple already wedded; or, in the construction of a machine, already made and applied. The church could be formed only once; it was formed appropriately and perfectly by the apostles; and whatever officers there have been or may be now, in the church, they are not, they cannot in the nature of things be, successors of the apostles; they are *promotive* of the church, not *formative*. An analytical appreciation of the collected testimony of the Scriptures must result in the conviction that the apostles were the generative, and, therefore, special officers of the church, essentially equal and circumstantially diverse. They displaced and succeeded the foolish and wicked builders that had disallowed

and rejected the head stone of the corner, the precious basement rock; and on the foundation of the new and glorious fabric which they reared, their own names, as instrumental founders and framers, are inscribed. They are without rivals and without successors, as officers of FORMATION; all ~~since~~ and all beside are officers of OPERATION.

Accordingly, the apostles were selected, endowed and empowered, as well as defined, by Christ himself.

Christ *selected* the twelve in the manner already shown. And he selected Paul (instead of Iscariot), as the history of the occurrence and Paul's own account of it clearly declare.¹ In his epistle to the Romans, and first to the Corinthians, Paul describes himself as "a called apostle," κλητος αποστολος, (not "called to be an apostle,") in correspondence with the name and nature of the church, as consisting of the called, and with the name of the church's head, as the Caller. In his second epistle to the Corinthians, and in his epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus, he denominates himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ;" and, to the Galatians, he describes himself as "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."

Christ *endowed* or *qualified* as well as selected his apostles. During his public life and ministry, he trained and prepared the eleven for the great work of publishing his gospel and forming his church; nor were they dismissed from the normal school of Christ, till by the descent and endowments of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, they were duly qualified and prepared to execute their commission. The baptism of the Spirit completed their education and endowments; for, though not a full revelation of Divine things at once, it was a

¹ Acts ix., xxii., xxvi. The election and office of Matthias will be subsequently considered.

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light that never left them, that never failed them, that steadily increased, that shone out with new and appropriate lustre in every time of perplexity and difficulty, and that culminated in John's apocalyptic visions. For this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, predicted by the Harbinger and promised by the Head, they were commanded to wait; and they waited; and on the day of Pentecost they received it. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." So Paul also was endowed: "Ananias, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."¹ To such endowments as those of the apostles, no post-apostolic ministers can lay claim. As Christ was formally installed at his baptism, by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, so the apostles were installed and endowed, by a similar anointing on the day of Pentecost. Before, they had preached and baptized as "disciples,"² as ecclesiastical preparers; now, they begin to preach and baptize, as apostles, as ecclesiastical founders and framers.

Christ *empowered* the apostles, as his witnesses, messengers, and vice-agents. The office and work for which he called and qualified them, were not ordinary or indefinite. He himself, as the Creator and King of the church, expressly authorised and instructed them to act for him. Significantly asserting his ample power, before his ascension to heaven, he gave them a formal warrant to bear witness of himself; to call men to himself and to his church, by teaching and persuading them; and to incorporate them with his church, by baptizing them: "And Jesus came and spake unto them ['the eleven disciples'] saying, All power is given unto me in heaven

¹ Acts ix. 17. ² John iv. 2.

and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."¹ Paul thus recites his apostolic commission: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of the things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."² "Whereto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."³ "The gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."⁴ This is Christ's peculiar commission to all his apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."⁵ And this is their peculiar language to mankind: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."⁶ Such language as this none after them is entitled to hold.

Christ empowered the apostles to be his special *witnesses*. Personal acquaintance with himself, and knowledge of his words and deeds, throughout his public life, were pre-requisite to the duodecimal testimony. He ordained twelve that they should be with him,⁷ and thus be qualified to testify of him: "Ye also," he said to them, "shall bear witness, because ye have been with

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18—20. ² Acts xxvi. 16—18. ³ 1 Tim. ii. 7. ⁴ 2 Tim. i. 11.
⁵ John xx. 21. ⁶ 2 Cor. iv. 20. ⁷ Mark iii. 14.

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¹ 2 Tim. i. 11.
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me from the beginning."¹ Not in the mouth of two or
 three witnesses only, but of twelve, are every word and
 deed of Christ established. Matthias was competent, as
 the twelfth witness : " Of these men which have com-
 panied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in
 and out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John
 [our Lord's formal and public inauguration] unto the
 same day that he was taken up from us, must one be
 ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.
 And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas [after-
 wards Barnabas], who was surnamed Justus, and Mat-
 thias."² The resurrection was the primary event to be
 witnessed, because it demonstrated Christ to be the Son
 of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness ;
 and thus vindicated his character and ratified his claims.
 Saul of Tarsus was a qualified apostle, because he had
 had a vision of Christ. Hence, he says—" Am I not an
 apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus
 Christ our Lord?"³ The apostolate is incommunicable
 and unsuccessive, because no post-apostolic persons
 could be witnesses of Christ. Ananias said to Saul,
 " Thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou
 hast seen and heard;"⁴ and Christ said, " I have appeared
 unto thee to make thee a minister and a witness."⁵
 Referring to his death and resurrection, Christ said to
 the eleven, " Ye are witnesses of these things."⁶ " Ye
 shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all
 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of
 the earth."⁷

Christ empowered the apostles to be his special
messengers. Their very name, apostles, denotes this.
 Christ is the apostle of God ; the twelve are the apostles
 of Christ ; other apostles are the apostles of churches.

¹ John xv. 27. ² Acts i. 21, 22, 23. ³ 1 Cor. ix. 1. ⁴ Acts xxii. 15.
⁵ Acts xxvi. 16. ⁶ Luke xxiv. 48. ⁷ Acts i. 8.

As Christ communicated the will of the Father to twelve, so they communicated it to mankind: "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."¹ "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."² They were, what none since can be, ambassadors of Christ. Post-apostolic officers of the church are not such, and not warranted to avow themselves such, or to act as such, but as biblical teachers and care-takers. The apostles were commissioned and instructed by Christ himself, to be his infallible messengers and recorders. Hence, Peter classes Paul's epistles with "the other scriptures;"³ and "all scripture is theopneustic." The message of Christ, by his apostles, was to be delivered both orally and in writing; orally, to their hearers; in writing, to be studied in the apostles' absence and transmitted to all future generations. Moses and the prophets were God's special messengers under the national economy; apostles, prophets, and evangelists are the special messengers of the ecclesiastical era. The combination of their messages constitutes the Bible, the perfect and appropriate revelation of God to man. Inspired men alone are God's direct ambassadors and messengers; all other religious teachers are ecclesiastical officers and agents.

Christ empowered the apostles as his *vice-agents*. The mere deliverance of a testimony and a message could not institute and arrange the church; the apostles must act, as well as speak and write, with authority, in order to combine men in a new and powerful association. Christ gave them power over nature, to heal diseases and raise the dead; power to speak with various tongues, as the appropriate agents of Him to whom all tongues are

¹ John xv. 15. ² John xvii. 20. ³ 2 Peter iii. 15, 16.

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known, and the competent teachers of men among whom various tongues obtain; power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost; and power to form and propagate the church. To Peter, in the presence of the disciples, he said: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."¹ The power thus conferred is ecclesiastical, because it is given in connection with the predicted erection and security of the church, and in its terms and tenor is special. A key-keeper controls all ingress and egress; and a binder and looser controls all interior movements. The power of the keys is peculiarly Messianic and apostolic, and cannot be otherwise claimed without gross usurpation and imposture; any such claim can never be permitted to rest on conjecture and elaborate argument; nothing can sustain it but direct and express Divine delegation. On another occasion, Christ instructed his disciples, not the twelve only, how to seek redress for fraternal injuries, the church being the last resort, and immediately subjoined, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."² The power of binding and loosing here evidently denotes ecclesiastical discipline, which is disjoined from the power of the keys; and it therefore appears that key-keeping was apostolic and Petrine, while ecclesiastical discipline is committed to the combined and collected disciples.

On another occasion, Christ promised to make his apostles enthroned judges: "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory,

¹ Matt. xvi. 19.

² Matt. xviii. 18.

ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."¹ There are three things, in these words, to be ascertained; the enthronization of Christ, the enthronization of his apostles, and the regeneration. The second, which will serve as a clue to the others, evidently denotes ecclesiastical power and honour, because it relates to the twelve tribes of Israel, whose distinctiveness is purely terrestrial, and who, in these words, symbolize the New Covenant Israel, or church, the only Israel in which the apostles have exercised power and authority. The twelve apostles, as the founders and framers of the church and as the inspirational channels of the church's creed and code, may be most justly and emphatically said to be throned in the church, directing and regulating it by their recorded words and deeds. The thrones are apostolical, as their number indicates; and apostolical power and honour are confined to the church. The enthronization of Christ must be his Messianic, his redemptive enthronization, as creator and king of the church, because it is coeval with the enthronization of the twelve: "When the Son of Man shall sit in his throne, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones." Accordingly, it is written of Christ, before his death, that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."² After his resurrection he said—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory."³ "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour."⁴ To be crowned with glory is the same as to be throned in glory.

The term *palingenesia*, rendered "regeneration," is susceptible of two meanings, as we connect it with the preceding or succeeding words. If we take it to be related to the previous words and to the "following" of

¹ Matt. xix. 28. ² John vii. 39. ³ Luke xxiv. 26. ⁴ Heb. ii. 9.

Christ, and accordingly read and punctuate thus—"Ye which have followed me in the regeneration;"—the term denotes *the preparation*. But if we take it to be related to the succeeding words and to denote what is coeval with the enthronization, it indicates *the performance*, or the ecclesiastical era. The latter interpretation gives an air of great abruptness to our Lord's words: "Ye which have followed me; in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory." And this interpretation, too, makes the term regeneration indicative of the era of enthronization, whereas this era seems sufficiently indicated in other and following words. The period of Christ's personal ministry was a regenerative period, because every preparation was then made for the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost. Peter said to Christ—"Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" And then our Lord tells him that the twelve, who followed him, in the ecclesiastical parturience or preparation, shall be enthroned as judges in the church whose birth was at hand; and that "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold [that is, 'now in this time,'¹ or 'in this present time,'²] and shall inherit everlasting life,"³ "in the world to come."⁴ The twelve, particularly, are described as following Christ in the preparation; all other disciples are described as forsaking all for Christ; the twelve are to receive apostolical honour and power in the church, that is, in this world; all other disciples are to receive in this world an hundredfold; and both apostles and Christians generally shall have, in the world to come, everlasting life. Thus distinctively does our

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Heb. ii. 9.

¹ Mark x. 29, 30. ² Luke xviii. 30. ³ Matt. xix. 29. ⁴ Mark x. 30.

Lord indicate the character and appropriate rewards of all his servants. The apostles, as inspired messengers or ambassadors, and as the instrumental ecclesiastical creators, or vice-agents of Christ to form his church, are enthroned ecclesiastical judges. And by their written word they will continue to be enthroned judges, while the church endures. When Christ empowered the apostles to baptize,¹ he empowered them to effect the ecclesiastical incorporation of mankind, for baptism is the door of the church, the rite of ecclesiastical initiation; and at the same time he empowered them to communicate the truth, which is the instrument of salvation and the rule of action.

If any doubt remain, as to the meaning of the apostolic thrones, it must, we think, be removed by our Lord's parallel language, after his last supper: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."² The period of temptations coincides with the period of preparation; Christ's kingdom is his mediatorial rule, which shall cease on the accomplishment of the resurrection; as the Father appointed Christ to create and rule that kingdom, so Christ appointed the apostles to create and rule it, as his ambassadors and vice-agents—"As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you;" and the apostolic possession of this kingdom is spiritually festal as well as potential, for it includes eating and drinking at Christ's regal table, in fulfilment of the symbolic supper, and enthronedly judging, by the revelation and record of the final and perfect ecclesiastical laws.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Luke xxii. 28—30.

Our Lord's meaning will be substantially the same, as respects the church, if we connect the regeneration with the enthronization: "Ye which have followed me in my temptations, shall be enthroned as judges, in my church, in the great era of regeneration, while I am enthroned in glory." No language could more expressly convey the ample and peculiar powers and prerogatives of the apostles, as the great ecclesiogenesisists. As the Father "hath committed all [mediatorial] judgment unto the Son,"¹ so the Son has committed judgment unto his apostles, in their personal acts and official compositions. Hence the Saviour's declaration, not to all his disciples, but to the apostles, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."² The primary subjects of Christ's intercessory prayer, described as "the men which thou gavest me," are not his disciples generally at that time, but the apostles: None of these was lost but the son of perdition, that is, none of the apostles, for of his disciples generally it is said that "many went back and walked no more with him."³ And of the apostles only could he say, as he said in his prayer, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."⁴ But having prayed for his vice-agents, the instruments of founding and forming his church, his special ecclesiastical officers, he prays also "for them which shall believe on him through their word," that they all, all his disciples, "may be one," and that "the world may believe that thou hast sent me."⁵ Thus in our Lord's great intercessory prayer, shortly before his self-sacrifice, he observes the distinction between his apostles and all other disciples, and the relation of the former to the latter.

¹ John v. 22. ² Matt. x. 40. ³ John vi. 66. ⁴ John xvii. 18.

⁵ John xvii. 20, 21.

In his triple charge to Peter, Christ tells him to feed and shepherd his flock. On all the apostles he breathed, inspiring them with his Spirit, and empowering them to remit and retain sins,¹ legislatively by publishing and recording the principles and laws of his kingdom, and administratively by binding and loosing. By all these communications, the apostles were constituted the vice-agents of Christ.

Yet the apostolic vice-agency must not be construed into either the precedent or the peculiarity of an ecclesiastical dictatorship. The apostles had authority and ability to found and form the church, especially as the channels of revelation, but they never attempted to command and control the church, as governors and masters. They instructed the churches how to govern themselves, and they duly respected the rights and liberties of every member and officer. Paul's language, respecting Apollos, is a remarkable instance of this: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren; but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time."² So that even Paul's great desire was not gratified, because Apollos, who was not one of the twelve, willed differently; and Paul never dared or desired to overrule or control him. The apostles themselves felt and acknowledged their dependence on the churches of Christ. Paul longed to see the saints in Rome, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, but, as has been well remarked, immediately subjoins the explanation: "that is, that I may be comforted *together* with you, by the *mutual* faith both of you and me."³ He most solemnly and pathetically entreats them to strive together with him, in their prayers to God for him.⁴ To

¹ John xx. 22, 23.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

³ Rom. i. 11, 12.

⁴ Rom. xv. 30—32.

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the church at Corinth and to the saints in all Achaia, he most expressly disavows all dictation and dominion: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy."¹ So, also, he says—"All things are for your sakes;"² and "we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying;"³ and again, most remarkably and significantly, "Let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,"⁴ &c.

Paul's rebuke of Peter's dissimulation, and the uncensured contention of the brethren with Peter, respecting his intercourse with the Gentiles, ought to check the tendency to priestism, clericism, and spiritual despotism, and convince Christians that any ecclesiastical officer is to be resisted and reprov'd, whenever he departs from the church's only record and rule, the word of God.

To "the church of the Thessalonians," Paul says—"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."⁵ No language could more clearly and beautifully indicate the apostolic spirit of pastoral care and gentle oversight, or more impressively remind us of the contrasted spirit of modern clerical dictation and domination: gentle as nurses, not judges in the church.

The apostles were *defined* by Christ, or numerically determined, and precluded from sharing or transmitting their power. The number of the apostles was twelve, answering to the twelve tribes of Israel. Christ "chose twelve, whom he also named apostles;" and they are called "twelve," or "the twelve," or "the twelve apostles," in ten places. After Judas's fall, the apostles are called "the eleven," "the eleven disciples," or "the eleven apostles," in five places. Even after Judas's fall, we find the phrase, "the twelve," occurring, because

¹ 2 Cor. i. 24.

² 2 Cor. iv. 15.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 19.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

⁵ 1 Thess. ii. 7-12.

twelve was the proper and complete, as well as retrospective, number of the apostles: "Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them."¹

The numerical definitiveness of the apostles appears also in our Lord's promise of twelve thrones, and from the inscription of the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem.²

Paul was the twelfth apostle. He is called an apostle in sixteen places, and an apostle of Christ in seven. He classes himself with the apostles, in saying, "I am the least [yet one] of the apostles."³ And he indicates the peculiarity of his apostolate, in saying, "As of one born out of due time." No such evidence as that for the eleven and for Paul can be adduced to prove the alleged, or imagined, apostolate of any one else. If others are called apostles, it is not in the specific sense of the twelve, but as messengers of a church or churches, as messengers of the Philipians, or messengers generally.

Enough, we think, has been said to show both the nature and the peculiarity of the apostolate. The apostles were specially constituted, empowered, and defined by Christ, to be ecclesiastical founders and framers. Succession to them is impossible and absurd. Let no man envy them their crowns, or madly aspire to their thrones. Let no man arrogate, and no church concede, such powers and prerogatives as the apostolic. It was the apostles' work to build the church; it is ours to inhabit it and work in it, to preserve it and enlarge it, for the pleasure of its proprietary Lord and the profit of a ransomed world.

The true succession is not of apostles, bishops or presbyters, but of Christians and churches. What some call the succession of the truth is really the continuance of the truth. Succession denotes displacement and

¹ John xx. 24.

² Rev. xxi. 14.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

replacement, or consecutive addition ; whereas revealed truth, since the apocalyptic visions, is unaugmented as well as unchanged. Succession to the apostles is absurd and impossible. Succession of pastors or presbyters may often have been broken, as in the case of destroyed Asiatic churches ; but since the day of Pentecost, the world has never been without a Christian church or without Christian men. The candlesticks of Christ have often been removed, and their light has varied in intensity and breadth, but they have never been extinguished and destroyed. Somewhere or other, in few places or many, in urban publicity or rural obscurity, in crowded districts or in solitary mountain glades and glens, there have always been both single and associated witnesses of the truth. The reality and validity of a Christian church, as already shown, is not dependent on lineal succession ; and the privileges and duties of Christian churchmen are not dependent, as has been shown, on "endless genealogies" and historic research and skill. The connection of a church now with the primitive churches, with apostles and prophets, and with the Creator and King of the churches, does not consist in lineal consecution to Pentecostal men, but in living conformity to Pentecostal principles. The character and claims of a church are to be tested by the word of God, not by uninspired records and tables. How else could the bible be to all the only rule and the sufficient rule of faith and practice ? Once admit that an extant church is bound to establish a historic basis, a lineal relation to the men of Palestine and Asia Minor, eighteen hundred years ago, and it necessarily follows that a man cannot be an assured and consistent member of a Christian church, unless he is a geographer and an eminent historian, for short of this he cannot know and prove that he belongs to the Christian church at all ! Historic

lore is useful in elucidating the evidences of Christianity, but it is not essential to the apprehension and fulfilment of Christianity, and is not even essential to the assurance of the divine origin of the bible. A church does not lean upon tradition or testimony for the soundness of her constitution and the validity of her operations, but upon her divine creed and code, after which she is modelled, and to which she is adjusted as an appropriate vehicle.

SECTION II.—*The Apostles were officially, and therefore essentially, co-equal.*

They are numbered together as the twelve, and named alike as the apostles; and by the Head of the church they were all selected, commissioned, endowed and empowered, as witnesses, messengers, and vice-agents. All the eleven were trained and prepared in the same school, and the twelfth was not a whit behind the very chief. Christ describes his apostles as destined to be co-equally enthroned; John describes them as co-equally foundational in the New Jerusalem; and when mention is made of the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the foundation which they proclaimed, which their office and teaching indicated, and on which they built, no difference whatever is intimated.

The religion of Christ precludes, by its nature, and prohibits, by its precepts, ecclesiastical primacy, pre-eminence, or absolutism. The true Christian superiority is moral, child-like, and consists particularly in humility. And the highest office in the Christian church is not a lordship or a dictatorship, but a ministrations, modelled after that of our Lord, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for

many. Christ most carefully repressed, among his disciples, all emulation and ambition ; telling them that the greatest among them should be their servant and the least : " If any man desire to be first, the same shall be least of all and servant of all."¹ This was said to the twelve, was elicited by their own dispute respecting primacy or pre-eminence, and proves conclusively that there was no official, and therefore no essential, difference among the apostles : " Ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake " is the language of the apostles, and of all right-minded ministers of the church. Titles of pre-eminence and absolute power are prohibited, such as master, lord, and father. The constitution and design of the Christian church are utterly incompatible with a mastership, a lordship, or a fatherhood ; and the attempt to establish them, or the use of such styles and titles, is disobedience to Christ and usurpation in his church. It may be worldly policy to render the church analogous to the state, to assimilate ecclesiastical functions and laws and forms to civil, but it is not conformable to the revealed will of Christ, or concordant with the nature and office of his church. A " pope," papa or father, a " patriarch " or chief father, an " archdeacon " or chief deacon, an " archbishop " or chief bishop, and " lord bishop," with everything synonymous and cognate, are as repugnant to the spirit as to the letter of the Christian religion : " So it shall not be among you." How long can a copartnership, a mutual service, a child-like humility, a Christ-like character, coexist with such titles and investitures ? Let each, for himself, answer and act

¹ Mark ix. 35.

SECTION III.—*The Apostles were practically, and therefore circumstantially, diverse.*

Essential equality and circumstantial diversity are the comparative characteristics of all mankind. One blood, one parentage, or, in other words, one species, one planetary sphere of labour and enjoyment, one government of grace, one expected heaven or dreaded hell, belong to all men. Yet no two men are absolutely alike, in any one respect. While the essential equality is the basis and rule of society, the circumstantial diversity is the mark and means of privacy. The apostles had one office and one work ; but they varied so much in natural character, actual operation, and Providential allotment or circumstances, that each performed his part with individual and distinctive energy ; each sought his appropriate reward ; and each bears a corresponding name in ecclesiastical record and estimation. The same acts could not be performed by all ; the same spheres of labour could not be occupied by all. Some one must make the first proclamation of the new-born church and incorporate the first converts ; and some one must first instruct and admit the Gentiles. Thus it is evident that, notwithstanding official and essential equality, there must be practical and circumstantial diversity. Of this diversity we have many records and hints in the New Testament. We find traces of it in the period of apostolic pupilage. Judas was the treasurer, for "he had the bag and bare what was put therein,"¹ but is always last in the list, and fell in his pupilage by betraying his Master. Peter, James, and John only were surnamed by Christ ;² they alone, of all the disciples, witnessed the recovery of the ruler's daughter,³ and

¹ John xii. 6.

² Mark iii. 16, 17.

³ Mark v. 37.

the transfiguration¹ and agony of Christ.² The numerical nucleus and minimum of ecclesiastical association and testimony are two or three; and accordingly Peter, James, and John were Christ's chosen witnesses of special events. Peter is always indicated as practical foreman or spokesman,³ and placed accordingly at the head of the apostolic catalogue. He denied his Master, whose prayer and power, however, preserved him from apostacy and total unbelief. For James and John, their mother sought pre-eminence in Christ's kingdom. John is described, in his pupilage, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, that leaned on his breast at supper and asked him to indicate the traitor. But the most interesting and important diversities are those which obtained on and after the day of Pentecost, the date of apostolic baptism, installation, and initial operation.

PETER WAS THE APOSTOLICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMENCER. Christ constituted him key-warden of the church, which, consequently, he opened to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius. His surname is of both Messianic origin and Messianic import, corresponding to the practical peculiarity of his apostleship. Andrew brought his brother, Simon, to Jesus. "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, Πετρος, Peter, a stone."⁴ Christ subsequently referred to the significance of this name, when Peter recognised him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God:" "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in

¹ Matt. xvii. 1—9. ² Matt. xxvi. 37. ³ John vi. 66—68; Matt. xvi. 15.

⁴ John i. 42.

heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."¹ Christ himself is the real rock, or sustainer of the church, and is called "the rock of offence" and "the foundation stone," so that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "The foundation of the apostles and prophets," therefore, is not the foundation which they constitute, but which they proclaim and build on ; and among them Peter is conspicuous, as appellatively symbolical and suggestive of the true and only foundation and corner stone of the ecclesiastical edifice. So Jacob gave the commemorative and suggestive name of "Mahanain," or two hosts, to one place ; and "Elbethel," or the God of Bethel, to another.² So, also, the Israelites drank of the rock, that is, of the water from the rock, that followed them ; and "that rock was Christ," that is, typically and prophetically denoted and suggested Christ. It was fit that when Peter recognised Christ, the rock, his own appellative symbolism of the rock should be reciprocally recognised, by repeating his name and by revealing its significance of ecclesiastical key-wardenship. "Thou art Peter," a nominal and symbolical stone, by my own choice and appointment, "and on this rock," which thou hast confessed and which thy name symbolizes and suggests, "I will build my church." "And," in consonance with all this and with thy own natural character, thy characteristic boldness and courage, "I will give unto thee the

¹ Matt. xvi. 16—19. ² Gen. xxxii. 2, and xxxv. 7.

keys of the kingdom of heaven," the keys of the church which I will build, and which is the full and final social development of my heavenly kingdom, that thou mayest open its portals to Jew and Gentile. The power of the keys relates simply to original ecclesiastical ingress, and is peculiarly and exclusively Petrine. The power of binding and loosing relates to the ecclesiastical interior, and was commonly apostolical and ecclesiastical, as has been already shown. Christ himself is the basis, bond and warden of his church; the keys are truly and primarily on his shoulder,—the keys of the church and of hell and of death. The apostles were his instruments or vice-agents. When he, in heaven, applied the key to open his church, he inspired his servant and symbol, Peter, to do it formally on earth; and when he bound and loosed in heaven, he inspired his apostles to bind and loose, formally and visibly, in his church on earth. The binding and loosing did not originate with them, to be sanctioned by him in heaven; but originated with himself, in heaven, to be ecclesiastically developed and executed by them on earth. "Whatsoever my apostles shall bind or loose, on earth, shall be the development and execution of what I previously or originally bound and loosed in heaven, as ecclesiastical creator and king. And their legislative or administrative remission or retention of sins shall be valid, because it will be the inspired development and execution of my sovereign will." Peter was the ecclesiastical pioneer, opening the church; first preaching the kingdom of heaven come, and working the first apostolical and ecclesiastical miracles; first vindicating the church's head and lord, against the Jewish authorities; and first excluding evildoers from the church, by the death of the mendacious pair, Ananias and Sapphira.¹ When Paul

¹ Acts ii., iii., iv., v.

first went up to Jerusalem, it was to see Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days; yet afterwards, instead of recognizing Peter as superior to the other apostles, he tells us that "he withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed,"¹ thus also teaching us that no office or elevation is to shield an offender or deprive Christians of the right to rebuke and repel evil. Paul also tells us that the gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter, and that God "wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision,"² meaning, probably, that Peter was the apostolic pioneer among the Jews, in replenishing as well as opening the Christian church. Peter was not the prince of the apostles, for there was none such, but he was the foreman of the apostles, and as such ecclesiastical commencer, or opener, and Jewish pioneer, addressing two epistles chiefly to Jewish Christians, in the first instance, and, through them, to all believers or professed Christians.

It was necessary that, in the election of the twelfth witness before the day of Pentecost, in the origination of the church on that day, and in the enlargement of the church in the house of Cornelius, some one of the twelve should be appointed and recognized, as the apostolic foreman, so as to preclude all unseemly competition and collision, and so as to preclude the evils of hesitation and delay. Hence the propriety and utility of Peter's peculiar position.

PAUL WAS EMPHATICALLY THE OPERATIVE OF ECCLESIASTICAL FRAMERS, OR, THE APOSTOLIC LABOURER. If Peter apostolically laid the foundation, Paul was the chief builder; if Peter opened the church, Paul especially operated to regulate and replenish it. He was "in labours more abundant;"³ and his labours consisted in

¹ Gal. i. 18, and ii. 11.

² Gal. ii. 7, 8.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 23.

oral and written communication, discourses and epistles, —in journeyings oft and far,—and in the care of all the churches. The recorded apostolical acts are chiefly Pauline acts, contributing immensely and directly to the founding, maturing and regulating of various churches. Abstract Paul's epistles from the New Testament, and how great the chasm and how irreparable the loss! Who, like him, has elucidated the Jewish or national economy, in his epistle to the Hebrews, and the Christian or ecclesiastical economy, in his epistle to the Romans; and who has furnished so ample a Christian directory as his, in all his epistles? It became him to say, in comparison with the other apostles, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."¹ He was the chief apostolical labourer among the Gentiles, for he says, "The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; for he that wrought effectually in Peter, to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me, toward the Gentiles."² He is the chief writer of the New Testament and the most able and systematic expounder of Christianity; and may be described as the most eminently and extensively laborious and useful of all the apostles. On account of the lateness of his call to the apostleship and inclusion among the twelve, he describes himself as "one born out of due time,"³ a sort of posthumous apostle, apostolically born to aid in the formation of the church after its commencement; and on account of his persecution of the church, he calls himself "the least of the apostles" and "not fit to be called an apostle,"⁴ a sort of morally miraculous

1 Cor. xv. 10.

² Gal. ii. 7, 8.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 8.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

apostle ; yet not a whit behind the chief, and most laborious of all.

ANDREW, JAMES THE SON OF ZEBEDEE, PHILIP, BARTHOLOMEW, THOMAS, MATTHEW, JAMES THE SON OF ALPHÆUS, SIMON ZELOTES, AND JUDE, OR JUDAS, BROTHER OF JAMES, WERE APOSTOLIC CO-OPERATORS. They all laboured, and doubtless laboured faithfully and effectually, in the formation of the church ; but none of them could claim the Petrine honour of commencer, or the Pauline honour of master-builder or greatest worker, or the Johannine honour of maturer. Yet even as collectively-considered co-operators, they exhibit diversities. James, the son of Alphæus, wrote an invaluable epistle on practical wisdom, proposed, by inspiration, the judgment in the apostolical council of Jerusalem,¹ and appears to have taken a prominent part in the affairs of the primary or Jerusalemite church ;² but there is no scriptural and, therefore, no sufficient warrant whatever for the assertion that he, an apostle, an ecclesiastical framer, became bishop of Jerusalem or pastor of a church. He and Peter and John seemed to Paul to be pillars.³ Matthew wrote one of the gospels, which is the most copious account of ecclesiastical preparation. Judas wrote a short epistle.

JOHN WAS THE ECCLESIASTICAL MATURER. Associated with Peter in preparing the passover, before our Lord's decease,⁴ we find him in the same association when the lame man was healed, when the truth was first preached before the Jewish authorities, and in the mission to Samaria to endow and edify the church.⁵ He and his brethren were surnamed by Christ, Boanerges, or sons of thunder.⁶ He wrote one of the

¹ Acts xv. 13—21. ² Acts xii. 17, and xxi. 18 ; Gal. ii. 9. ³ Gal. ii. 9.
⁴ Luke xxii. 8. ⁵ Acts iii. 1, 11 ; iv. 13 ; viii. 14. ⁶ Mark iii. 17.

gospels, in which are preserved some of our Lord's most precious discourses; and he wrote three epistles on Christian love and its fruits. But it is the authorship of the apocalypse that chiefly distinguishes him. The formation of the church, which Peter commenced and Paul continued, John completed. Peter laid the foundation, Paul served as a wise master-builder, and John brought forth the topstone. Peter opened the portals, Paul and his co-apostles operated to replenish it with Christian occupants, and John completed its means and muniments. The church could not be fully formed till its rescripts and records, its rule of operation and chronicle of progress, were completed; and this honour was reserved for John. The kingdom comes, and Peter proclaims it; the kingdom is matured, and John announces it. The completion of the canon was the completion of the church's formation, for it was the completion of the laws by which the church is to be governed, and of the truths which the church is to be occupied in receiving and teaching; and in the completion of these, the church was fully developed and furnished. It was Peter's peculiar honour to commence and open the church to the two great divisions of mankind; it was John's to complete and seal it, in the inspired Sabbatic visions of his prison-isle. Nor is this conjecture, but recorded fact and accomplished prophecy. It is the fulfilment of our Lord's remarkable but scarcely appreciated words to Peter, respecting John: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Peter, the appellative symbol of Christ and the key-keeper of his church, destined to throw wide to the world the ecclesiastical portals, cannot repress his curiosity to learn the fate of John. He had just heard from Christ by what death he himself should glorify God, and seeing John following, he said—"Lord, and what shall this man *do*?"

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Gal. ii. 9.
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[what shall become of this man? or, what shall be his fate?] Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."¹ The destruction of Jerusalem is supposed by some to be the advent to which Christ refers; but of this supposition there is no evidence. To suppose, with others, that our Lord refers to his judicial advent, at the end of the world, is to make him speak in a most extravagant strain, quite inconsistent with his character and custom, and quite unnecessary for checking Peter's curiosity, if this were his design, if not also quite uncourteous and harsh: "If I will that he lives till the day of judgment, what is that to thee!" It seems strange that Christ's advent in Patmos, to this very disciple, should have been overlooked, as solving every difficulty and investing the passage with a peculiarly interesting and weighty import. John closes his gospel with the prediction of an advent, which in Patmos he experienced, and which in the apocalypse he describes. John tarried on earth till Christ came to him, in the apocalyptic visions that matured and sealed the church. And the prophecy of this advent was naturally elicited by the opener of the church, recorded by the maturer, that was to experience it, as well as uttered in the presence of both. As we close John's gospel, the prophetic note of a Messianic advent dies away on our ear; as we open the apocalypse, the trumpet of that advent rings around us. The Creator and King of the church came to John, in visions of the Spirit, arrayed in sacerdotal and regal vestments, as a princely priest, grasping his astral messengers, walking king-like among his golden and radiant churches, dictating his last ecclesiastical epistles, and revealing finally and adequately his future operations. Till this advent, John

¹ John xxi. 19—22.

tarried ; beyond it, we have no inspired record of apostle or church. "The Acts" commences with the ascription of Christ's last commandments to the agency of the Holy Spirit, with Christ's promise of the Spirit, with the apostolic ordination by the Spirit, and with the opening of the church by the Spirit ; "the Apocalypse" embodies the consummatory communications of the Spirit to the beloved disciple, and therefore crowns the Spirit's creation, by apostolic vice-agency, of the Church of Christ.

SECTION IV.—*The Apostles were specially assisted by subordinate temporary officers.*

The twelve apostles were divinely-charged with the universal publication of the gospel and the correspondent formation and propagation of the church. In the fulfilment of such a task, they required and obtained help. Upon others as well as themselves peculiar gifts were conferred, to authenticate and promote the ministration of mercy ; and from among these the apostles chose such extraordinary officers and auxiliaries as they found requisite to accomplish their great work. Hence we find, in the primitive churches, miraculous discerners of the future, or prophets ; miraculous discerners of spirits ; miraculous linguists, or divers kinds of tongues ; miraculous interpreters and teachers, as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the interpretation of tongues, and interpreters generally ; miraculous workers, called gifts of healing and workers of miracles ; and such auxiliaries as are denoted by the terms evangelists, helps, governments. The officers and agents which were chosen by the churches themselves must be carefully distinguished from the special and temporary helps of the apostles. The latter belong to the origination and organization of the church ; the former to the continuance

and operation of the church; the latter were apostolical and extraordinary, the former are ecclesiastical and ordinary. That the latter offices and endowments were intended to be special and temporary is evident from the facts that nothing is said of their continuance or renewal and that they are never mentioned, in the epistles to the churches, among the ecclesiastical offices, in the same manner as the bishops and deacons.

MATTHIAS was chosen as THE TWELFTH WITNESS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. "One must be ordained," said Peter, "to be a witness with us of his resurrection."¹ After consultation and prayer, the one hundred and twenty disciples "gave forth their lots, [*κλήρους*, lots, ballots, pebbles, beans, votes,] and the lot [or vote] fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered [as a witness of the resurrection, according to Peter's previous statement] with the eleven apostles,"² in whose deaconship, or ministry, and apostleship, he accordingly took part. Though never honoured and employed as an inspired writer or primary ecclesiastical framer, he completed the amount of testimony to Christ, which was designed to be duodecimal and perfect, at the very beginning of Christ's kingdom. Paul, in estimating the evidence of Christ's resurrection, recognizes the validity of Matthias's election, to be a witness, when he says that the risen Saviour "was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."³ He could not then be seen of the twelve, unless Matthias was reckoned, because Judas had fallen and died, and because Paul's conversion and vision of the Saviour had not then occurred, but are subsequently referred to as distinct and additional evidence. Neither is Paul's use of "the twelve" parallel to John's use of it in relation to Thomas, because the

¹ Acts i. 22.

² Acts i. 15-26.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

former use of it denotes the actual experience of twelve men, but the latter does not. "Thomas, one of the twelve," is simply an indicative and descriptive phrase; "seen of the twelve" is expressive of the experience of twelve living men.

It has been proved that there were only twelve apostles, and that Paul was one of them. Matthias was not an apostle, in the primary and peculiar sense of the term, but a witness of the Saviour's resurrection, as the narrative shows. Besides, the eleven or the one hundred and twenty were not competent to constitute an apostle, but Christ himself, as has been fully shown. Matthias filled the vacancy created by Judas's death; but that vacancy was not in the apostolate, for Judas never was an apostle, as he fell in his pupilage, and the apostolate did not really and properly begin till the day of Pentecost.

PROPHETS are usually coupled with apostles, in relation to the great Christian Foundation. Probably the term has a historic as well as a present reference, in the New Testament. The prophets of Judaism proclaimed the future advent of the Messiah. The prophets of the church proclaimed the future operations of the Messiah, whose advent was past. But the term prophets, in the New Testament, is always placed after the term apostles, as if to denote that the former were auxiliary to the latter, in the great work of ecclesiastical formation and evangelistic announcement: "God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets."¹ "The apostles and prophets."² "His holy apostles and prophets."³

We read of prophets going from Jerusalem to Antioch, one of whom, Agabus, foretold, by the Spirit, a great and universal dearth.⁴ Certain prophets and teachers in

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 28. ² Eph. ii. 20. ³ Eph. iii. 5, and Rev. xviii. 20.

⁴ Acts xi. 27, 28.

the church of Antioch were divinely-directed to separate Barnabas and Saul for a special work.¹ "Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves," were sent with Barnabas and Paul, by the apostles and elders and the whole church in Jerusalem, to communicate to the brethren of the Gentiles the result of the council respecting circumcision. In the mystic Babylon "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."²

MARK and LUKE appear, from their itinerant co-operation with the apostles, to have been practical evangelists, though not so denominated in the New Testament. Both participate in the exalted honour and usefulness of INSPIRED PENMANSHIP.

Luke, apparently the most learned of the writers of the gospels, supplies several particulars respecting the period of ecclesiastical preparation, which are not found in the other historians. To him, also, belongs the honour of inspired historian of the church's formation, as he wrote the Acts of the apostles. "The New Testament informs us of very few particulars concerning him. He is not named in any of the gospels. In the Acts of the apostles, he uses the first person plural, when he is relating some of the travels of St. Paul; and thence it is inferred that all these times he was himself with that apostle. The first instance of this kind is in the eleventh verse of the sixteenth chapter; he there says, 'Loosing from Troas, *we* came up with a straight course to Samothracia.' Thus we learn that St. Luke accompanied St. Paul in this his first voyage to Macedonia. From Samothracia, they went to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. At this last place we conclude that St. Paul and St. Luke separated, because, in continuing the history of St. Paul,

¹ Acts xiii. 1. ² Rev. xviii. 24.

after he left Philippi, St. Luke uses the third person, saying, 'Now when *they* had passed through Amphipolis,' &c., Acts xvii. 1; and he does not resume the first person till St. Paul was in Greece the second time. We have no account of St. Luke during the interval; it only appears that he was not with St. Paul. When St. Paul was about to go to Jerusalem from Greece, after his second visit into that country, St. Luke, mentioning certain persons, says, 'These going before, tarried for *us* at Troas, and *we* sailed away from Philippi,' Acts xx. 5, 6. Thus again we learn that St. Luke accompanied St. Paul out of Greece, through Macedonia to Troas; and the sequel of St. Paul's history in the Acts, and some passages in his epistles, 2 Tim. iv. 11, Col. iv. 14, Philem. 24, written while he was a prisoner at Rome, inform us that St. Luke continued from that time with Paul, till he was released from his confinement at Rome; which was a space of about five years, and included a very interesting part of St. Paul's life, Acts xx.—xxviii."¹

Mark, the writer of one of the gospels, "was the nephew of Barnabas, being his sister's son; and he is supposed to have been converted to the gospel by St. Peter, who calls him his son, 1 Peter v. 13; but no circumstances of his conversion are recorded. The first historical fact mentioned of him in the New Testament is that he went from Jerusalem to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas. Not long after, he set out from Antioch with them upon a journey, which they undertook by the direction of the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of preaching the gospel in different countries: but he soon left them, probably without sufficient reason, at Perga, in Pamphylia, and went to Jerusalem, Ac's xiii. Afterwards, when Paul and Barnabas had determined to visit the several

¹ Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary.

churches which they had established, Barnabas proposed that they should take Mark with them; to which Paul objected, because Mark had left them in their former journey. This produced a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas, which ended in their separation. Mark accompanied his uncle Barnabas to Cyprus, but it is not mentioned whither they went when they left that island. We may conclude that St. Paul was afterwards reconciled to St. Mark, from the manner in which he mentions him, in his epistles written subsequently to this dispute; and particularly from the direction which he gives to Timothy: 'Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry,' 2 Tim. iv. 11."¹

Perhaps no apostolical auxiliary function has been so little understood as that of THE EVANGELISTS. The name itself simply signifies the good-newsbearer, or preacher of the gospel. It occurs in only three passages,² and is specifically applied to none but Philip and Timothy. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul mentions evangelists as distinct from apostles and prophets, and from pastors and teachers. They are not ordinary and permanent officers of the church, but distinct from the pastors and teachers, who are such indisputably; and it is probable, from the way in which they are classed, from the restricted application of the name, and from the duties and labours ascribed to them, that they were, like the prophets, special assistants of the apostles, subordinately contributing to "the planting and training" of the church, and ceasing, like the apostles, when this work was fulfilled. They seem to have been the itinerant assistants of the itinerating apostles. Itinerancy is, unquestionably, the best method

¹ Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary.

² Acts xxi. 8. Eph. iv. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 5.

of diffusing the gospel, and of planting and propagating the church; it is the method of ecclesiastical formation, rather than of ecclesiastical consecution and edification; it was the method of the apostles, as the founders and framers of the church, and elicited the consentaneous aid of the evangelists' office. The apostles first introduced the gospel and originated churches; and then employed evangelists to organize, edify, and furnish those churches more adequately. Prophects, linguists, interpreters, workers of miracles, &c., were probably all local apostolical auxiliaries, confining their labours to the adjacent churches and districts, while the evangelists itinerated according to apostolical warrant and instruction. As Christ trained the twelve and their fellow-disciples, so the apostles, both with and without local and itinerary helps, trained the first churches and church officers. And it appears, too, that to teach and train the first pastors and teachers of the churches was one principal business of the evangelists. Hence the detailed and full enumerations of the qualities and characteristics of bishops and deacons, in Paul's epistles to the evangelist Timothy.

TIMOTHY was a sort of theological tutor and trainer; and, though not formally at the head of a "normal" clerical school, or college, was empowered to instruct and instal appropriate candidates for the work of the Christian ministry. The preparation of the apostles was not left to contingencies by Christ; and neither, we should suppose, was the preparation of the first pastors and teachers so left by the apostles. They, doubtless, did what they could in the work of ministerial training; and what they could not do themselves, on account of their abbreviated stay and extensive journeys, they committed to evangelists, whom they had themselves suitably instructed and prepared. Paul expressly directs Timothy to instruct and prepare competent teachers: "The things that thou hast heard of

me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."¹ It was not office or authority that Timothy was to commit, but "the things that he had heard of Paul." What Paul spoke and Timothy heard, were "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" not secrets in the church, like the Eleusinian mysteries, but spoken openly, "among many witnesses." "The things which we have heard" are indicated by Paul as what we ought to give earnest heed to,² and cannot, by any process of sane interpretation, be confounded with ecclesiastical functions. They were to be committed by Timothy to men faithful and able to teach, as Paul committed his charge to Timothy.³ Timothy's commitment of truth was not merely for personal improvement, but to qualify for teaching others also; and, therefore, it was commitment from a teacher and trainer of ecclesiastical teachers. Respecting the preparation of candidates for the ministry, Paul says, commit what thou hast heard of me to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others. Respecting the installation of teachers, he says, "Lay hands suddenly on no man;" and, respecting the instruction of teachers, he says, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."⁴ To Timothy, as a trainer and installer of teachers, Paul describes the character and qualifications of both bishops and deacons, that Timothy might know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God.⁵ The good thing committed to Timothy was not office or authority but truth, which Paul denominates a charge: "The end of the charge is charity:" "Charge some that they teach no other doctrine:" "This charge I commit to thee:"

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.² Heb. ii. 1.³ 1 Tim. i. 18.⁴ 1 Tim. i. 3.⁵ 1 Tim. iii.

"The glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust:" "The things which thou hast heard of me commit:" "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep:" "But continue thou in the things which thou hast heard and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures:" "I charge thee, therefore, preach the word:" "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." This collation and induction of passages plainly evince that what was committed to Timothy was biblical truth; and that he was not only so to keep and teach this truth as to save himself and them that heard him, but also to train and prepare suitable and efficient teachers for the church of God. All this was emphatically a work; and it was not only assigned but done, for Paul says of Timothy, "He worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do."¹

That Timothy was not stationary but itinerant is easily proved. Paul found him at Lystra or Derbe and chose him "to go forth with him," that is, to travel with him. Writing to the Romans, Paul calls Timothy his "work-fellow;" he writes to the Corinthians of Timothy coming to them, and having preached Christ among them; he hoped to send Timothy shortly to the Philippians, and from Athens sent him to the Thessalonians; and he informs the Hebrews of Timothy's liberation. The churches generally had an interest in Timothy, because he was a general auxiliary of the apostles.

PHILIP, first a deacon and then an evangelist, itinerated. He went down to Samaria and preached Christ. The Spirit sent him to the eunuch, and after the baptism "caught him away;" and he was "found at Azotus, and, passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

came to Cæsarea." Here he seems to have chiefly dwelt, as we are told that Paul's company came to Cæsarea, and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him. He was married, for "the same man had daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Probably from Cæsarea, as a centre, he made excursions to preach and to do the work of an evangelist.

TITUS, too, was probably an evangelist, though not named as such. When a door was opened to Paul at Troas, he had no rest in his spirit because he found not Titus, whom, it would appear, he wished to employ there. In Macedonia, he was comforted by the coming of Titus; he tells the Corinthians of Titus's affection and earnest care for them, and of their own reception of him; recognizes him as his partner and fellow-helper, and says—"We desired Titus that as he had begun so he would also finish in you the same grace also." When Paul went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, he took Titus also with him. And he informs Timothy that Titus had departed unto Dalmatia. He writes to Titus in the same spirit and strain as to Timothy, telling him that he had left him in Crete to set in order the things that are wanting and to ordain elders in every city; and then delineates the character of an elder or bishop. And he directs Titus to meet him at Nicopolis.

Hence it appears that the evangelists were not settled diocesan or parochial bishops, but itinerary assistants of the itinerary apostles; and, like the apostles, peculiar and temporary officers, or formative functionaries, in the church of Christ.

BARNABAS was a prominent and useful apostolical assistant. He was the first in Jerusalem to acknowledge the converted Saul of Tarsus; and was sent thence to visit the converted Gentiles in Antioch, whom he gladly

recognized and exhorted, being himself "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." He went to Tarsus to seek Saul, and brought him to Antioch; whence they were deputed with "relief," for the approaching famine, to the brethren in Judea. Returning to Antioch, they were divinely commissioned to preach the gospel among the Gentiles; and accordingly they travelled and laboured together, and are therefore called apostles or messengers from Antioch. On finishing their work, they returned to Antioch, reported their labours to the church, and abode long time with the disciples. After this they were sent to Jerusalem respecting the debated question of Gentile circumcision; and returned, with Judas and Silas, to communicate the decision of the question. Subsequently, Barnabas continued with Paul in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Differing respecting a companion, in the visitation of the scenes of their former labours, they separated from each other; and while Paul departed with Silas, Barnabas took Mark and sailed into Cyprus. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, mentions Barnabas as having accompanied himself and Titus, in a visit to Jerusalem, and as having been carried away with the Jewish dissimulation. On the whole, it appears that Barnabas did the work of an evangelist, though not bearing the name.

APOLLOS was noted for his eloquence and skill in the Scriptures. Paul couples him with himself, in having been perversely made a party name in Corinth, and in the honourable relation of ministers, with the distinction that he himself planted and Apollos watered.

OTHER NAMES, chiefly of smaller note and lower office, as subservient to the apostolate, are on record. Paul specifies, as his helpers or fellow-labourers, (*συνεργοί*) Priscilla and Aquila, Urbane, Epaphroditus, Tychicus,

(a fellow-servant, *συνδουλος*;) Justus, Philemon, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas. He also speaks of "women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life." He mentions Archippus, as his "fellow-soldier;" and he couples Barnabas with himself in working.

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CHAPTER III.

CHRONAL ORIGIN.

THE CHURCH IS PENTECOSTAL, BECAUSE IT BEGAN TO
BE FORMED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST FIRST FOL-
LOWING OUR LORD'S ASCENSION.

THE period of ecclesiastical formation extends from the day of Pentecost, the commencement, to the visions of Patmos, the close; and consists of an indeterminate number of years. The only chronicle of it is "the Acts of the apostles," which indicate the preaching of the gospel and the process of ecclesiastical formation, at various times.

The first specific mention of the church, in the New Testament, is in Matt. xvi. 18, as of a fabric to be built, not an extant operative institute: "I will build my church." The kingdom of heaven was announced as "at hand," by John the Baptist and by our Lord and his messengers; and was announced as come by Peter, on the day of Pentecost. The church is the great social index and instrument of the divine kingdom, with whose latter-day glory it synchronizes. The first mention of the church, as extant, is in the narrative of Pentecostal events, which closes with the statement that "the Lord added the saved daily to the church." The church to which, after that day, there were daily additions, is plainly the church that on that day was formed.

Before that day, no mention is made of the church as existing; after that day, it is frequently mentioned as operating, regulated, persecuted, or enlarged. The command, "tell it unto the church," is evidently prospective legislation; is conjoined with the prospectively-conferred power of opening, binding and loosing; and is comprehended in our Lord's great regal, terrestrial, adventive work of ecclesiastical preparation. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," drawn together by a divine influence on the divinely-selected day, most appropriate as the feast of first-fruits, and as either the Jewish or Christian sabbath.

The epoch of ecclesiastical creation was most suitable and auspicious. It was "the fulness of time." Human experience, during the preceding thousands of years, had proved and proclaimed the inadequacy of unaided human reason to discover religious truth, the inadequacy of tradition to transmit truth, and the inadequacy of writing and of national organism to diffuse truth. The genius and learning of Egypt, Greece, and Rome had reached and passed their meridian, but had failed to discover what the gospel has brought to light. All their searching had not found out God, in the purposes, principles and processes of his moral government. Their secular fruits were large and rich, but their spiritual fruits were as the apples of Sodom. The written monuments and remains of those countries are characterized by serious want of truth and sad excess of error. Polytheism, idolatry, error, superstition, and vice were the moral fruits or countenanced concomitants of the wisest, mightiest and best of these wisest, mightiest and best nations of antiquity. They had had truth, but lost it. Tradition failed to preserve it, and depravity cared not to keep it. Men "changed the truth of God into a lie,

and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."¹ Vestiges of primitive truth may be detected, by a skilful and discerning eye, among the mythological opinions and practices of Heathendom; but so attenuated, mutilated and shrouded by error, and evil, as to have been of little comparative and practical value. Unwritten truth must soon perish; and hence the revelations of Sinai were engraved on tables and written in a book; and the later and larger revelations of Sion were committed to imperishable record, by apostles and evangelists. The twofold revelation is the two Testaments, forming the one Bible, which we prize and use as God's choicest visible gift to mankind and the pregnant means of the world's improvement. But the written revelations of Sinai, and the national organism to which they were committed, did not counteract and cure conterminous heathenism. The Jewish religion was a beacon-light on the shores of the Mediterranean, to which but few of even adjacent nations repaired. Intended to be stationary and preparatory, it yet demonstrated the fact that written religious truth will not circulate, that national religion will not propagate, and that only by aggressive operation and perambulatory means can religious truth and power surround and saturate the globe. The suitable time for such means and operation was selected by Divine Providence. When the new ecclesiastical organism appeared, enriched with a new and superior revelation, the world was at peace under Rome's sagacious policy and mighty military sway. One language, and that the language of consummate civilization, was the recognised vehicle of the world's refined and richest intercourse. The whole earth was a quiet field and an open highway for the messengers

¹ Romans i. 25.

and instruments of redeeming love. Cæsar kept the world in secular peace, while Christ created the new organism of peace with God and good-will towards men. The moon of Judaism had long been waning, and went down in the western empire, that absorbed and destroyed it, as the sun of Christianity, pre-intimated by the eastern star, arose, "full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete," to pour the light of life around our darkened earth. Heathenism had demonstratively failed to illuminate the world, and Judaism had not attempted it, when the true light appeared and the day of deliverance, in its morning glory, burst upon mankind. "For after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, in his wisdom, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Time was ripe; ancient institutions were decayed and vanishing away; as the Desire of nations came and created the church to be the index, instrument, depôt and development of whatsoever things are true, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

It was natural that the final and perfect era of Mediatorial manifestation should speedily follow the Mediator's triumphant ascension and formal regal installation. And so it did. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" was the assurance of Christ to his apostles, as he was about to ascend. This was forty days after his death, and ten days before the ever-memorable day of Pentecost. These ten intervening days were fitly spent in prayer and supplication, and an apostolic election. A protracted prayer-meeting was the immediate precursor and preparative of the Spirit's manifestation.

CHAPTER IV.

SPACIAL ORIGIN.

THE CHURCH IS PALESTINIAN, BECAUSE IT WAS INSTITUTED IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM AND AMPLIFIED IN CÆSAREA.

THE "one place," where the "hundred and twenty" disciples were assembled "with one accord," "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," was in Jerusalem. Christ had selected that city as the birth-place of his church, and commanded his disciples to tarry there till divinely empowered. "He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."¹ The same writer elsewhere informs us, that Jesus, being assembled with

¹ Acts xxiv. 46—53.

the apostles, "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me." "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And "they returned unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode" the eleven.¹ Thus Christ commanded the proclamation of his salvation to begin at Jerusalem, and it began there on the day of Pentecost; thus Christ promised the baptism of his Spirit, first in Jerusalem, and it was given accordingly on the day of Pentecost; thus Christ commanded his apostles to tarry in Jerusalem, not to depart from Jerusalem, and they immediately returned to it and remained in it, so that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all in it with one accord. At Jerusalem began the formation of the church, the operation and development of the kingdom of heaven, which, small as a stone and superhumanly hewn, is to expand into a world-filling mountain.

The place of ecclesiastical genesis is as appropriate and significant as the time. Its name denotes peace. Melchizedek, one of the most apt and illustrious types of Christ, was "King of Salem, that is, king of peace."² It was the seat and centre of Jewish religion and Jewish power, whence went out the blessing of God, and the rod of his strength: "In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle."³ There the curtains of Jehovah's tabernacle had been spread, and the walls of his successive temples reared.

¹ Acts i. 4, 8, 12, 13.

² Heb. vii. 2.

³ Psalm lxxvi. 2, 3.

There victims bled and altars smoked, with incense and a pure offering. There priests, in rich attire, with subserving Levites, made ceremonial and typical atonement for the people, and prophetically adumbrated the world's high-priest. There sceptre, sword and throne prefigured a Prince and a Saviour. To that compactly-built city the tribes went up, "the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there were set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David."¹ It was the depôt of truth, the locality of Divine organism, the scene of oracular response. The beacon-light of the earth blazed there, and a lunar lustre shone around it. Long was it the place where men ought to worship, and where the Jews assembled accordingly three a year; first passing through the valley of Baca, encountering its drought, receiving rain in the wells they dug, or slipping each other, from company to company, and appearing without diminution before God in Zion. It was the perfection of beauty and the source of light. Pious Jews affectionately and gladly recognised and remembered it, as the city of their God, the city of the great king, in whose palaces God was known for a refuge, and whose Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, was beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth. Oh! how eagerly and lovingly they circumambulated it, telling its towers, marking its bulwarks, and considering its palaces, that from each retiring to each rising generation the blissful appreciation might be passed and perpetuated! The Saviour's presence, in his infantile presentation, his temple-purging and his temple-teaching, transcendently glorified its latter house. Over it he wept, foreseeing its destruction. In one of its upper rooms he celebrated the last legal passover, and

¹ Psalm cxxii. 3—5.

instituted its eucharistic successor. Within its walls he washed his disciples' feet, delivered to them his precious post-communion discourses, offered his great intercessory prayer, and endured the mockery of repeated trial and multiplied insults. Without, he endured the agony of the garden and the crucifixion of Calvary, reposed in the sepulchre, and rose again in triumph. It was meet that such a city should be the birth-place of a nobler organism, the recipient of a better covenant, the witness of a brighter day, the point of departure and basis of operations for God's world-wide message and chosen messengers. Besides, it was as ethnically central and suitable, as historically interesting and institutionally preparatory. Jerusalem stands near the shores of earth's central sea; by the hive of mankind; on the great highway from Egypt, the cradle of science, to the seats of the great cities and peoples of antiquity; within easy sail of intellectually-sovereign Greece, and manageably distant from physically-sovereign Rome. During the whole period of the church's formation, no one place could have been selected so suitable, as a centre of operation and as a resort for council, as Jerusalem; and it was selected and occupied accordingly.

Zechariah prophesied that living waters should go out from Jerusalem, half of them eastward, toward the former or Dead Sea, and half of them westward, towards the hinder or Mediterranean Sea, so as to refresh and fructify the two great divisions of the world, as known to the ancients;¹ and Paul declares his fulfilment of the prophecy, when he tells us "that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."² His first labours, after his conversion, were eastward in Arabia;³ subsequently he preached

¹ Zech. xiv. 8. ² Rom. xv. 19. ³ Gal. i. 15—17.

westerly, in Greece and Rome. By the labours of all the apostles, the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven;" and the living water, which flows in rivers from the body of every believer, has since continued to flow in the world, for the spiritual sustenance, health, and happiness of mankind.

Biblical references to Jerusalem, besides the historical, the appreciatory and the prophetic, are various. The city is mentioned *indicatively*, as when God is called "the God of Jerusalem;"¹ *illustratively*, when it is said—"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever;"² and *typically* or representatively of the church, both in the Old and New Testament. In the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which, according to Paul (Rom. x. 20), commences with a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, Jerusalem is mentioned as a *creation*, in connection with the new heavens and the new earth: "Behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."³ Such expressions as these—"Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem"—"he hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem"—"till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth"—"put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem"—"a fountain opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem"—with many other similar passages, are all evidently prophetic and representative indications of great spiritual and general changes and blessings, not Jewish but Christian. It is no wonder, therefore, that in the New Testament, which so exactly corresponds and correlates to the Old, similar representative language is used. Paul compares "the two covenants" (*διαθηκαι*) to the two children of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac; and the two organisms, Jewish-national,

¹ 2 Chron. xxxii. 19.

² Psalm cxxv. 2.

³ Isa. lxxv. 13.

and Christian-ecclesiastical, to Jerusalem, literally and spiritually considered. The one covenant, he says, is from the Mount Sinai; and its cognate organism is "Jerusalem, that now is," that is similar to, or that corresponds with, Hagar. The other covenant is from Mount Sion, as he supplementally intimates in his epistle to the Hebrews; and its cognate organism is the church, "free Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all."¹ Thus the Jewish revelation and machinery are contrasted with the Christian; and to the same effect, but varied in manner, is the contrastive description in Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. The Mount Sinai, the scene of Jewish revelation and national organization, tangible, burning with fire, dark, black and tempestuous, reverberating the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, and occasioning, by its terrible-ness, fear and quaking, represents the old economy and polity. Mount Sion is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and comprehends the innumerable company of messengers—the general assembly and church of the first-born, of celestial registration—God, the judge of all—righteous and perfected minds—Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant—and the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than Abel. These are the constituents and characteristics of the final dispensation and organism of divine truth and grace.² They do not indicate a state hereafter but a state to which we "are come;" the contrast is not between earth and heaven, literally considered, but between an inferior and preparatory system, on the one hand, and a superior and perfect system, on the other. The church of Christ is the New Jerusalem; and the gospel or New Testament is the second covenant, illustrated by Isaac. The

¹ Gal. iv. 22—31.

² Heb. xii. 18—29.

Jewish nation was the old Jerusalem, illustrated by Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, who was in bondage with her children; and the Jewish law, or economy, is the old covenant, illustrated by Ishmael. As the old covenant emanated from Mount Sinai, so the new covenant emanates from Mount Zion. Sinai is the literal mountain whence God dispensed his law; Zion is the spiritual mountain, the church, whence its enthroned Creator and Lord sends forth his light and truth. The enumerated attributes of Sinai are all sensible and literal; the arrayed glories of Mount Zion are all spiritual. To the church belongs an innumerable company of messengers, apostles, evangelists, and preachers; it is a "general" assembly, because it embraces both Jew and Gentile, male and female, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, unlike the particular congregation or assembly of circumcised and isolated Jews; the church of the first-born is the primitive church; the superior composition of the new association is denoted by the expression "righteous [or just] and perfected minds," *και πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων*; and registration in heaven is ecclesiarchal registration, registration in the heavenly dispensation, agreeably to Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, which describes the Christian era as a great change in the heavenly bodies. The apostle, in the remaining part of the chapter, follows up this contrast of the old and the new economies, by describing the Jewish state and system, as denoted by an earth-voice and an earth-quake, and as now, according to the prophecy, shaken "yet once more," so as to signify "the removing of those things [of Judaism] that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things [of Christianity] which cannot be shaken [because final and perfective] may remain." And the just and natural inference from the whole is

that we, who live under the gospel, receive a kingdom that cannot be removed. With so many instances of the apostle's contrast of the two covenants and their cognate organisms, it seems strange that so many critics should have supposed the apostle to contrast the present state and the future, the terrestrial and the celestial, or the Jewish and the celestial. The only or the chief reasons that can be assigned for this misapprehension are the terms of the translation and the strength of the figures. "Myriads of angels," or messengers, may *comprehend* the pure celestial spirits that minister to the heirs of salvation, but cannot *consist* of them, cannot exclude the ecclesiastical messengers, whose very names denote their office, as apostles or messengers, evangelists or good messengers, "the messengers (*αποστολοι*) of the churches,"¹ and the mystic stars, "the angels (*αγγελοι*) of the churches." The phrase "spirits of just men made perfect" seems certainly to savour of a disembodied condition; but the term *πνευμα* (*pneuma*) simply signifies mind; it occurs in hundreds of passages in the New Testament, and denotes both the Divine Spirit and created spirits, good spirits and bad spirits, embodied and unembodied minds; and it is much more difficult to find a passage in which it denotes a disembodied spirit than one in which it denotes embodied intelligence: all difficulty vanishes by rendering the original literally—"and to perfected righteous minds." The verb, *πελειωω*, signifies to fulfil, to complete, to accomplish, and generally occurs, in the New Testament, in relation to character and work on earth.

Rightly understood, the passage we have been considering, in Heb. xiii., is an exceedingly luminous, beautiful and graphic account of the preceding and present

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 23.

dispensation of Mediatorial government. And concurrent with both it and the passage previously considered, (Gal. iv. 21—31) is the apocalyptic description of the New Jerusalem.¹ The apocalyptic Jerusalem is mediatorial, christian and terrestrial, not retributive and celestial; because its light and lord is the Lamb, or priestly mediator, who is described as enthroned and making all things new, but whose mediation and kingdom, we know, will close with the Resurrection; because into it are brought the glory and honour of the nations and kings of the earth, which are purely terrestrial distinctions and designations; because the names of the twelve apostles, who are purely ecclesiastical and christian, are inscribed on its foundations; because its measure is "the measure of a man;" because it has terrestrial aspects, northerly, southerly, easterly, and westerly; because it is the bride, the Lamb's wife, which, according to other scriptures, is the church of Christ, whose existence and operation are solely probationary and terrestrial; and because, in several features and circumstances, it strikingly coincides with the spiritual Jerusalem of Isaiah, of Ezekiel, of Zechariah, and of Paul, in his epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews, and with other Scripture references. Isaiah ushers in his account of Jerusalem with the new heavens and earth, created to displace the old: "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever, in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people."² So, also, John: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth

¹ Rev. xxi.² Isaiah lxx. 17—19

were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."¹ Paul says to the church—"Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them ; and I will be their God and they shall be my people."² John says, quoting the same scriptures—"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Isaiah exhorts to joy and rejoicing in Jerusalem, and says—"The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." John says—"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more [spiritual] death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall be there any more pain [a strong description of Christian blessedness] : for the former things [of Judaism] are passed away." Isaiah describes the innocence or holiness of the new Jerusalem thus—"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and dust [prostration and defeat] shall be the serpent's [or Satan's] meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." John, with no less descriptive vigour, says of the church, as it ought to be, and as, in its proper composition, it really is—"There shall in no wise enter it anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Paul describes Christianity as a kingdom that cannot be moved ; so does John when he says—"There shall be no more sea," no more disturbance and fluctuation. Isaiah describes the church as a holy mountain ; Paul calls it the Mount Zion ; and John was

¹ Rev. xxi. 1, 2.

² 2 Cor. vi. 16.

carried to a great and high mountain, to see the holy Jerusalem. Isaiah calls the mountain holy, and so does John the city, in accordance with Ezekiel's symbolical description of the house of God, whose law, he says, is holiness. Paul calls the church "Jerusalem which is above," *Ἱερουσαλημ ἄνω*, and "the heavenly Jerusalem;" John calls it "new Jerusalem, coming down from God," "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God;" both writers in striking accordance with our Lord, who says—"Ye must be born from above, *ἄνωθεν*" which is formed from *ἄνω*, the very word that Paul applies to Jerusalem. Isaiah describes the church as a city, and calls it Jerusalem; Paul calls it the city of the living God, and names it Jerusalem; John describes it as a city, and names it the new Jerusalem, in accordance with the symbolism of the new heavens and earth, in both his own and Isaiah's description, and with the apocalyptic announcement—"Behold, I make all things new." Paul says of marriage—"I speak concerning Christ and his church;" John describes new Jerusalem as "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The bride *prepared* coincides with Christ's elaborate personal preparation for the church and with his glorious pneumatical formation of it. Zechariah describes living water as going out from Jerusalem, for all mankind. Ezekiel saw waters issuing from under the threshold of the mystic house, in Jerusalem, so that a very great multitude of fish should be "healed" and a river formed, gradually deepening and widening, with very many trees on the one side and on the other, where the fishers should stand and spread forth nets. John says—"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare

twelve manner of fruits [corresponding to the formative or apostolical instrumentality], and yielded her fruit every month [affording a constant supply]: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations ;” and Christ says that out of the body of every believer shall flow rivers of living water. Ezekiel describes the river-bank as occupied with fishers and nets ; and Christ said to the twelve—“ I will make you fishers of men,” for “ the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net.” Christ proclaimed, on the great day of the feast—“ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink ;” John, in the vision of Jerusalem, describes the enthroned and recreating Alpha and Omega as saying—“ I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Christ to the seven Asiatic representative churches says—“ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne ;” Christ enthroned says to the New Jerusalem—“ He that overcometh [by further continuance and conquest, and, therefore, in a prolonged trial] shall inherit all things.” Paul tells churchmen that they are the temple of God, superseding the literal temple of Jerusalem ; and John describes New Jerusalem as a tabernacle or temple and, therefore, as “ having no [literal] temple therein.” Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness, that creates the world’s day ; and John says there shall be no night in the New Jerusalem. Paul describes the general and firstborn assembly as “ written in heaven ;” and John describes the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem as “ written in the Lamb’s book of life,” or characteristically described in the Scriptures, which are the record of the Prince of life. Paul says—“ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law ;” John says of the New Jerusalem—“ There shall be no more curse.” Christ compares his advent in the formation of the church, when his king-

dom and therefore himself should spiritually come, to the lightning; and foretels the destruction of the Jewish organism, under the bold and striking figures of the darkened sun, the lustreless moon, the falling stars and the shaken powers of heaven, accompanied by the appearance of his own sign, his gospel and his church, with power and great glory, occasioning mourning among the tribes of the earth, the Jewish tribes, cleaving to their earthly economy and rejecting the heavenly; and then declares that he shall send his angels or messengers with a great sound of a trumpet, the trumpet of the gospel, to gather together his elect or called, *εκλεκτους*, the members of his church, into a new and glorious organization, from the four winds, from the one end of heaven unto the other; and he determines both time and meaning by subjoining—"This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." In remarkable accordance with our Lord's style, and in proof of the interpretation we have given, is Joel's prophecy, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost as then fulfilled. The formation of the church and its displacement of Judaism are compared to "wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapour of smoke; the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood." The Jewish luminaries were first eclipsed and then displaced, and the whole Jewish organism destroyed. So Paul to the Galatians describes Judaism as cast out, like the bondwoman; and to the Hebrews as shaken and removed, not as respects earth only, but also heaven, that is, both secularly and spiritually. And so John in the Apocalypse tells us that "the first heaven and the first earth [the Jewish economy, spiritually and secularly,] were passed away, and there was no more sea," no more fluctuation and passing away. Unlike the Jewish

Jerusalem, the new had no material temple, no reflecting moon or typic light, no candle to adumbrate a better illumination, and no rising and setting sun, like successive priests and prophets, but full and ceaseless day. John saw this city in its perfection and glory, towards the close of his visions, because by these visions the church was matured, fully furnished and beautified. He saw the city of co-equal length, breadth and height, an exact cube, to denote the perfect proportion and correlation of the Christian revelation and organism; he found the measure an hundred and forty and four cubits, the square of twelve, which is the number of the apostles and tribes, squared to denote its comprehensibility of the whole human field, "the world" and "every creature." The walls are jasper, or terrestrial green. The city itself consists of pure diaphanous gold, to denote the purity, lustre, and preciousness of the Christian organism, inhabitants, and endowments. The foundation consists of twelve courses of precious stones, which appear to be the same as the stones in the breastplate of the Jewish high-priest. It is difficult to determine the various shades of colour which their names originally indicated, but the probability is that they substantially harmonize with the hues of the rainbow and spectrum, and accordingly together constitute white, which comprehends all colours, and whose primitive elements are red, yellow, and blue. Light is white and is the biblical symbol of truth and purity; but reflected through the apostles, the twelve ornamental and foundational stones or courses, in the church, assumes the various colours which these precious stones exhibit. Christ is the light of the church; and his light is "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;" his apostles are indicated in their ecclesiastical *value*, by comparison with precious stones, and in

the *variety* of their communications and usefulness, by the variety of the gems ; their position is what Christ has assigned them, their preciousness is what he has given them, and their lustre is his reflected radiance ; and their names are on the foundation, because they, as instruments, founded and formed the church. The statement that "the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones" denotes the amplitude and value of the endowments and advantages, especially Scriptural, from Christ to his church. The city has twelve gates, which are pearls, three on every side, always open, to denote equal and ample and constant access to the church, from every part or division of the globe. The wall of the city denotes distinction, defence and safety ; for "we have a strong city ; salvation shall God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Twelve names are on the foundations and on the gates ; on the former the names of the formative officers of the church, "the twelve apostles of the Lamb ;" and on the latter "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel," symbolically representative of the varied population, yet of one parentage, of the church of Christ. Twelve angels or messengers at the gates denote the ample and continuous message and ministry of the church. The city is represented as "having the glory of God," in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophetic address to the church—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." When the church was instituted, God added "the saved" to it daily ; and John declares that "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." John accordingly says of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, "they shall see his face." The first Jerusalem was a literal city, the second

is spiritual; the old was in bondage, the new is free; the former was national, the present is cosmical and cosmoplastic, or, in other words, destined to be world-embracing and world-forming.

By a singular coincidence, the place of ecclesiastical enlargement to Gentiles, Cæsarea, the place where the church was amplified to embrace the world, bore not only a gentile name but the name of the ethnical civil Head. In the house of Cornelius, in Cæsarea, the church was catholicized, or made susceptible of embracing Cæsar himself and every other non-Jewish member of the human family.

So appropriate and significant, then, are the Palestinian places of ecclesiastical formation. The church was opened in the Jewish metropolis to the Jews, and in the ethnicized Palestinian town to the great ethnic portion of mankind. And to crown the process, the church was consummated and seen in vision, as a glorious city, of catholic construction, in the island of Patmos; as if to intimate that the islands of the sea were not to be overlooked or obscured. So it had been prophesied—"The isles shall wait for his law." And so it has occurred, in Britain's signal reception, illustration, and promotion of Christianity; and in the remarkable prevalence of the gospel, in modern times, among the islands of the sea.

CHAPTER V.

MODAL ORIGIN.

THE CHURCH WAS APPROPRIATELY COMMENCED, AMPLIFIED, PROPAGATED, AND FURNISHED.

THE analysis of vast machinery is a necessary preparation for appreciating the process of construction, but is not the appreciation itself. It is one thing to know that a machine consists of such powers as levers, pulleys, axes and wheels, screws and inclined planes, and is moved and controlled by free and intelligent energy; and it is another thing to know the manner and order of combining and adjusting these powers. The method of ecclesiastical formation was accordant with the means and materials—was worthy of the contriving mind and the constructing hand—and was eminently adapted to the aim and end. The materials were provided by Christ himself, during his personal terrestrial ministry; the ecclesiastical mechanism was framed in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, was amplified in Cæsarea, was widely propagated by the apostles and their assistants, and was fully furnished or matured, by the perfection of the ecclesiastical creed and code, “in the isle called Patmos.”

SECTION I.—*The Church was commenced with Jews.*

The process of ecclesiastical organization or birth is distinguished as the development of the divinely-prepared germ, the fulfilment of prophecy and promise, the

answer of protracted prayer, the import of significant symbols, the preaching of the gospel, the illustration of ample means, the outburst of the Sun of Righteousness, for the creation of the world's day and for the glory and pleasure of the world's Author.

1. The disciples, whom Christ had trained and prepared, were the nucleus and germ of the church. They were the seed that should vegetate and expand into the magnificent Christian tree. They constituted not only the nucleus around which converts should be gathered, the centre of ecclesiastical accretion, the visible standing point and starting-post of ecclesiastical operation, but, also, Christ's authorized and qualified officers by whom the process of accretion and operation should be conducted. When the time for originating and opening the church arrived, there were one hundred and twenty disciples, as the original accepted candidates for membership; there were twelve officers of Christ then duly endowed and empowered to testify of their Master, to proclaim his society, to publish the nature and conditions of communion, and to conduct, through the ecclesiastical portals of belief and baptism, the proper applicants. At that momentous epoch, there was no paralyzing want of competent authority; no delaying and distracting process of official election, for the witnesses' vacancy had been filled in the ten days of expectation, pause and prayer; and no dispute as to which of the twelve should have the honour of taking the initiative and acting as foreman, for the keys of the church had been put into Peter's hand by the church's Founder and Lord. Hence, "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice" and expounded and announced the great doings and developments of the day.

2. "No man hath seen God at any time;" and, therefore, no one could see the descending Spirit on the day

of Pentecost. But as God symbolizes himself to man, in the constitution and course of nature, and in the indicia of revelation, so did he symbolize his Spirit's Pentecostal visitation by miraculous changes, material and human: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."¹ The Spirit's emblem is the wind, which bloweth where it pleaseth, and the sound and the rush of whose mighty coming proclaimed the advent of the highest power and of the greatest of all religious revolutions. It filled the house, as if to denote the amplitude of the new energy and the new dispensation. Cloven tongues, like as of fire, on the disciples' heads, symbolized the effective and universal preaching of the gospel. If wind be the emblem of the Spirit's mysterious and world-wide power, fire is the emblem of his characteristic and generated purity, and cloven tongues the sign of his latter-day communications with every variety of human tongues and tribes. The very emblems of Pentecost proclaimed the catholicity of Christianity, foretold its unrestricted circulation, and forcibly rebuked the straitened aims and operations of Christian churches. The disciples began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit that filled them gave them utterance; so that devout men, out of every nation under heaven, marvelled with amazement, and inquired how mere Galileans could speak in so many and such various tongues as to be intelligible to Parthians, Medes and Elamites, to the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia,

¹ Acts ii. 2-4.

Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and to strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; evincing remarkable knowledge of God's wonderful works and unparalleled linguistic skill and power. Mingled amazement, doubt and curiosity were the natural emotions of the thronging spectators; while ungodliness, according to its wont, mocked and slandered.

3. Peter, as the apostolic foreman and key-keeper, not only vindicated the disciples, from the insinuation of drunkenness, but pointed out the present fulfilment of prophecy and promise. "This is that," said he, "which was spoken by the prophet Joel," whose words he proceeds to rehearse. This remarkable prophecy first announces the effusion and influences of the Spirit; and then the eclipse and extinction of Judaism, under the boldest imagery. As nigh of kin to this, and next in order of statement, Peter declares the death and resurrection of the Messiah, as witnessed by the disciples present, his exaltation and consequent spiritual effusion. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear:" "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."¹ The use of prophecy is to prepare and to prove; unfulfilled, it is preliminary; fulfilled, it is evidential. The use of promise is to stimulate and to cheer, by inspiring faith and hope. As exactly as the key is adjusted to the lock, to press its springs and propel its bolts, and as antitype corresponds to type, so exactly do the events of Pentecost realize prophecy and promise, accrediting the prophetic and promissory medium, illustrating the omniscient benignity of God, and animating

¹ Acts ii. 33, 39.

Christians to fidelity and continuity, in their work of faith and labour of love.

4. Prayer subserves faith ; and prayer both preceded Pentecost and was answered by its wonders. All the eleven, from the day of ascension, "continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."¹ A protracted prayer-meeting, interrupted only for an apostolical election, preceded the work of ecclesiastical formation and gospel publication. Thus was fulfilled Christ's command to pray always and not faint ; and thus was exemplified, in the beginning of the Christian era, the spirit and power of prayer, that so eminently distinguish all true christians and churches. Not in vain did the disciples wait and pray. The Lord, whom they sought, suddenly came to his temple, the New Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God with men, to consume and purify, like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. For ten days, they waited on the Lord and then renewed their strength : the Sun of Righteousness arose upon them, with healing in his wings ; and the associated disciples went forth and grew up, as calves of the stall.²

5. Glorious achievements crowned the means and ministrations of the day of Pentecost. Disciples obediently assembled, according to due time and place,—the Spirit descending with appropriate symbols—apostolical preaching—the fulfilment of prophecy, promise and prayer—all resulted in the belief and baptism of three thousand souls. This was the first accretion to the ecclesiastical nucleus ; this was the first-fruits of the ecclesiastical harvest ; this was the distinguished evidence and illustration of Christ's character and claims and kingdom, of his sacerdotal sufficiency and sovereign

¹ Acts i. 14.

² Malachi iii. 1, 2 ; iv. 1, 2.

sway, of the amplitude and adaptation of his means for the recovery of a degenerate world. As if to preclude doubt and inspire faith, in all ages, the gospel began with a mighty conquest; the church leaped into life and started on her course, with gigantic strength; the very beginning of Christianity indicated the hidings of the Redeemer's power and the inexhaustible fulness of the residue of the Spirit. If Christianity, in its birth, could develope such energies, could display such apparatus, could achieve such a triumph,—no apostle or primitive christain need quail, no post-apostolical church need waver, no combination and array of hostile strategy and strength should daunt or drive back our marshalled legions, fighting in the eye and by the inspired energy of the Captain of our salvation. Pentecost is our origin, model, and study; the church of that day is the ecclesiastical first-born of Christ, his might and the beginning of his strength, the excellency of his dignity and the excellency of power.

6. The church, Judaically originated, was Judaically expanded. It was fit, as a historical sequent and as a gracious overture, that to the Jews first the gospel should be preached; that with the Jews, and in their cherished city, the first church should be formed; and that due time and opportunity should be allowed for the expansion of the church among the Jews, before its portals were opened to the idolatrous nations. And it was fit, too, that the last momentous trial of the Jewish people should be thus signal and distinctive, before the Roman axe descended on the tree and the Roman fire consumed it to the stump.

The process of Jewish ecclesiastical expansion was marked by the miraculous healing of the lame man and by the sermon of Peter, which occasioned the healing and which induced the conversion of about five thousand, together

with the arraignment and defence of Peter and John before the Jewish authorities, followed by a remarkable prayer-meeting and visitation of the Spirit; by large and liberal donations to the ecclesiastical funds and by the sudden death of the impostors, Ananias and Sapphira; by the addition of multitudes, both of men and women, and the popular admiration of the apostles; by the accomplishment of numerous miracles of healing; by the imprisonment and miraculous release of the apostles and by their testimony before the council; by the daily templar and domiciliary ministrations of the apostles; by the appointment of seven deacons, as stewards and treasurers; by the death of the proto-martyr, Stephen, a deacon; by the Sauline persecution and consequent Christian dispersion; by evangelical and ecclesiastical propagation, among the Jews in Samaria, eliciting the character of Simon and including the conversion of the eunuch; and by the very momentous conversion of the church's chief enemy, Saul of Tarsus, into the church's chief labourer and promoter, Paul the apostle.¹ All these events are full of meaning and interest, as contributing to the full formation and efficiency of the church, and as illustrative of Christianity and its Author and of human character. The miracle-working and inspiring energy of the Holy Ghost was never absent, when needed; the apostolic and christian spirit and testimony never failed or flagged; prayer and praise were never neglected; providential interposition, as in the release of the apostles, the advice of Gamaliel and the arrest of Saul, was often experienced; prudential measures and the due division of labour, as in the election of the deacons, were not omitted. But the crowning event was the conversion of Saul. By his learning, abilities, position,

¹ Acts vi.—ix.

energy and zeal, he was the most formidable enemy of the church and gospel ; he was the standard-bearer and leader of the church's foes ; his conversion is the most remarkable individual instance, on record, of the power of Christianity and of the succour of the church ; it seems to have so disheartened the persecutors as to afford rest to the churches, throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria ; and it so subserved the cause of Christ that those churches were edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. The transformation of the enemy into the operative of the church completed the process of Jewish ecclesiastical expansion and supplied what was necessary to Gentile incorporation, as it supplied the twelfth apostle to whom, pre-eminently, was to be committed the gospel of the uncircumcision.

SECTION II.—*The Church was amplified with Gentiles.*

The classification of Jews and Gentiles, like that of Greeks and Barbarians or British and Foreign, is comprehensive of our race. The baptism of the Gentiles, in Cæsarea, in the house of Cornelius, broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile and amplified the church, as a fold of world-wide capacity. Everything contributed to illustrate and adorn this event. The time was the completion of the church's Judaical expansion. The place was a Palestinian city and port, on the Méditerranean, affording peculiar facilities to missionaries and named after the great political chief of the nations. Cornelius, a devout centurion of the Roman emperor, was the primary Gentile instrument of Gentile communion. Peter, the ecclesiastical key-keeper, officiated, as on the day of Pentecost, in preaching the gospel and unbarring to the world the gates of the

church. As before on the Jews, the Spirit now descended on the Gentiles, renewing them in righteousness and authenticating and sealing their Christian fellowship. Cornelius and Peter were coincidentally prepared for this ecclesiastical enlargement, which was the answer of Cornelius's prayers and the fulfilment of Divine prophecy and promise, and was symbolized by the descending sheet. The gift of tongues was conferred; baptism, the ceremony of transference from Judaism and from heathenism, the ordinance of ecclesiastical initiation, was observed;¹ and now the church stood forth with its gates of pearl unlocked to all mankind, proclaiming the mystery that had been hidden through the ages and awaiting the proper times and seasons for deputing her messengers to every creature.

So great a change as the amplification of the church was likely to be resisted and denounced by the adherents of the circumcision. And, accordingly, in Jerusalem, they contended with Peter; who, instead of simply asserting his authority, consecutively rehearsed and expounded the matter to them, so as to convince the of the Divine procedure.² "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

SECTION III.—*The Church was widely propagated.*

The Sauline persecution subserved Christianity, because it occasioned the dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem and their extensive publication of the truth, "as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch." Generally, they preached only to Jews; but some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, spake unto the Grecians, in Antioch,

¹ Acts x. passim.

² Acts xi. 1—18.

with great success. On account of this, Barnabas was sent from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch; and he not only saw the dispensation of grace but gladly encouraged the believers. He also visited Saul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch; and together, for a whole year, they assembled with the church and taught much people. Here, for the first time, the disciples were appropriately called Christians.¹

In anticipation of the famine, foretold by the prophet Agabus, the disciples in Antioch, in the true spirit of brotherly kindness and liberality, and in exact accordance with the Christian principle of contribution—"every man according to his ability"—spontaneously sent relief, by Barnabas and Saul, to the brethren dwelling in Judea.²

The period of Herodian persecution comprehends the martyrdom of James, the brother of John; the imprisonment and miraculous release of Peter; the descent of Herod to Cæsarea, together with his impiety and consequent death in that place; and the promotion of the truth, as in the case of Saul, by the means that seemed likely to counteract and conceal it. "The word of God grew and multiplied."³

The separation, by divine direction, of Barnabas and Saul (after their return to Antioch with John and Mark), to the work of Christian propagation, was a very important event, because it originated the systematic promulgation of the gospel and the chief itinerancies of the apostle Paul. Paul and Barnabas, accompanied for a time by John and Mark, visited Seleucia, Cyprus, Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them for Jerusalem, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lycaonia, Derbe, Perga, and Attalia. Returning to Antioch, they reported their

¹ Acts xi. 19—26.

² Acts xi. 27—30.

³ Acts xii. 1—24.

labours to the assembled church, "and there abode long time with the disciples."¹

The controversy and council, concerning circumcision, resulted in the tranquillization and prosperity of the churches and were followed by renewed itinerancies of Barnabas and Paul; who, however, became permanently disjoined by a difference respecting companionship. Barnabas and Mark sailed to Cyprus; Paul and Silas "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." Paul's journey is traced to Derbe and Lystra, Mysia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Miletus, Tyre, Ptolemais, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem.²

The circumstances and labours of Paul now assumed a new aspect, resulting in his entrance into Rome as a prisoner. The purification of himself and four others, by advice of James and the elders in Jerusalem, as a measure of conciliation, occasioned a tumult and conspiracy. From the Jews, who were beating him, Paul was rescued by the chief captain and permitted to address the multitude, till his voice became drowned by their clamours, on the avowal of his mission to the Gentiles. The assertion of his Roman citizenship saved him from a scourging, which the chief captain had ordered. Arraigned before the council, he resented the injustice of the high-priest, yet recognised his office; and, in a masterly manner, thwarted his enemies, by dividing them into two hostile parties, Pharisees and Sadducees. The hand of God appeared in his nightly encouragement and in the detection and defeat of the conspiracy against his life. Removed, under a military escort of the chief captain's, to Cæsarea, he ably defended himself, before Felix the governor, against the artifices

¹ Acts xii. 25; xiv. 28.

² Acts xv. 1; xxi. 17.

of Tertullus the orator, who acted as the advocate of the high-priest and the elders. And when Felix was displaced by Festus, whom the Jews sought to entrap into a conspiracy against Paul's life, the apostle boldly asserted his innocence and his political rights, and appealed to the emperor. Festus, in order to elicit some ground for the prosecution of the case, instituted an examination of Paul before king Agrippa, with the chief captains and principal men of the city. Before this imposing assemblage, Paul nobly confessed his persecution of the Christians, his conversion and commission, and his conformity, as a Christian, to the predictions of Moses and the prophets; and the result was not only his full acquittal from anything worthy of death or of bonds, but also a recognition of the necessity of prosecuting his appeal. The voyage and shipwreck of Paul and his companions ensued; and, after a useful sojourn in the island of Melita, Paul and the others resumed their journey, sailing to Syracuse and thence to Puteoli, where he tarried with brethren seven days and whence he proceeded to Appii Forum. Here he thanked God and took courage, on meeting brethren from Rome; and in the great metropolis he dwelt two whole years, in his own hired house, by himself, with a soldier that kept him, preaching, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, "the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."¹

SECTION IV.—*The Church was fully furnished.*

As a spiritual and redeeming Prince, Christ, in person, prepared for his church, by training his disciples, especially the twelve; by the agency of his Spirit and the

¹ Acts xxi. 18; xxviii. 31.

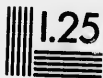
instrumentality of his apostles, he created the church, on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem; by the same agency and apostolate and by the created church, he expanded his visible kingdom among the Jews; by the same means he amplified, or catholically adapted, his church, in the house of Cornelius, in Cæsarea; by the same means he widely extended his church and gospel, so as to put the world fairly in possession of them; and by the apostles and co-operative prophets and evangelists, he trained and prepared the first churches and the first church members, for faithful and efficient action.

The agency of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of revealed truth are the great means of human salvation and of ecclesiastical vitality and efficiency. The agency is always present and permeative, like the circumambient air; and its achievements are dependent only on man's non-resistance to its revealing light. That light is biblical truth, which was never wanting where apostles and their inspired coadjutors laboured. But in the absence of such men, itinerating and dying, some fixed, permanent and multiplicative record of revealed truth was necessary; and, accordingly, Christ has furnished his church with her rule of operation and message of ministration, by the completion of his written word. The four gospels are the record of ecclesiastical preparation; the Acts of the apostles are the record of ecclesiastical formation or genesis; the epistles are the rule of ecclesiastical operation; the apocalypse is the record of ecclesiastical futurity or destiny; and the whole New Testament is the ecclesiastical creed and code. The gospels and Acts are the church's historic record,—the first introductory, the second narrative; the apocalypse is the church's prophetic record. In the Acts we see the church's rise; in the apocalypse, the church's progress. Where the former ends, the latter substan-



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tially begins. Uninspired ecclesiastical history, like other human history, is not destitute of attraction and value ; but the biblical history of the church, which it behoves every christian to study, is couched in the apocalyptic visions and comprehends everything essential, from the church's maturation to her appropriate and glorious close.

By the completion of revealed truth, in the isle called Patmos, on the Lord's-day, the church was matured and appeared in her maturity, as the New Jerusalem. Deeply-interesting is this event ; most attractive and significant is its whole manner. In what place could the church be more appropriately crowned than in an island, and that island Mediterranean ? On what day so appropriately as the Lord's-day, the day of her Founder and Head ? Through what instrumentality so appositely as that of the beloved and loving John ? By what agency but by that of the Head himself, arrayed in his sacerdotal vestments ; his snowy head bespeaking his antiquity, as the Ancient of Days ; his flaming eyes denoting his omniscience ; his brassy, brilliant feet indicating the strength and splendour of his steps and progress ; his ocean-voice betokening the majesty and might of his communications ; and his girdled loins evincing his readiness for action. Girt upon his thigh, wielded by his hand or issuing from his mouth, is the two-edged sword of his Spirit, his pure and perfect truth, by which he achieves his regal conquests. He walks king-like among his golden candlesticks ; grasping in his hand their concentrated flames, his astral messengers ; asserting his supremacy ; dictating his ecclesiastical epistles ; unfolding his future operations ; presenting to his servant, in vision, his perfected and glorious church, "coming down from God out of heaven ;" prohibiting the mutilation or corruption of his word and indicating eternal retribution. Thus appropriately and gloriously was the church matured and crowned, equipped

for her warfare and started on her progress; to sound the trumpet of salvation, to wield the sword of spiritual conquest, to carry through the world the torch of Christian truth, and to flash it on the darkness of degraded humanity; till every sleeper wakes, till every wanderer returns, till every captive is rescued, till the glory of the Lord is revealed and all flesh beholds it together.

SECTION V.—*Summary of ecclesiastical formation.*

Very suggestive, as well as comprehensive and interesting, is the scripture-history of the church's formation. "Beginning at Jerusalem." How fraught is the name with recollections and anticipations! What christian can forget or disregard "the holy city?" Next to her, chronologically, in ecclesiastical annals, is Samaria, where Philip the evangelist formed a church. After baptizing the eunuch in "the desert," between Jerusalem and Gaza, "Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea." Near Damascus, Saul of Tarsus was arrested; and in the city itself he found mercy and was baptized by Ananias, was certain days with the disciples, and preached Christ in the synagogues. How pregnant with mighty influence was all this to the church and to mankind! After visiting Jerusalem, Paul was brought down to Cæsarea and sent forth to Tarsus. This last was the place of his birth; and Cæsarea was the abode of Cornelius, the locality of the church's enlargement, and the scene of Paul's appearance before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. We can no more forget Cæsarea than Jerusalem. As for Lydda and Saron, *all* that dwelt there saw Eneas miraculously cured of an eight-years' palsy, "and turned to the Lord." Of no other place has such a record been made. To Joppa belonged Dorcas,

whose name is still indicative of benevolence, where also dwelt Peter, with one Simon a tanner, and where he was prepared by a trance for the baptism of believing Gentiles. Other places harboured the persecuted and dispersed christians. "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." Thus was the gospel introduced into Antioch, whence Saul and Barnabas were sent forth, where the disciples were first and fitly called Christians, where the first steps to settle the controversy concerning circumcision were taken, and where Paul nobly withstood Peter in his error. With Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium is connected the history of Timothy, who was so serviceable to Paul and the churches, and to whom two most serviceable epistles were written. Several places from Seleucia to Attalia are the recorded scenes of the united labours of Paul and Barnabas, in their mission from Antioch; and some of these places are marked by the record of memorable addresses and events. Phrygia, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, and many other places are connected with Paul's progress and achievements; and some of them are marked by registered events of no ordinary importance. To Galatia Paul wrote one of his epistles. In Troas, Paul heard in a vision the Macedonian cry. To Philippi, belong the conversion of Lydia and the jailer and also a Pauline epistle. To Thessalonica belong two Pauline epistles. Berea is noted for a noble-minded search after truth. In Athens was pronounced one of Paul's most remarkable discourses. To Corinth were

addressed the two epistles which treat most of the resurrection and of ecclesiastical matters. In Ephesus, some of John's disciples were rebaptized and Paul's protracted disputation was held, and to Ephesus was addressed one of Paul's epistles. In Miletus, the Ephesian elders were apostolically addressed. Melita received Paul, after his shipwreck, and was the scene of many miracles. Rome was the scene of Paul's labours for two years and the destination of a noble epistle, logical, comprehensive, doctrinal, and practical. Colosse is known by the Pauline epistle to it. With Crete we associate Titus and the epistle to him. The apocalypse is connected with the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; and these are connected with Christianity and the church, always and everywhere, because they are typical churches, representative of the character and condition of the churches of Christ, in every age and place.

Every church finds its type and parallel in the apocalyptic seven. The number seven is biblically significant of completeness or perfection. It indicates and commemorates a complete period of original time, the period of divine creation and cessation, operation and repose; and corresponds with the week, which through all terrestrial time includes man's activity and rest, his secular and his spiritual service. It reminds us of the completion of God's work and the consequent sabbath, of redemption and its commemorative weekly seventh. It denotes, too, completeness of purification: "as silver purified seven times." The churches of proconsular Asia are symbolical in their number and character, or, more briefly, they are *a complete ecclesiographic symbol*. To limit the apocalyptic epistles to the Asiatic churches, literally, is not accordant with the symbolical style and comprehensive range of the whole apocalypse. It does not agree with

the general dedication to "the servants of Jesus Christ." It does not harmonize with the apocalyptic close: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." "These things" are the preceding things, throughout the whole book; and were "these things" for the Asiatic churches only? No: "they were written for our learning," and therefore preserved and included in the canon and entitled a revelation to the servants of Jesus Christ, as well as concluded with an unrestricted invitation to the listening and the thirsty.

If the Asiatic churches be not ecclesiastically representative, why was such a comprehensive book of prophecy addressed to churches, most of which have long since perished, and to whom the apocalyptic fulfilment could be but little known? The Turk or the Arab pitches his tent among the ruins of some of those once-flourishing cities; and there are now no churches there, with their angels or messengers, to be taught and edified by the apocalyptic visions and epistles. But elsewhere and always, Christ has churches that answer, in their condition, to the Asiatic ones, and that require the lessons and warnings of the final revelation. Three of the Asiatic churches were DEGENERATE; Ephesus *initially*, Laodicea *medially*, Sardis *decidedly*.¹ Two of them were FAITHFUL; Smyrna as *suffering*, Philadelphia as *juvenile*. And two were of a MIXED character; Pergamos *stedfast but undisciplined*, Thyatira *improving but lenient towards evil*. We find not the local name of our own particular church in the Bible, but we find its character and condition there, in the biblical typical local churches. The Asiatic localities are world-wide

¹ In other words, Ephesus was *declining*, Laodicea *apathetic*, and Sardis *dead*. The first was *beginning to cool*, the second was *lukewarm*, the third was *cold*. The first two were *falling*, the third was *fallen*.

and world-during, because they represent all ecclesiastical localities. Thus has the wisdom of God provided, in the biblical ecclesiastical records, for the instruction and edification of every church "always, even to the end of the world."

The church that was born in Jerusalem was matured in Patmos. The ecclesiastical blade sprung up on the shores of the Mediterranean; and the full corn in the ear appeared in the Ægean islet. Peter opened "the house of the living God" to Jews and Gentiles; Paul replenished it; and John finished it. The church's light broke forth on the Pentecostal sabbath, and culminated on the Apocalyptic. Peter and his co-apostles were filled with the Spirit, when the church was created; John was in the Spirit, when the church was consummated. One wisdom, one power, and one goodness formed and furnished the church, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. "Her foundation is in the holy hills." "They shall prosper that love thee." "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

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PART III.

The Relations of the Church.

RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

NOTHING in the universe is isolated. God is related to all, as Creator and Lord ; and, correlatively, all are related to him, as his creatures and subjects. The secular subserves the spiritual, and the spiritual serves God. Agency and instrumentality, means and ends, minute and vast, distant and contiguous, are connected and correlated. Each individual is related to all circumjacent being ; the present is related to the past and the future ; and all created things are related among themselves, because they spring from one origin, and co-operate for one end.

The study of ecclesiastical relations is antecedent and preparatory to the study of ecclesiastical operations. If the church be not solitary but complicate, it should operate in harmony with every other Divine institute and instrument ; and, to appreciate its harmonious operations, we must appreciate its relations. It exists and operates circumspectively, or in relation to co-existent and circumjacent agencies and means ; retrospectively, or in relation to the past ; and prospectively, or in priority to future means and mutations.

CHAPTER I.

CIRCUMSPECTIVE RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

MEDIATORIAL government is comprehensively adapted to man's nature and relations ; and, consequently, consists of two great departments, the secular and the spiritual, securing to both soul and body sustentation and supply. We have wants and interests to be provided for, belonging to the body ; and, accordingly, we are physical or secular beings. We sustain relations to the rights and happiness of others, with consequent duties and privileges ; and, accordingly, we are moral and spiritual beings. Spiritual theocracy, or Grace, is the great theme of the Bible, and its great result is godliness. Secular theocracy is usually denominated Providence, and its great result is civilization. Physical science, secular society, and secular art are all subordinate to the means and methods of redeeming grace. The church is a spiritual institute, included in the spiritual department of Christ's comprehensive sovereignty. Its circumscriptive relations are to the whole system of Divine government, both to the spiritual department with which it is interwoven, and to the secular which it transcends. Hence, it stands in collateral or interior relations to the various elements of Christianity, and in declinate or exterior relations to civilization. To everything in Christianity besides itself, it is related collaterally, like one part of a printer's machinery to every other

part ; to everything beside—that is, below—Christianity, it is superiorly or declinately related, like the mechanism of a printing-office to the subservient mechanism of the type-founder and the paper-maker. Towards every element of Grace besides itself, the church is related internally ; towards every element of Providence, it is related externally ; as the hull of a ship is related mechanismally to the masts, yards, and serouds with which it is conjoined as a part, and exteriorly related to the dockyard, machinery, operatives, and artisans ashore, who, as the instruments of the owner and master, have contributed to freight and furnish the vessel for her voyage ; and yet both these species of relations are circumspective, because they are relations to what surrounds or co-exists.

SECTION I. — *Collateral circumspectiveness of the Church ; or, Internal ecclesiastical relations.*

Christ, as the world's redeeming Sovereign, employs appropriate means of surmounting and subduing the practical obstacles to the spiritual recovery and happiness of mankind. He legalized salvation by his priesthood, and he realizes it by his princedom. His rectoral resources consist of agency and instrumentality, or of dynamical and mechanical means ; and by these men are awakened, reclaimed, and fitted for heaven. The dynamical means of Christ's kingdom consist of the agency of his Holy Spirit that saves, and the agency of man, in repentance and faith, that accepts salvation. This twofold agency is the power of Christ's kingdom ; but chiefly the first, which constitutes Christ " mighty to save," and illustrates his title as " the mighty God." The instrumentality or mechanism of Christ's government, which the agency wields and employs, or by which

the power is developed and applied, is fourfold—operative, vehicular, elicitive, and counteractive; and these are most felicitously and benevolently adapted to man's condition and interests.

The *operative* instrument, by which the agency achieves salvation, is biblical or revealed truth, the truth of Christ, as embodied in the Scriptures. This is the hammer which Christ grasps and wields to break the moral rock; the sword with which he pierces, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;" the light with which he irradiates and directs benighted and wandering men. And because this truth is not directly communicated from God to every man, but recorded in a book, and because this book is not miraculously conveyed, but circulated like other literary compositions, some vehicle is necessary to preserve and propagate it. There are secular vehicles or conveyances for this book, as for any other, in the various means of transcription or multiplication, and of transmission by land and sea, which men usually employ; but these will not be used to circulate such a book as the bible, and to communicate its contents to every creature, without men able to appreciate and apt to promote it, from adequate motives. Such men as these are the disciples of Christ, called christians; and they are associated, as churches, for the very end and business of communicating the truth. The church is the spiritual *vehicle* of the truth, to guard it as a precious deposit, and to transmit it as a divine message and means. The *elicitive* instrumentality of Christ's kingdom is intercessory faith and prayer, by which christians, for each other and for the world, elicit the power of the Holy Ghost to effectuate the truth; just as the lightning rod aspires to the heavens, and elicits and draws down their electric agency to the earth. The *counteractive* instrumentality of Christ

is secular or physical evil, pain in all its forms and gradations, such as death, and his shadow, sickness; for by these, men's evil tendencies and tempers are counteracted and, consequently, the reception of saving truth is greatly promoted.

The scope and limits of the present inquiry preclude an elaborate and argumentative vindication of these distinctions. Their justness, however, is obvious; and so is their value in elucidating the aspects and relations of the church. The church is neither everything nor the chief thing, yet not the least, in the great system of agency and instrumentality by which Christ subdues and sanctifies the soul. It is subordinate to the Spirit's power that achieves and to the sinner's power that accepts salvation. It is subordinate to the truth, the great operative instrument, which the Spirit employs and which the sinner receives for the saving of the soul. But it is subordinate to nothing else. Next these it ranks, performing a most important part in the government of Christ. The church is inferior to the truth, just as a vehicle is inferior to what it contains and conveys; while with counteractive means and methods it is simply concurrent.

It is the office and duty of the church, as CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL VEHICLE, to preserve the truth uncorrupted, and to communicate it to all men. Accordingly, it is "put in trust with the gospel." As the conservator of the truth, the church is most solemnly warned by her Head, in the moment of perfecting his deposited word, against either addition or diminution.¹ As the conveyer of the truth, the church should both minister and exemplify it. Christ, accordingly, charges his church to "preach the gospel;" and describes his disciples as "the

¹ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

light of the world," enlightening men and glorifying God by means of their good works.¹ Biblical truth is the seed of Christ's kingdom, which produces the fruits of righteousness, and the sword of Christ, which is "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." This only is what the church has to convey, and is called *εὐαγγέλιον* (*evangelion*), the good message. This is the only offensive or aggressive weapon of the church, and is called "the sword of the Spirit." Of this truth the church is the depôt and messenger—the great vehicle for retention and circulation—the candlestick or light-holder, containing the candle or lamp of truth, that is to shine on all surrounding human darkness. Christ's ministers and the church's agents are stars, formed by the flames of the golden candlesticks, the churches, which are constructed and furnished by Him who is at once the light and the life of men. He created and continues them to shine in his reflecting radiance. They are candlesticks in the house or temple of his kingdom, to give light unto all that are in the house and to be the light of the world. The spiritual servants of God, in every age, and the servants of the church particularly, are called MESSENGERS (apostles, angels, evangelists, preachers), because it is their office and business to communicate the message or truth of God. Christ himself is called the apostle, that is, messenger, of our profession, the angel or messenger of the Lord of hosts and of his covenant.² The Jewish priest was God's messenger: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."³ John the Baptist was the messenger of Christ: "this is he of whom it is written,

¹ Matt. v. 14—16; Mark xvi. 15. ² Heb. iii. 1; Mal. iii. 1.

³ Mal. ii. 7.

Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."¹ The apostles, as their very name imports, were messengers. Epaphroditus is called the messenger of the Philippians.² Titus and others are called "the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ."³ The agency and operation of the seven typical churches are symbolically called stars and angels or messengers; and some other angels, in the apocalyptic scenes, are fellow-servants of John and of his brethren the prophets. The church, as the great vehicle of the truth, is apocalyptically symbolized as an angel flying through the midst of heaven, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."⁴ What the church is entrusted with is a message; and what the church is to do is faithfully to carry that message, uncorrupted, universally, and without delay. The command—"Go ye into all the world and *preach* the gospel to every creature,"—and the subjoined promise—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—were given to the eleven, as to the germ and nucleus of that church which was to survive their own decease and expand into a world-wide and world-lasting illuminator. The truth, by which souls are to be saved, can be communicated to men, only as written, spoken, symbolized and exemplified. As written, it must be transcribed, translated, circulated and read. As spoken, it requires messengers, hearers, delivery and audience. As symbolized, it requires a significant ordinance, as the eucharist. As exemplified, it requires christians and churches, who walk even as Christ walked. The church is the vehicle of Christ, for communicating his truth to the members within and to the world without.

¹ Matt. xi. 10. ² Phil. ii. 25. ³ 2 Cor. viii. 23. ⁴ Rev. xiv. 6.

All its elements, officers, ordinances and operations are intended for the conveyance and efficiency of the truth. Christ himself came among men, teaching and preaching, symbolizing and practising. "He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."¹ "Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."² His harbinger, John, "came preaching"³ and symbolically instructing by baptism. He himself symbolized by the eucharistic rite; ordained twelve that he might send them forth to preach; and commanded the seventy to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God.⁴ Paul tells us that God revealed his Son in him for this purpose, "that I might preach him among the heathen," and that Christ sent him "not to baptize but to preach the gospel."⁵ He also tells Timothy that the persons to be accounted worthy of the chief honour in the church are those especially "who labour in the word and doctrine."⁶ Christ's great commission and command to his church is to preach his gospel to every creature, to incorporate with his church by baptism, and to teach the disciples all things whatsoever, which he himself had commanded.⁷ The chief officers of the church, therefore, should not leave the word of God to serve tables, but should be at once "pastors and teachers" and "apt to teach."

The church is intended and required, by its Creator and Lord, to be a spontaneous vehicle of the truth, not a mere responsive one; or, in other words, to originate the communication of the truth to all that are without. In the salvation of the world, the principle of supply and demand, that regulates trade and commerce, is not sufficient or suitable, because there is no demand, no desire,

¹ Isa. lxi. 1. ² Matt. iv. 17. ³ Matt. iii. 1. ⁴ Mark iii. 14; Luke x. 8, 9.
⁵ Gal. i. 15; 1 Cor. i. 17. ⁶ 1 Tim. v. 17. ⁷ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

for truth and salvation, till it is created by the faithful diffusion of the truth. The canon of communication is to GO to every creature with a preached gospel, not wait for invitation or simply supply the applicants. The church that has the truth, that values the truth, and that loves the souls that are perishing from lack of the truth, is to go with the truth and give it gratuitously, till every creature is supplied: "Freely ye have received; freely give." The church must awake a sleeping world and not wait for the world to awake; she must apprise the world of both its danger and its refuge, its disease and its remedy, and not wait for the world, asleep in the dark, to perform the impossibility of discovering its condition and redemption. The church is fitted for spontaneous supply, because it has life in itself and the world's provision in itself, and acts under the constant care of its divine and gracious Head.

The church is the ELICITIVE as well as vehicular instrument of Christ. To the operative means of salvation (the truth), the church is a vehicle; to the efficient means of salvation (the Spirit's power), the church is an eliciter or attractor. As a vehicle, the church conveys the truth to men; as an eliciter, the church, by intercessory faith and prayer, obtains the development of the power which alone effectuates the truth and renders the gospel the power of God unto salvation. The church is like the railway, whose train conveys what is requisite for distant places, and whose conductor elicits the motive power that propels the train to its destined place; or, like the electric telegraph, that consists at once of the machinery of indication and the power of motion, of wires and indices and of the electricity that stirs them. Without indicative machinery, the electric battery could produce no significant change; and without the battery and the due elicitation of its

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force, the machinery would make no sign and convey no message. But it must always be remembered that, in the economy of grace and salvation, the divine agency or power is primarily and properly spontaneous, and only secondarily and condescendingly elicitable. God works to save where no intercessory faith and prayer obtain; and he, also, works to save, when his church, like the lightning-rod, lifts herself towards heaven, on behalf of others, for the power that is necessary to give action to the sword of the Spirit and productiveness to the seed of the kingdom. "Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase;" and he gives increase both spontaneously and responsively. The bible is replete with the doctrine of elicitation. Samuel prayed for Hannah; and to the people he said—"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."¹ God said to the three friends of Job—"My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept."² "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."³ "Now I pray to God that ye do no evil."⁴ "Brethren, pray for us."⁵ "Let them pray over him:" "Pray one for another:" "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."⁶ "I exhort that prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men."⁷ "This shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer and the [elicited] supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."⁸ Hence it is certain that intercessory prayer is a christian duty and an important means of usefulness. We know not to what extent intercession will prevail, in any supposed or real instance, and it is best we do not know; but we know that we ought to pray for others, and that it is part of the great office and service of the church to elicit the power of

¹ 1 Sam. xii. 23. ² Job xlii. 8. ³ Matt. v. 44. ⁴ 2 Cor. xiii. 7.

⁵ 1 Thess. v. 25. ⁶ James v. 14, 16. ⁷ Tim. ii. 1. ⁸ Philipp. i. 19.

God, for the salvation of those to whom it communicates the message of mercy.

Everything pertaining to the church is divinely designed and should be humanly appreciated and employed, as subservient to the great ends of faithfully conveying the truth and adequately eliciting the glorious power. The Sabbath is the church's special *time* to achieve these ends, for it is a holy convocation to its members, and a periodical summons and invitation to strangers. Pastors and teachers are *ecclesiastical vehicles* of the truth, which they utter in sermons and exhortations, in reading and expounding the word of God. Songs of praise and words of prayer are *literary forms* of truth. Baptism and the eucharist *symbolize* the truth. The holiness of true Christians, in their various relations and in their ecclesiastical capacity, *practically illustrates* the truth. The fervent prayer of the church, aggregately and representatively, *elicits* the agency of the Lord, the Spirit, without which the might of human learning, reason and eloquence would accomplish nothing. If men cannot read the truth, they can hear it; if they are too careless to read a book, they may be induced to repair to the attractions of a large assemblage and of the preacher's living voice; and if they are too careless to go to the christian teacher, he is to go to them, if possible, until the truth of God is, everywhere and to all, made accessible and influential. Truth is the cargo, by which all lands are to be fed and nourished; the church is the gallant ship, in which it is deposited for universal distribution; and the power of Christ, by his Spirit, is the breath of heaven that propels that vessel, in her benevolent circumnavigation of the globe. The cargo without the vessel cannot be conveyed; the vessel without the cargo is useless; and the vessel with the cargo may lift her masts to the clouds and cover herself with

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canvass, without the slightest motion, until the breath of heaven catch and swell her sails and urge her on her course. No foreign freight or contraband goods should be received on board; the precious time should not be lazily spent in port; on no protective principles and with no monopolizing or partial spirit, should the voyage of cosmical¹ instruction and supply be conducted; but with fervent prayer for favouring breezes and clothed with ample canvass, should this noble barque of truth and grace go forth upon the ocean of humanity, till the life-giving and exhaustless cargo is imparted to every port and region under heaven. Truth and the church are the chief instrumental means of man's salvation, the former operative, the latter vehicular; the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the power of Christ, the power of God, is the great dynamical means. Truth is the weapon that subdues, the church is the hand that carries it, the power of God is the energy that vivifies that hand and sends the weapon home. Truth is the seed, the church is the sower, and the gracious influence of the Spirit is the genial sunshine and shower that induce vegetation, growth and fruit. Truth is the water of life, and the church is the conduit through which it flows to irrigate, fertilize and satisfy. Each member of the church should aid in communicating the truth to all within and to all without, and should himself receive the communicated truth. Thus to every member of the church, if he be not faulty and unfaithful, belong the blessedness of giving and the blessedness of receiving, the honour of conveying the effective instrument of salvation and of eliciting the efficient agency, and the benefit of reciprocal service from his brethren. The sole business of the church is to communicate, internally and externally, with intercessory

¹ Relating to all the world.

faith and prayer, the truth as it is in Jesus. Praise and prayer, reading, expounding and preaching, baptism and the eucharist, polity and pastorate, are not valuable in themselves, but as accomplishing or subserving the diffusion of divine truth and the elicitation of divine power. The church is faithful and useful as far as she thus communicates the pure and perfect truth to her members and to strangers, and no farther. Failing in this, she fails utterly, and betrays her momentous trust.

The church, then, is related to every other element and provision of Christ's kingdom. To Christ himself it is related, as an instrument or social spiritual servant, which he creatively originated and rectorally wields. To his power it is related, as an eliciter; to his truth, as a vehicle; and to his counteractive instrumentality, which is physical evil, it is related simply as concurrent. To humanity, individually, it is thus related, as a means of spiritual welfare, concurring and co-operating with individual freedom and activity. All society is explicable and intelligible only as a means of individual happiness, not as originated and maintained for its own sake; and the church can be no exception to this theory. Every form of divinely-instituted society is valuable and rational, only in its relations to the supreme Individual that controls it and to the subordinate individuals that are served by it. It is a great and grievous error to think that our proper functions can be fully performed, merely in and with the church. Personality cannot be thus absorbed and lost. "Every man must give account of himself to God." Our usefulness and happiness are personal; no ordinance or association whatever can exempt us from our individual liabilities; and the church proves appropriate and useful to us, only so far as it makes us individually wiser, holier and happier. Religion in the church is not an end but a means, a means of

promoting personal conformity and devotedness to Christ; and it behoves us to look and act accordingly.

This theory of internal ecclesiastical relations is particular as well as general; it is the theory of each church as well as of all churches. The church consists of local associations, in successive ages and in various lands, and is, therefore, incapable of aggregate action. The office of the whole church is really and truly the office of each local part. As we may not shift upon society our individual obligations and responsibilities, so no local church can devolve upon the church generally its duties of truth-communication and power-elicitation. Each church and each member of a church should appreciate and practise this godlike and glorious task.

SECTION II.—*Declinate circumspectiveness of the Church; or, External ecclesiastical relations.*

The only relations which the church can sustain, besides those already considered, are relations to what is without and beneath, that is, to the purely secular or the mixed; and the only forms of those that need to be examined, in their relations to the church, are social forms. We have seen how the church is connected with the co-existent elements of the spiritual system to which it belongs; we must now ascertain its connection with other forms of human society.

This inquiry leads us into a wide field, and comprehends the relations of the spiritual to the secular, of the church to the family and the nation, of the departments of divine government, called Grace and Providence, to each other. It involves the broadest views of humanity, the science of society at large, the wide domain of God's terrestrial moral government, and demands the most patient and dispassionate research. The question is not

what is, but what ought to be; not what we have been taught, but what is truth; not whither our predilections and interests may lead us, but to what result the most searching scrutiny and the most ardent love of verity will conduct us. The present investigation is too much beset with prejudice, partizanship and private interests, to admit of thoroughness and success, unless we are prepared to buy the truth at any price and hold it unsold at any risk. The timidity that cannot part with leading-strings and that cannot pass the barriers of progenitors and parties, will either never enter here or will quickly return to its olden counsels and its golden conclusions. But he who loves truth for her own sake, who distinguishes her voice and steps continually, and who gazes upon her celestial symmetry and loveliness with inextinguishable ardour, will heed no toil and dread no danger in pushing his way to the proper goal.

The office and use of the secular is to supply and to signify; and the office and use of society is to subserve individuality. These great principles should be intelligently seized and constantly remembered. Physical existence supplies man's corporeal wants and signifies man's mental operations and changes. As suppletory of the body, it affords residence, food, raiment, medicine, vehicular means and materials, weapons, means of regalement, and mediums of exchange. As significant of mental operations and changes, it both indicates and suggests; as oral sounds, it indicates to the ear; as manual-marks, it indicates to the eye, or, in the case of the blind, to the touch. Society is requisite and beneficial for both secular and spiritual interests and operations. In infancy and childhood, our secular supplies are derived from the society that brings us into the world; and our preparation for manhood, by suitable education, is dependent upon the same society. In manhood, we find

ourselves incorporated with civil society, or vested with rights and obligations as members of some confederation, called territorial or political. Upon this society, as well as upon personal capabilities, possessions and exertions, the secular interests of manhood depend. And when we voluntarily enter the church, or voluntarily prolong our connection with it, we are vested with ecclesiastical, that is, social and spiritual, rights and obligations. To appreciate and to maintain aright this twofold position of manhood, it is necessary that we should study and understand the relations of the church to the family and the state. These relations are declinate, because the spiritual is superior to the secular, and the church is in the higher or spiritual department of divine government ; they are external relations, because the family and the state are outside of that spiritual department of theocracy to which the church belongs.

The question proposed is simply the relations of the church to other forms of divinely-instituted extant society. What man has made he may continue or change, accept or reject ; but what God has been pleased permanently to create or ordain, it behoves us reverently to understand and regard. We know of only three forms of extant divine society, the Family, the Nation, and the Church. The divine origin of the last has already been proved ; and the divine origin of the other two may be inferred from their combined utility, universality and continuity, and is also clearly indicated in the Sacred Writings. The family is as old as Paradise : " And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an helpmeet for him." " Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh." ¹

¹ Gen. ii. 18, 24.

"God setteth the solitary in families"¹ Civil government, too, is of divine appointment: "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God:" "He is the minister of God to thee for good:" "They are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."²

THE CORRELATIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE, or of ecclesiastical and national society, may be considered sociologically, Christologically, and choriologically or politically. The church is related to the nation, as a member of general human society, that is, sociologically; it is related as a servant of Christ, that is, Christologically; and it is related to the nation as to a form of society that has its distinctive principles and purposes, rights and duties, which must be respected alike by churches, families and individuals, and hence the choriological or political aspect of the relations of church and state. The first question is—What correlation of church and state harmonizes with the great framework of society at large, or with the science called Sociology? The second is—What correlation of church and state harmonizes with the system or science of Christianity, to which the church belongs? And the third question is—What correlation of church and state harmonizes with the science called Choriology or politics, in which the state or civil government is included? Thus the question before us has a social, a religious, and a political aspect and standard, and must be considered accordingly.

Society at large is a vast and varied mechanism, divinely originated and employed, consisting chiefly of the family, the nation and the church. The science that attempts to appreciate this mechanism, and to account

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 6.

² Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4, 6.

for it, systematically, is called Sociology. This trinary social constellation is worthy of its author and adapted to its end; and must, therefore, be harmonious and intelligible. Each member of it must have its distinct orbit and office; and the whole must include whatever is really requisite, as a social instrument, for the happiness of man. To comprehend this complex social machinery is really to determine the correlations of its several simple machines.

The object or end of the oldest society, the FAMILY, is the continuance of the human race, or the introduction of the human being into terrestrial life; the preservation of that life in immaturity; the preparation of immaturity for maturity; and the happiness of the parents themselves. This society, in its best and proper style, is caused by sexual love, and consists of husband and wife, parents and children, and of such others as the husband and wife may choose to accept as companions or to employ as servants. It is also caused by the circumstances and necessities of men, which oblige them to construct and occupy houses; and hence the name, household or domestic society. As thus caused, and in its secondary style, domestic society may consist of any two or more persons, whom economy or friendship may induce to live together. According to the operation of this species of society, according as it is well or ill conducted, arise the varieties of domestic happiness or misery, unity or discord, prosperity or decline.

NATIONAL OR CIVIL SOCIETY is caused by the love of country and by the circumstances and necessities of mankind; among whom secular wants abound, requiring co-operation; and among whom wrongs obtain, occasioning curatorship, or preventive and remedial measures. It consists of the owners and occupants of a territory, which is naturally or artificially bounded and defined. Only in a

very lax and inferior sense can it be said that the members of a nation dwell together; but they co-operate either personally or by proxy, the government consisting of the appointed or accepted representatives and caretakers of the whole territory and confederacy. According to the varieties of government, as respects both the governing machinery and its action, are the varieties of national society. Hence we speak of monarchical, aristocratical and democratical countries; of nations enslaved and free, prosperous, declining, and stagnant. Of the ends of national society, and of its organ and operation, which are civil government—themes so momentous and so much controverted—we postpone the consideration till spiritual society has been described.

ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY is caused by Christian love, filial and fraternal, and by the circumstances and necessities of Christians. The necessities spring out of man's moral alienation; the circumstances arise from God's redemptive interposition, in its final development. The society itself consists of professed believers, called "the household of faith," locally convocating, co-operating and caretaking, in conformity to the New Testament. Its objects or ends are purely spiritual; and its proper office and operation are the communication of divine truth and the intermediary elicitation of divine power. Its strict and simple spirituality has been already proved. Secularities are sought and employed by scriptural churches, only in subserviency to spiritual ends and in conformity to spiritual rules; and thus related, they cannot cease to be subordinately necessary till man ceases to be a compound of the physical and the spiritual, and a probationary occupant of such a region as the globe.

Waiving all minor aspects and distinctions, we are now prepared to discriminate and characterize these three great forms of human society. The end and office

of the family are TO PERPETUATE HUMANITY AND PREPARE IT FOR MATURITY. The end and office of the nation are TO PROMOTE MATURE MAN'S SECULAR WELFARE. The end and office of the church are TO PROMOTE MATURE MAN'S SPIRITUAL WELFARE. Domestic society is for IMMATURITY; civil and ecclesiastical society are for MATURITY, the former for maturity in its *secular* interests, the latter for maturity in its *spiritual* interests. Thus considered, how beautifully do they dovetail and interlink, conjoin and correlate; how complete the social mechanism which they constitute; how admirably are they adapted to man; and how impressively they illustrate the wisdom, power and goodness of God! The family is man's birth-place and school; the nation is man's secular, the church is man's spiritual, arena and field; the whole constitute man's great probationary social sphere, in which he is to give and receive, to prove and be proved, to prepare himself and to aid in preparing others for retributory reckoning and results, to the glory of God for ever. The family and the church are local household societies; the nation is a territorial society. Domestic society is formed by marriage and its resultant births; civil society is formed by birth and naturalization, or by birth and adoption; ecclesiastical society is formed by belief and baptism. The family is preparatory; the nation and the church are consummatory.

To appreciate this mechanism of divinely-instituted society is not merely to suppose or believe but to *see* that the end or object of civil society is simply secular. To think otherwise is to imply that God's construction of society is confused and imperfect; that the functions of his several social instruments are chaotically blended or unhappily undistinguished; and that society is framed for collision and controversy. "As for God his way is

perfect." But there can be no perfection without distinctness of function; and there can be no distinctness of function without distinctness of design. Besides, the same revelation that determines the simple spirituality of the church, determines also the simple secularity of the state. The sword of the Spirit is committed to the church, the sword of steel to Cæsar. Carnal weapons belong to the latter, spiritual to the former. The kingdom of Christ, for which his personal ministry was a preparation, is not of this world, not secular in its origin, object and operations, as all other kingdoms are. It is the business of civil or national judges to divide secular inheritances; to be a terror to men, not as believers or unbelievers, but as evil-doers under national law; and to be a praise, not to the baptized or unbaptized, but to them that do well, according to law. Acts, not religious attributes, are to be cognosed by the magistrate; and carnal weapons, physical force, not spiritualities, are the means of his conquest and control. Everything is God's, the secular and the spiritual, the earth and its fulness, and all its souls; and, therefore, when Christ distinguishes between what is Cæsar's and what is God's, we must understand him not as denying anything to God, but as distinguishing between his spiritual and ecclesiastical domain, on the one hand, and, on the other, his secular control, by means of secular or civil society.

How obvious, then, is the relation of the church to the state or nation, as that of perfect distinctness and independence! We ought not to identify, or intermix, or interlink what God has so clearly and fully distinguished. We ought not to combine the great instrumentalities which God himself creates and wields as separate, and whose combination he has not authorized. We ought not to unite societies so diverse, and, therefore, so unsusceptible of union, as church and nation; or

agencies so diverse as clergy and magistracy. The church is local, the nation is territorial. The former is spiritual, in its end, office, means, and operations; the latter, in these respects, is secular. The first is voluntary, the second compulsory; the one is for salvation, the other for civilization. The church is replenished by truth and faith; the nation is replenished by birth and force. The nation belongs only to the life that now is, and to the relations of man with man; the church belongs pre-eminently to the life to come, and to the relations of man with God. The church is ruled and regulated by revelation; the nation is ruled either rightly by the consent and the created laws of its owners and occupants, or wrongly by the dictates and decrees of its usurping and domineering masters. The nation, the church and the family, which God has created separate, ought to be kept separate. The family ushers man into the world, and provides for him in his immaturity, and prepares him for manhood; and having accomplished its important initiatory and preparatory task, it transfers him to the nation for the social secularities of maturity, and to the church for the social spiritualities of maturity. Man, in his nonage or unripeness, is incapable of discriminating and separately regarding the moral and the material, and is, therefore, placed in the family, which combines the two; but in the maturity of his powers it is quite otherwise; and to attempt, then, to blend or bind, by artificial ligaments, the things that so greatly differ, is to induce confusion, frustration and mischief. The church is above, the state below; and it is impossible to unite them without displacement and disorder, without degrading the church or forcing up the state, or doing both at once. The church is spiritual, the state is secular; and it is impossible to unite them without vitiation, without secularizing

the church or spiritualizing the state, or both together, and, in either case, damaging and disordering both. We enter the church by one door, we enter the nation by another; we have one work as churchmen, we have another as patriots; and to attempt an organic or artificial connection of our corresponding associations and relations, is to induce sociological derangement, discord and deterioration. It is only from formal union that competition and collision, between church and state, can arise. Church, nation and family, working separately, work harmoniously and efficiently. The church and the nation should pursue their respective courses, and perform their proper functions, apart. To attempt to unite them is to retard and burden each. How mischievous and absurd to conjoin the mechanism of a steam-engine and a chronometer, the mechanism of propulsion and the mechanism of chironal-indication! Such different kinds of mechanism cannot work in formal union, without the aid of guards, breaks, checks, and counter-balances; these clumsy contrivances cannot be applied without loss of time, trouble and material, without the most serious imperfection, difficulty and danger; and all these may be advantageously dispensed with, by returning to the simplicity and perfection of the divine arrangement. We foolishly and impiously seek to mend God's work, and we mar it; and, then, instead of relinquishing our folly, we institute a second absurdity to counteract the first, we complicate our clumsiness to correct its confusion! "The separation of the spiritual from the temporal power is the source of liberty of conscience; and it rests upon no other principle than that which serves as the base of the most unrestricted and extended liberty of conscience. The separation between the temporal and spiritual powers is founded upon the principle that physical force has no right or influence

over the minds of men, or over conviction and truth. It results from the distinction established between the world of thought and that of action, between circumstances of an internal and those of an external nature. This maxim of liberty of conscience, for which Europe has struggled and suffered so much, and which has prevailed only so lately, often against the exertions of the clergy, was laid down under the name of a separation between temporal and spiritual power, in the earliest stages of European civilization ; and its introduction and maintenance was owing to the christian church being compelled, by the necessity of its situation, to defend itself against the barbarism of the times."¹ Thus the separation of the spiritual and temporal, and the freedom of the former, may be not only found in science, the science of sociology, as a most important principle, but also traced in history, as a most prominent and influential fact. Its introduction, however, is much higher and nobler than "the necessity of ecclesiastical situation ;" for it springs from the nature of things, the divine constitution of society, and the principles of both christian and civil science.

2. The relation of the church to the state is a *religious or biblical* question, because the church is a religious society, and is ruled and regulated by the bible, as the revelation and law of the church's Head. It is too obvious to admit of dispute, or to require proof, that the church should sustain no relation, should accept or suffer no relation, but what is perfectly accordant with the spiritual system to which she belongs, and with the spiritual standard by which she is to be judged.

No formal relation whatever should be instituted between the church and the state, because Christ has

¹ Guizot's "History of Civilization in Europe." Lecture II.

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ordered and warranted none, and because Christianity has come perfect out of his hands, so that his institutes are not to be moulded and tampered with by man. Christ has created his church independent of the nation, separate from the state, and as such it should be most sacredly observed and maintained. The union of church and state is religiously wrong because it is *unauthorized*; and it is the utmost presumption and impiety to attempt to improve God's work. If Christ had designed his church to be allied to the state, he would doubtless have authorized and instructed his servants accordingly; and, in the absence of any such authority, to unite the church to the mechanism of the nation is practically to add to his word and presumptuously to alter his work. If the mere circumstances of primitive Christianity, the mere want of sufficient gospel prevalence and of magisterial and imperial conversion, prevented the union of church and state, we should, at least, expect to find a provision, a prospective legislation, for such a union in the New Testament; but nothing of the kind really exists.

But the union of church and state is *condemned* by Christ, as well as unauthorized, because it contravenes and violates the spirit and principles of Christianity. It transforms a voluntary institute into a compulsory one, and transposes a superior institute into a subordinate one. If the union of church and state means anything, it means, at least, the endowment of the former by the latter, the derivation of ecclesiastical secularities from civil sources. We have seen that the secular is both suppletory and significant, and as such it is both requisite and subservient in the church. The church needs houses for its convocations, and supplies or salaries for its officers, who are fully and exclusively devoted to its service; and it needs secular things as significant of

spiritual, for it needs water, bread and wine for its symbolical ordinances, writing materials to record its transactions, and also books and vehicular means for the circulation of its inspired standards. Whence, then, is the church to derive its secular supplies? It must be either from within or from without, from the voluntary contributions of its members or from the compulsory levies of the state. The Head of the church has made proper provision, because he has made it the duty of church-members to supply church-funds, he has charged ecclesiastical secularities on ecclesiastical and voluntary contributions, not on national and compulsory collections. "The Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."¹ "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things"² "The labourer is worthy of his reward."³ "The workman is worthy of his meat."⁴ "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things."⁵ Nothing can be more natural and equitable than this arrangement. It is meat for the workman, wages for the labourer, from those whom he serves; it is a fair exchange of spiritual things for secular; it is support from the church to the servants of the church. Why should one society support the agents of another society? Why should the servants of a spiritual copartnership be sustained by the funds of a secular copartnership? How can they be so sustained with any fairness or propriety? And how can an institute that is essentially and distinctively voluntary be sustained and endowed by an institute that is essentially and distinctively compulsory, without surrendering the voluntarism of the former institute and merging the

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 14. ² Gal. vi. 6. ³ 1 Tim. v. 18. ⁴ Matt. x. 10.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 11.

spiritual in the secular? National funds are obtained by force, by carnal weapons, by seizure and sale, by fines and imprisonments; but Christianity repudiates all this, in the church, as utterly foreign to its nature, as utterly discordant with its purposes and principles. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight: but now is my kingdom not from hence." The church is not at liberty to resort to fighting and force, or to accept of carnal weapons; yet this she must do, if she leagues herself with the state. In doing this, she descends from the altitude of spiritualism and voluntaryism into the low ground of carnalism and compulsion; she repudiates the provision which her Head has made for her, and prefers the provision of an inferior and foreign association; she sacrifices her character, and adopts a self-debasing and suicidal policy. "Ye are complete in Christ," says Paul to the Colossians, not complete in civil patronage and pay, but "in him who is the head of all principality and power,"¹ and whose kingdom ought not to be subordinated to principalities and powers that are subservient to himself.

A state-paid church is a degraded church. The church's proper position is above the state, because the spiritual is above the secular, and because operation divinely revealed and ruled is above operation humanly contrived and controlled. But when the church surrenders and sacrifices her voluntaryism, her dependence for support first on her own members and ultimately on her heavenly head, she not merely degrades herself to the level of secularity but subordinates herself to the secular power. No nation, no civil government, either does or should endow an association without a return of

¹ Coloss. ii. 10.

subordination and service. The paymaster is clearly and confessedly above the paid agent. If the nation pays the church, it ought to cognosce and control the church, and it does. True patriotism and political consistency and fidelity forbid any other course. A church paid by the state is really a department of the state, a servant of the state, a creature of the state; Cæsar and not Christ is her head; compulsion and not freedom is her stamp and mark; and "Ichabod," the glory is departed, glares on her front and forehead. The state will not endow the church for nothing, and ought not. If the church renounces her self-reliance and her divine sustenance, she deserves nothing better than to be Cæsar's tool, and nothing nobler and better can she attain. The church's choice lies altogether between subordination and separation. Ecclesiastical subjection is the price she must always pay for civil salary. In every alliance of church and state, there are and must be, expressed or understood, terms and conditions of endowment, a *quid pro quo*. The state will clothe and feed the clergy, if the clergy will help and serve the state, and not otherwise. The state will become ecclesiastical, if the church will become political. The state will accept the theology and polity of the church and replenish her treasury, if the church will become a buttress to the state and a barrier against disloyalty. "You serve me and I will sustain you"—is the language into which may be fairly and intelligibly translated every proposal and league of the state to the church.

Christ created his church to be dependent on himself only, and, in this dependence, to be self-sufficient. "Our sufficiency is of God." But to yoke the church to the state is to disavow all this, to despoil the church of her glory, to dishonour the church's head, and to make the church the servant or paid agent of man. In the

sovereignty of Christ, in the completeness and adaptation of Scripture, and in the affection and fidelity of her members, the church has everything requisite to her efficiency and prosperity; and when she descends from her high position to ask help of Cæsar, to bow at his levees, to accept his donatives, and to serve his interests, she becomes ineffably debased and most reprehensibly inconsistent. The payment of christian ministers from civil sources, instead of being decent and dignified, as is generally supposed, is most mean and debasing. It is unfair that the servant of one society should be paid by another. It is dishonourable to the minister of truth and love, of divine influence and voluntary operation, that his salary should be collected by physical force, by civil summons and execution, by bailiffs, distraint and imprisonment. How dare any church stoop to such dishonour and wrong? How dare any christian minister accept such foreign and forbidden support?

3. The union of church and state is also a *political* question, to be weighed in the balance of political science. Sociology, that comprehends all society, takes the broadest view; biblicism applies its own test and pronounces its own judgment; and political philosophy measures with its own rule, and reaches its own result. These three sources of evidence and standards of action cannot be discordant, for all truth is harmonious. Let us not put on the eye-glass of socialism for sociology, of sectarianism for scripture, of party prejudice for political science; and by every inspection we shall discern one conclusion, that church and state are separate societies.

Political science is the science of territorial justice. The basis and distinction of every kingdom, state or nation, is a territory, region or country, large or small; the members of political society are the owners and occupants of the territory; the object or end of the

society is secular welfare ; the means are secular co-operation and care, especially in the enactment and administration of just laws ; and the state or civil government is, formally or practically, the representative agency of the political society, to frame and enforce the laws of territorial justice. Now it is obvious that when the state allies itself to the church, it overpasses its proper bounds, or travels out of its record and province, and becomes guilty of gross impropriety and perversion. Men, as such, men in their individual capacity, and men in their religious or ecclesiastical relations, have an unquestionable right to judge for themselves in all spiritual matters. But men, in their political relations and in the discharge of their political duties, have no such right, and cannot intermeddle with religious matters without unwarrantable assumption and excess. When, therefore, civil rulers ally themselves to ecclesiastical agency, they must either endow all sorts of religious doctrine and polity, which is grossly unprincipled and latitudinarian, or they must sit in judgment on questions and claims of religion, and thus confound civil and religious offices, and pervert their political position and power to extraneous and unconstitutional purposes. In endowing all religious sects and systems, they pervert their office and authority, which are purely secular, and they practically disregard all distinctions of truth and error, right and wrong ; and in selecting any, they unwarrantably and unconstitutionally turn the seat of civil legislation and administration into the chair of biblical criticism and polemical theology. But such a selection is open to still higher and graver objections. It is a process of favouritism, of gross partiality and injustice, on the part of civil rulers, to select and endow and honour any portion of the people, as religionists, and thus throw all the rest into a position of oblivion, inferiority and dishonour. The relation and

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function of civil rulers are wholly secular, and comprehend all the owners and occupants of the territory, without exception or distinction; the great duty hence arising is justice, strict and stern justice; and this first, this last, this all-comprehending duty of civil rulers is utterly disregarded and trampled in the dust, when a part of the territorial occupants is selected, on religious grounds, to receive peculiar civil honour, salary and support, and the remaining part is rejected, dishonoured, and depressed.

If there be but one religious denomination in a country, the alliance of church and state is still a perversion and abuse of civil power. But when has such a case occurred? Not when the Romanists of England were disestablished and the Protestants endowed; not when multitudes of ministers were ejected and the rest maintained; not when nonconformity was harassed and persecuted and Anglo-episcopacy fostered; and not now, when national honours and emoluments are lavished upon one-half of the kingdom, and the other half is necessarily, in consequence, dishonoured and obstructed. Even if the alliance of church and state could *arise* unobjectionably, with only one denomination, it ought not to be *continued*, on the emergence and consolidation of other denominations. But the fact is that it ought never to begin, for it is necessarily unconstitutional and unwarrantable; and to continue it as a selection involves the additional abuses of favouritism and injustice. If a nation be not equitable and just, it has nothing that it ought to have; and it cannot be just with one religious denomination, out of many, preferred and endowed. If a nation overstep its proper boundary and intermeddle with other association and office, there is no assignable limit to its transgression and perversion; and such is its position and process when it estimates and endows, or endows without estimating, a religious system and society.

4. Weighed in every balance and tried by every test, the union of church and state is wrong. It is the derangement of divinely-instituted society, the prostitution of the church, and the perversion of the state. It is sociological folly, ecclesiastical dishonour, and political injustice. The church was originated independently of the state, and ought to remain so. The church is superior to the state, as spiritual is superior to secular, divine to human; and they cannot be united without displacing one of them or both, without unnaturally degrading the spiritual or improperly exalting the secular, or doing both at once. How can the freedom of religion be allied to the force of politics? How can the voluntariness of the church be conjoined to the compulsoriness of the state? How can moral society be interlinked with physical? How can the secular federation of a territory be leagued with the spiritual copartnerships of multitudinous localities? As well attempt to combine the machinery of a mill with the mechanism of a chronometer, the operation of a forcing-pump with that of a telegraph. The theory is folly; and the practice is mischief. The mill and the chronometer do not and cannot work well together. With interposed checks and breaks, some co-operation is obtained; but the mill goes heavily and grinds badly, the chronometer goes irregularly and never tells true time. The nation is the sphere of justice, founded on jural relations, or relations to men's rights; the church is the sphere of beneficence, founded on felicitarian relations, or relations to men's happiness; the former is for the present life and the things terrestrial, the latter is chiefly for the future life and the things celestial; the one operates by force, the other by faith embracing truth, and by love fulfilling law; and every attempted coalition of the two must be mischievous to each.

The friends of national churchism are ever ready to allege the paternal character of the state, its godlessness without ecclesiastical alliance, and the inadequacy of voluntary churchism. To some these allegations may seem plausible and forcible, but before the light of reason and religion, they vanish like mists before the noon-day sun.

The personality and paternity of civil government are rather figures of speech than facts. A nation is not, in any sense, a person but a territorial coalition. And civil rulers are the elected or accepted or obtruded care-takers and controllers of the secularities of such a coalition. Patriarchal civil government is a fiction, a fallacy, and a figure. Authentic history ignores it, and reason discards it. Nimrod, the first recorded king, was "a mighty hunter," not a paternal civil curator. A father is a procreator; and what has procreation to do with the claims and control of kings and queens, of consuls and councils, of pretors and presidents? What analogy can there be between the society of a house, or tent, and the society of a tribe or territory; between the offspring of one man and the owners and occupants of lands who permit or employ one or more persons to enslave them, or to take care of their common secularities? Domestic society, as respects husband and wife, is a partnership; as respects children, a procreatorship; as respects household servants, a commutation, an exchange of money or goods for services; and all these pertain to a house or household. Civil society is purely a territorial partnership; and civil government is the exchange of the honours and emoluments of such society for the curatorship of governors. Parents ought to take care of their children, because they own their children; and civil society ought to take care of its territory, because it owns that territory; but civil rulers are not the owners of the territory, but the representative agents and care-takers of the owners.

Superficial thinkers, with whom words are coins and not counters, are never weary of declaring that as nations have no existence in the other world, they must be religious in this or not at all, must be divinely rewarded and punished now or never. If civil relations will not exist hereafter, the persons civilly related will exist, and they will be responsible and retributable for their conduct in every terrestrial and temporary relation. All collections of men consist of individuals; all collective or social operations are the results of the voices and votes of individual men, in their relations to each other, and are conducted by an individual or by a plurality of individuals; and each of these men must answer hereafter for his part and participation in all terrestrial social movements. The individual is never lost in the society. A nation can be religious, only so far as the individuals that compose it are such, because religion is a personal possession and procedure. If its religiousness consisted in the combination of religious forms with political acts, of ecclesiastical machinery with national machinery, then indeed a nation and a church must either be go-carts to each other, or the former be utterly godless. And, then, on that ground, every secular association must be leagued with the church, or be a godless association; and into every office, shop, market and exchange, we must introduce sermons and psalms, bibles and hymn-books. No such absurdities follow from just and rational apprehensions. Religion should be in every man's heart, wherever he is, however related and occupied, but not, therefore, always in his mouth; it should always be within and always practically without, but not always ostensibly without; he should always have its principle and power, but not always observe its form and profession; he should always fear, trust, love and obey God, but not always talk of God, not always sing praises or

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utter prayers to God, not always hear or pronounce sermons. All the members of all associations—political, literary, scientific, benevolent, spiritual—should be religious; they should be such as individuals; they should be such by possessing, everywhere and always, the spirit, the principles and power of religion; they should be such by constantly practising the justice and goodness of religion; but not by linking spiritual machinery with secular machinery, and not by organically combining religious forms and fashions with other forms and fashions.

The efficiency of church and state is not furthered but hindered by their connection. Their diversity should disjoin them, and their disjunction surely harmonizes them. The church is not to rule the nation, for it has no right of secular cognizance and control; the nation is not to rule the church, for it has no right of spiritual cognizance and control. Their union renders the one intrusive upon the other, for it makes the state pseudo-ecclesiastical and the church pseudo-political. When all kinds of machinery must be formally united, to render them effective, it will be time enough to unite the secular and inferior machinery of the state with the spiritual and superior machinery of the church. When a steam-engine ceases to propel, because it is not linked to a chronometer or to an electric telegraph, it will be time enough to link the kingdom that is not of this world with the kingdom that is. Each institute has its place and should keep it. Each has its work and should do it. The one is not to compete, collide, or interfere, with the other. They are natural and harmonious when separate, and deranged and discordant when united. They co-operate apart, by different functions, in accomplishing the distinct and graduated ends of divine government. He who made both employs both, but has not united them, or authorized their union,

or made them susceptible of union. Attempt to unite them, and each begins to struggle for pre-eminence. The statesman tries to make the secular power predominant; and if he succeeds, as he is sure to do, the result is Erastianism. The ambitious and worldly ecclesiastic tries to make the church predominant; and if he succeeds the result is priestcraft and practical popery, a withering bigotry and a relentless tyranny. If Christ had intended or approved such a measure as the union of church and state, he would, at least, have prospectively legislated for it; but he has not done so; he has legislated against it. He has made his service all-comprehensive, not by the conjunction of diverse organisms, but by the permeating power of his own principles. To serve him in all secular things, to eat, drink, or otherwise act, without exception, to his glory, is not universally to transfer his forms but thus to transfuse his principles. To carry his spirit and principles into our political and conventional associations is not to carry the church into them. To love and serve Christ, in all things, is not to effect a union of the church with all things. To be godly in politics is not to be ecclesiastical. To be philosophical politicians is not to unite philosophical societies with the civil government, but to carry *philosophy itself* into our political deliberations and transactions. And to be christian politicians is not to unite the church and the state, but to carry *Christianity itself*, its spirit and principles, into our political thinkings and business. He is not a godless statesman who seeks to keep his secular machinery distinct from the spiritual, but who lives without the faith and love of Christ, as practical and permeating principles. And he is not a godly statesman, but a blind and bad one, who seeks to interlink and incorporate the machinery of earth with the mechanism of heaven, the agency that fights with the agency that prays, the fruits

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The union of church and state involves, on both sides,
 gross perversion and abuse. The civil government has
 no right to levy taxes for spiritual purposes. It cannot
 intermeddle with religious things, either spontaneously
 or responsively, without great impertinence and grievous
 usurpation. The state has no right to endow the church,
 and the church has no right to accept such endowment.
 The New Testament contains no enactment, express or
 constructive, immediate or prospective, in favour of such
 endowments ; but the very reverse, as has been already
 shown. Nothing surely can be simpler or clearer than
 the question between the voluntaries and the compul-
 sories. It cannot be disputed, and is not, that the only
 financial system of the primitive christians was voluntary-
 ism, and that this is perfectly scriptural. Let scriptural
 authority, then, be produced as well for compulsory eccle-
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 warrant for leaguering herself with the state, and accept-
 ing the aid of carnal weapons, the honour that cometh
 from man, the sword of steel, the bailiff's baton, and the
 sheriff's force. Let the state produce his warrant for
 intermeddling with the church, and for intruding into
 spiritual functions and affairs. And let church and state
 vindicate, if they can—but they cannot—the partiality
 and favouritism of endowment, the violation of liberty
 and conscience involved in compelling men to support a
 religion which they abhor. By what right is one church
 out of many selected or continued in incorporation with
 the state? Who made civil rulers, as such, judges in
 theology? As men and for themselves, they are entitled
 to weigh and decide theological questions ; but who
 entitled them to do this as civil officers? who entitled

them to do this for a nation? There is no visible tribunal, competent and authorized, to judge between papists and protestants, Calvinists and Arminians, episcopals and presbyterians and independents; and to determine which system and society, if any, ought to be preferred. The endowment of one creed and church out of many is sheer favouritism and class-legislation; the endowment of all creeds and churches is latitudinarianism; the endowment of any church is an assumption and abuse of civil power; and the acceptance of such endowment, on the part of the church, is treachery and prostitution. When will the churches of Christ, universally, avow their sole dependence upon their Head, the sufficiency of their own constitution, and their elevation above civil subsidy and sway? And when will christian ministers awake to the sin and shame of subservience to Cæsar, and of accepting support that is dragged out of the people by the secular arm? It matters not whether the persons taxed for religious purposes are in the church or out, compulsories or voluntaries in theology; they are taxed as civilians, by the civil power, for non-civil purposes. It matters not whether the ecclesiastical tax is levied overtly or covertly, separately or by composition with other taxes. The state has no right to demand such taxes, and the church has no right to receive them; and no christian minister can accept them, without dishonouring himself, his office, and his Lord. The church is not authorised or permitted to receive support, irrespective of its source and character, for otherwise she might allow the wages of iniquity to be thrown into her treasury. She is not at liberty to form or suffer any alliance or connection, but what comports with her Messianic origin, rule and relations.

In determining the proper relations of church and state, the question is not whether the truth should be

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conveyed to the world, without its desire and demand, but on whom devolves the duty of conveying it, and what is the proper position and procedure of the conveyer. The church alone is the depositary and vehicle of saving truth; and she is appropriately and adequately such, because she is fitted and endowed for spontaneous operation. What she has received she gives, and her gift is the expression of her own life and love. Through her alone, the spiritual supply of the world can come. The alleged or imagined inadequacy of the church, in dependence upon her own voluntary resources only, is no argument for state interference. We may not commission purveyors to supplement physicians, or call upon mere artisans to become schoolmasters. The church may not have accomplished the regeneration of a nation or of the world, or may not have brought the truth directly to every human creature, within the range of its long-occupied field; but this is no reason for state interference, and no proof whatever of the unfitness or inadequacy of independent churchism. God himself has confided the communication of the truth to his church alone, and that is enough. The church may have been lethargic and unfaithful, but God has not dismissed her or commissioned the state to supplement or rectify her. The spiritual interests of a country are not confided to the civil government, and the civil government, therefore, need not be disquieted on account of them; and especially should this government not pervert the means and methods of spiritual persuasion and culture, to serve as buttresses and bulwarks to its own policy and pretensions. It is, in fact, the perversion of the state and the prostitution of the church, in the alliance of the two, that has rendered the church, for so long a time, lethargic and cramped. How much the church can do, in the freedom of independence, her youthful achievements

declare ; how little she can do, in the fetters of compulsion, let the middle ages testify. If the church has not adequately cultivated her long-occupied field, and duly extended her conquests, it is not from any fault in her constitution, or any deficiency in her provision ; it is not because state patronage and pay are essential to her vitality and vigour ; but it is greatly owing to the incubus and virus of her unnatural and dishonourable subservience to the state. The question is not what the church has done, or failed to do, in this position of subservience ; but what she might have done in perfect freedom, and what she really did, in the years of her freedom, the period of her pristine purity and independence, before she parted with her glorious distinctness, to become the paid agent and political servant of the Roman power. The question is not what independent and voluntary churchism has done, in modern days, in a small minority, persecuted by the compulsories, frowned on by the state, driven into a corner, suspected and checked in all its operations ; but what it would have done in fair and proper circumstances, and what it did, in reality, before the days of Constantine. It is very unfair to allege, in a country like England, Scotland, or Ireland, that voluntarism is impotent or inadequate, because it has not fully met the spiritual wants of the people. National religion may be said to be impotent and inadequate for the same reason. But the fact is that the connection of church and state is one great reason for the contracted operations of British churches. National churchism takes forcible possession of the field ; acquires civil status, honours and emoluments, and draws or drags into its train all, or nearly all, the wealth, learning and influence of the land ; gags, fetters, imprisons, wastes and consumes all dissent or nonconformity ; till in spite of all this the object of its persecution and

injustice becomes too powerful to be thus dealt with any longer; and then gravely alleges the shortcomings of voluntaryism, in feeding the people, as a reason for its own position and pretensions! Was ever insult so grossly and wantonly added to injury? Even now, when persecution is impracticable, the political favouritism and ecclesiastical prostitution, involved in national churchism, preclude a fair trial to voluntary churchism. The educational operations, both literary and theological, and the pastoral labours, of voluntary churches, must always be greatly impeded and injured by the influence and effects of a national ecclesiastical establishment. Such an establishment compels voluntary christians to pay money for its own support; diminishes thereby the amount of voluntary ability and contribution, and cripples the means of voluntary extension; and holds out secular attractions and inducements that often diminish the ranks and resources of voluntary churches, and serve to elicit and illustrate most painfully the extent of human infirmity, without really augmenting, in any quarter, the strength and efficiency of spiritual agency.

It is, also, fallacious and unfair to charge upon any religious system or systems the entire amount of irreligion in a land. No system can create general religiousness, either formal or vital. Religion is an individual matter, and is, at least, as chargeable upon individual choice as upon the evils of ecclesiastical systems or the scantiness of ecclesiastical supplies. Churches may supply the means of religion, but cannot secure the use of them. The gospel may be preached in every neighbourhood and introduced, by pastoral visitation, into every house, and yet great numbers of the people may reject it and refuse to attend its public services. Such a result is evidential of human freedom and folly, but not of ineptitude or inefficacy in voluntary churchism. Must

such persons be compelled by the magistrate to observe the forms of Christianity, and individual rights and liberties be thus trampled on, for no better end than to multiply hypocrisy and mockery? If not, what can national churchism do in such cases? No form of religion can force, or ought to force if it could, irreligious men into the ranks or under the *regime* of churches; and, therefore, the mere number of such persons is no evidence of ecclesiastical impotence and unfitness. The question is not does a religious system christianize all around it, but does it adequately try to do so; does it scripturally communicate with all, and make spiritual supplies properly accessible to all? The wonder is not that voluntaryism has done so little, but that, in its crippled and thwarted condition, it has done so much; and the rational hope and belief are that when it alone occupies the universal field, as assuredly it some day will, its pristine power will appear and its original glory return.

There is no parallel between voluntary evangelization, home or foreign, and the economic doctrine of demand and supply. In trade and commerce, in mere secular exchange, the demand and the supply regulate each other. And such, for the most part, and such scripturally, as has been shown, is the principle that regulates the pastoral supply of churches. But not wholly so, for it is the duty of strong churches to help the weak, that the abundance of the former may be a supply for the want of the latter, "that there may be equality." Besides and especially, we are not to confound the sustenance of churches with their extension. The demand for pastors and the supply of pastors regulate each other, so as to sustain existing churches. But from those that are without there is no demand for spiritual supplies; and voluntaryism does not, in theory or practice, wait for such demand, but spontaneously seeks to create an appe-

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tancy and offer a supply, "in the regions beyond." It is simply libelling voluntaryism to describe it as "Free trade in Christianity." There is nothing of the trade-spirit in the free election and cordial support of a pastor, and in the spontaneous and gratuitous distribution of the bread of life. The home and foreign missions of modern voluntary churches disprove every such libel, and vindicate the excellence and efficiency not of free trade but of free truth in religion. Voluntary churchism is not free trade in religion, but compulsory churchism is protectionism and monopoly in religion. The real traders, in Christianity, are the churches which trade with civil governments for sustenance, extension and pre-eminence, at the price of ecclesiastical subsidence and subserviency.

Taking the lowest ground, the ground of expediency, it is easy to demonstrate the utter inaptitude and inadequacy of a national church for both home and foreign evangelism, but especially for the latter. No existing state church provides fully for the wants of the country to which it belongs, but is grievously deficient either in mechanism or in life, in pure spiritual provision or in the means of its distribution, or in both ; and the history of all state churches proves that the more exclusively they obtain and prevail, the more spiritually lethargic and debased their countries become. The remedies for such declension and the spiritual revolutions which those remedies occasion are always created and characterized by voluntaryism. The extension, too, of national churches, as of England and Scotland, is a process of voluntaryism, in the form of church-building societies, gospel-propagation, pastoral-aid, church-missionary and religious-knowledge societies. Only or chiefly by such societies, can national churches achieve either domestic or foreign evangelism and extension. How are state churches, as such, to spread Christianity abroad, in

obedience to the divine mandate? Must the civil government, through the church, become a spiritual propagandist and proselyter, in other lands? Must it appropriate the country's resources, raised for itself, to the culture and welfare of foreign regions? Ought it do so, and will other nations suffer it to do so? It ill comports with the principles of international law for the government of a country, through its ecclesiastical servant, to commence a systematic attack upon the religious principles and institutions of another country. Must Christian and Pagan, Protestant and Popish nations thus commence belligerent proceedings? Is it thus the peace and goodwill of the gospel are to be promoted? It is easy to see that national churchism is wrong, because it cannot harmonize international law and evangelical zeal; and that a spiritual system, like Christianity, that aims at universal diffusion and triumph, cannot be made the instrument and dependent of any civil power whatever, without the surrender of its principles and the sacrifice of its pretensions; that alliance with the state must either keep a church at home or send it, as a firebrand, abroad, must paralyze it or pervert it, degrade it or demoralize it; and that Christianity can never circumnavigate the globe without cutting the cable of the state, or pursue her march of universal conquest and blessing but in perfect independence of civil machinery and secular sway.

Patriotism and piety combine to dissolve the unnatural, the unholy, the disgraceful and disastrous alliance of church and state. The question between the voluntaries and compulsories is not, as some say, a mere question of machinery, but of momentous principles. It is, therefore, exceedingly inaccurate and unfair to compare the voluntaries, as Dr. Chalmers does, to machine-breakers; but to compare the promoters of a legal dis-

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union of church and state to the illegal and riotous
 "machine-breakers of Kent and the frame-breakers of
 Leicestershire, or the incendiaries of a few years back in
 the southern and midland counties of England," is to
 substitute bad names and false analogies for truth and
 logic, although with the best intentions. To seek, by
 constitutional and legal means, to dis sever the nation
 from the church is a process of pure and enlightened
 patriotism; and to seek the withdrawal of the church
 from all formal connection with the state, that she may
 operate purely, freely and gloriously, is a process of
 intelligent scriptural piety. Either process is one, also,
 of propriety and prudence, of sociological soundness and
 science. The compound machinery of church and state
 is a burlesque upon the science of social mechanics; and,
 instead of attempting to mend matters, by setting better
 men to work the machinery, or by getting it periodically
 tinkered, we should disunite the ill-conjoined engines,
 and consign them respectively to competent spiritual
 and civil engineers, to work them skilfully and vigorously
 apart. The question is not whether popular representa-
 tives are freely chosen, and whether these representatives
 freely incorporate and enow a religion; but what right
 have civil rulers to intermeddle with religion, to raise
 religious funds by force? And what right have churches
 or church-agents to accept such funds, to subserve the
 state, to debase themselves, and to disobey Christ? Might
 not right, human policy not heavenly principle, love of gain
 not godliness, love of honour not humility—one or all—
 are the source and secret of the alliance between kings
 and clergyman, between "the altar and the throne."
 And, as the result of this alliance, the world has seen,
 not the bride, the Lamb's wife, in spotless attire and
 celestial beauty, but the whore on many waters, the har-
 lot on the beast, whose heads are mountains or secular

possessions, whose horns are kings or secular rulers "And the woman is that great city," ruled by crown and crosier combined, "which reigneth over the kings of the earth." From this mystic city, from its suburbs and its environs, from the shadow of its sceptre, from the pollution and progeny of its harlotry, let every one that loves his Saviour and his soul, make haste to flee.

The obvious inference from all that has been said is that the only right relation between churches and civil governments is that of **PERFECT INDEPENDENCY**. Such independence belongs, of course, to nothing but what is distinctive of each institution. The nation is independent of churches, in everything secular and territorial; churches are independent of nations, in everything spiritual. But civil government has cognizance and control, on dispute and appeal, of ecclesiastical temporalities, of houses, grounds, and funds. Churches rightly obtain these by spontaneous liberality or voluntary contribution; and the state recognizes them, as part and parcel of the territorial secularities. Money already given to an ecclesiastical officer, for his support and in lieu of his services, is of course beyond dispute; but money guaranteed, real estate or money funded, property held in trust, for specified ecclesiastical purposes and according to specified methods, is, of course, liable to difference and dispute, and may occasion application to civil judicature. The question to be determined, in such a case, is one of fact, the fact of the donor's expressed intentions, the fact of the trustees' compliance with such intentions, the fact of the person or persons now rightly charged with the fulfilment of such intentions. We can easily conceive, it is true, of a trust created on improper conditions, such as the exact and thorough observance of everything biblical, to be weighed and adjudicated by the civil judicature; but the state should decline, legislatively and

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administratively, such a function and trust, and make property so vested a lapse to the heirs or a forfeiture to the territory. Churches or individuals have no right to impose improper functions or responsibilities on civil authorities; and the civil authorities ought not to accept them. All secularity, however acquired and designed, is liable to the common political burdens and cognizance; and all churches and ecclesiasts are as liable as other associations and functionaries to answer to the territorial courts, for their proprietary and personal relations to the territorial laws and institutions.

From what has been said it is, also, to be inferred that the only right relation between THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY is that of PERFECT INDEPENDENCE. A family cannot dictate to a church, or a church to a family. An individual may be at once a member of both and responsible accordingly; and just as the secularities of a churchman, but not his spiritualities, are cognosced by the state, so the spiritualities of a domestician, but not his secularities, may be cognosced by his church. Not of the domestic circle or family itself, as such, has the church any right of cognizance, but of the spiritual conduct of its own members, individually, to whatever families belonging, and in harmony simply with the revealed will of the church's Head. Children are the property of their parents and cannot be rightfully subjected, in nonage, to any ecclesiastical instruction or influence, except by consent of the parents. Primarily, it is the duty of parents, not of churches, to train up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and it is the duty of the church, as the vehicle of truth and the eliciter of blessing, to co-operate with parents, by conveying the truth, with faith and prayer, to children's minds, as often and as fully as parents afford her an opportunity of doing so. Neither the church

nor the state has a right to abolish and absorb parental power and authority ; on the contrary, they are bound to respect the domestic institute as the oldest among men, as the spring of all human affinities, and as man's great preparatory school, arena and field, from generation to generation. The only education which the church is bound to give is a spiritual or religious education ; orally, by pastors and teachers ; writtenly, by printed bibles and biblical aids ; in Sunday-schools and bible classes ; and in theological classes and colleges, to accepted and qualified candidates for the christian ministry. The work of secular education belongs not to the church, in her distinctive capacity, and ought not to be embarrassingly or unduly undertaken by her ; though, in its subservience to religion, to the perusal and appreciation of the sacred writings, and to the qualification and accomplishment of christian ministers, it is inappreciably great ; and it claims, accordingly, the earnest sympathy and support of all christian men.

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CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECTIVE RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

THE church is not only an element of a system but a member of a series. It is neither the sole nor the initial social form of true religion. To know how much it inherits and how much it introduces is necessary to the appreciation of its position and province.

The mediatorial government of mankind, from the fall to the flood, was TENTATIVE AND PREPARATORY. Experiment is not necessary to the wisdom of God and preparation is not necessary to his mere power; but they are requisite to man, as a subject of moral government, which implies the intelligence of its subjects and their moral education by appropriate means; and, accordingly, they are subservient to the moral purposes and processes of God himself. The peculiar circumstances in which God's antediluvian moral government was conducted, were chiefly protracted life and an undeteriorated abode; and the problem which it solved was the inaptitude of these conditions to the moral welfare of fallen man. Their total unfitness was proved by the resultant facts, the perversionary effects, that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and that "the earth was corrupt before God and was filled with violence," for "all flesh had corrupted his way upon

the earth.”¹ A wrecked world is the fit abode of a wrecked race, and therefore the world was wrecked by the flood ; an abbreviated life is the proper probationary duration of fallen man, and, accordingly, man’s life became limited, first to one hundred and twenty years, and then to seventy, instead of eight or nine hundred ; and, in these new and apt conditions, from the subsidence of the deluge, began the chief and continuous development of restorative theocracy. The first era of this development was PATRIARCHAL, or domestic, because the family was its chief social instrument and form. The second era was CHORARCHAL, or national, because religion was socially embodied and promoted in the Jewish nation, commencing with the civil organization of the Jews at Mount Sinai. And the third great era is the ECCLESIAARCHAL, or ecclesiastical, beginning on the day of Pentecost, and characterized by the church, as the great social instrument and expression of Christ’s spiritual sway.

The christian church is not the successor of a Jewish church, but absolutely the first and only church ; in these pages, therefore, it is simply denominated the church. There was never any church in the world before the day of Pentecost. There was religion in the world before, there was revealed religion, there was religion socially developed and subserved, in the family and the nation, there were religious ordinances, officers, and assemblies ; but there was no church. To confound the church with the forms of religion generally, or with any other form particularly, is to obscure the ways of God and perplex and mislead the biblical student. From the mere occurrence of the term *ecclesia*, nothing definite and conclusive can be argued. “The church (*ecclesia*) in

¹ Gen. vi. 6, 11, 12.

the wilderness"¹ is simply "the assembly in the wilderness," the Jewish national assembly; and we have seen that a church is not a nation, or a simple assembly, or even a mere religious assembly. The passage, just referred to, is the only one, in the New Testament, in which the term *ecclesia* is applied to any pre-pentecostal institute, and it denotes nothing more than a national gathering. To denominate the whole body of the Israelites, or any part of them, a church, because they are often denominated the congregation of the Lord, is to betray ignorance of the real nature and characteristics of a church, and to confound an organized, registered partnership with an assembly. The tumultuous concourse (*systrophe*) of the Ephesians is also called an assembly (*ecclesia*); but neither the Ephesian nor the Jewish assembly was a church. The first mention of the church, in the New Testament, is predictive, not descriptive: "I will build my church." What can more clearly and incontestably indicate the non-existence of a building than the avowal of an intention to construct it? The second mention of the church is in a passage that has been shown to be prospectively legislative.² The third mention of the church, which is the first mention of it as an existing institute, occurs on its Pentecostal formation. Describing the Pentecostal events, the historian says—"the same day, there were added three thousand souls," not added "to the church," because till then there was no church at all; and he closes his narrative with the first mention of the church as an extant operative institute: "and the Lord added the saved daily to the church." Till the day of Pentecost, the church is spoken of as future, and in only two instances; from that day it is often and familiarly referred to, as

¹ Acts vii. 33.

² Matt. xviii. 17.

actual and active. The inference is inevitable that on that day it was created.

If Judaism and its successor are both churches, and, consequently, essentially alike but circumstantially different, why does Paul so strikingly and thoroughly *contrast* them, in his epistle to the Hebrews? "Ye are not come" to the tangible, fiery, dark, tempestuous and terrific Mount of Judaism, with trumpet-tongue and unearthly voice; but to "Mount Sion." Ye are come to "the general assembly and church of the first-born," to the catholic association of Jew and Gentile, to the church of the first-born ecclesiasts. Ye, believing Hebrews, "holy brethren," "partakers of the heavenly calling," by which men are invited out of the earthly economy of Judaism into the heavenly economy of the Ecclesiasm; ye first recipients of the gospel and first incorporated ecclesiasts, to whom I now write; ye are come to the church that is composed of the first-born, and, therefore, to the very first church, the church originated in your own times, not to the consecution and modification of a church formed under any previous dispensation. The primitive christians were the eldest churchmen; and the eldest of the eldest were the believing Hebrews. With what marked propriety and significance does the apostle write to *contemporary Hebrew* christians, probably in Judea, as having come to the *first* church, the church of the *first-born*, whose names are written in the new and heavenly economy, instead of in the terrestrial Jewish genealogies!

The *onus probandi* really lies upon those who assert the existence of a church before the day of Pentecost. We have shown what the christian church is and when it commenced; let it be shown, if possible, that there was any earlier similar institute. Those who deny an ante-pentecostal church have nothing to prove; for a

negative need not and cannot be proved. It avails nothing to show that, before the day of Pentecost, there were social religion, revealed religion, religious assemblies, religious ordinances and officers, religion in families and in a nation ; and to *say* that these constituted or implied a church. The church is distinct and different from both domestic and civil society. What trace or evidence is there of it, or of anything like it, before the day of Pentecost ? There was a covenant before that day, but not a covenant with an actual church. Christ reigned before that day, but not in and through a church. There was a distinct people of God before that day, both as families and as a nation, whom Paul compares to an olive tree ; but there was no separate, local, registered, religious copartnership, till Christ began to build his church, in Jerusalem, on the ever-memorable day of Pentecost following his own ascension. From Abraham onwards, the people of God were distinguished by circumcision, but such distinction is far from being equivalent to ecclesiastical union. The Old Testament predicts the church, but does not chronicle it ; the New Testament chronicles its creation and predicts its course. We have no warrant to call anything a church but the christian association of the latter days. The Jews were a nation, a territorial confederation, a religious nation, ruled by laws divinely dictated and by divine agency directly exerted, a nation whose officers and ordinances were both secular and spiritual ; but the church is local not territorial, diffusive not stationary, catholic not contracted, spiritual not secular, co-existent with families and nations and not absorbent or supersessive of either. The church is the institutionary glory of the latter days ; the grand social characteristic, instrument, and sphere of Christ's full redeeming sway ; the pre-eminent institutionary gift of the risen and enthroned Redeemer. We

obscure the present glory of the Saviour's reign, we shade the lustre of the latter days and the church, when we ascribe the peculiarity of ecclesiastical advantages and usefulness to any preceding time, state or people. It is ours, post-pentecostals', not Abraham's or the Israelites', to belong to the church of Christ; and, as such, to rejoice in our ecclesiastical privileges and to perform our glorious ecclesiastical work.

The kingdom of Christ is essentially the same in every age, from the fall to the resurrection, yet comprehends a series of ascending and expanding dispensations. Its development and glory are "like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The emission of its light began in the midnight of man's apostacy, and has kindled and heightened from astral to lunar, and thence to solar radiance. Each consecutive dispensation outshines and eclipses the preceding. The promise of the woman's conquering seed was the first, the solitary star, that shone upon fallen man,—a lamp suspended by the hand of the Almighty, in the firmament of heaven, to mitigate the gloom of midnight, and to manifest faintly the way of salvation. It was not solitary long. It soon became a member of a constellation, and was succeeded by the emergence of stars and clusters, during the patriarchal era, till the heavens became bright with the lamps of love and mercy. The moon of Judaism in due time appeared, and shed its mild but superior lustre upon our darkened world. Extraordinary messengers, called prophets, appeared at uncertain intervals, like comets blazing and rushing through the sky, to alarm and reclaim the evil-doers. John the Baptist was the harbinger of day; the east brightened at his coming, and rejoiced in the dawn of a long-desired and expected light. Soon the Sun himself appeared.

"See, yonder comes the powerful King of day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow,
Il' am'd with fluid gold, His near approach
Betoken glad."

Celestial truth, "full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete," now mounts the expanse of heaven, and absorbs, or throws into deepest shade, all anterior lustre. Night is gone never to return. "Morning high and higher shines." The shades of death and darkness disappear. God is light, and relumes and revives benighted man. The Sun of Righteousness makes our day, never to decline, though occasionally obscured by lowering clouds and infernal fogs, but yet to ascend to his zenith, and thence diffuse his light and heat for ever.

Judaism has now no glory, by reason of "the glory that excelleth." It was a blessing to millions, who rejoiced in its light; it was a preparatory economy and, having fulfilled its end, has passed away. Its subjects at once enjoyed its advantages, and looked for a better state of things, which is ours. They eagerly and anxiously watched for the morning, which belongs to us, but never beheld it. "God has provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Kings, prophets and righteous men desired to see what we see, but died without the sight. They bent and listened, to catch from a land far off the music of the gospel; that music falls on our ears, in strains of highest harmony. Theirs was intense desire, ours the full fruition. To them, "coming events cast their shadows before;" upon the events themselves we gaze and expatiate, with unspeakable delight. Theirs were the lunar light, the veiled face, the lengthened vista, and the vague conjecture; ours are the day's resplendence, the open face, events transpired, and the full assurance. Not unto themselves but unto us they

ministered. They had truth in figure; we have it in fact. They saw it in dim perspective; we have it in the foreground. Theirs was society circumscribed and circumscribed; ours is the catholic church, expanding and free, radiant with divine light, renewed in love, baptized with the fire and the flood of the eternal Spirit's energy. It was theirs to gather and group around their beacon-light, on the shores of the Mediterranean; it is ours to carry the torch of celestial truth into every benighted heart, home and country,—to kindle and keep alive, on every ocean-shore and every mountain-top, the light and fire of universal love,—to rend the veil that is spread over all nations, and relume them with the radiance of day, that darkness and death may disappear for ever.

The present dispensation of truth and grace is successive and superior to Judaism; characteristically ecclesiastical, not national or domestic; settled and complete, not preparatory or experimental. The church is the localized and catholicized successor of a national religion, but not of a national church. Judaism had no church, either national or otherwise, and therefore furnishes no parallel or precedent for national ecclesiastical establishments. The stereotyped verbiage and transcriptive absurdity of justifying national churchism by Judaism, should, at once and for ever, cease and determine. Inspiration knows nothing of national churches, though it reveals the operation and display of religion in the family, the nation, and the church, as well as in individuals. Kings and Queens should be nursing parents, among the people of God, not by absurdly and mischievously linking their coarse secular machinery with the spiritual organism of the church, not by presumptuously and impiously carrying their civil supremacy into Christ's domain, and among Christ's co-equal servants; but by being themselves faithful christians and

church-members, by contributing liberally to ecclesiastical objects and resources, and by discharging their rectoral and other duties, with exemplary diligence and fidelity, and in the faith and fear of Christ.

No one, that understands the relation of Christianity to Judaism, can suppose for a moment that the former is, or ought to be, modelled after the latter. The better is not moulded by the less. The superior and permanent is not copied from the inferior and abrogated. Day is not the imitation of moonlight. Antitypes do not take their shape and hue from types. If Judaism is to be our model, we ought to *abolish the church* and make the nation everything. And, indeed, this is virtually the theory of many ecclesiastics and politicians, and is practically and largely the result in most countries that combine church and state. It is to a great extent the result in England. The members of the national church constitute local congregations but not local churches, except in a very imperfect and qualified sense. The chief magistrate is the head of the church, contrary to Christ's sole ecclesiastical headship, and contrary to the exclusion of females from ecclesiastical control. By the monarch, as such, and by the monarch's political advisers, the chief ecclesiastical appointments are made, so as to subserve political party purposes. The civil legislature enacts all ecclesiastical laws. Ecclesiastical officers are subjected to civil pains and penalties for their religious conduct. The monarch must have no conscience or religion but what the law of the land prescribes. And is this christianity and its churchhood? Certainly not these, whatever else it may be. It is a retrogression to Judaism, a return to the weak and beggarly elements of a superseded economy, and a heart-rending prostration and paralysis of Christ's glorious Institute.

Whatever be the supposed advantages of the parochial

system, they did not belong to Judaism and are not necessarily peculiar to a national church. A civil government may allocate the whole territory, in portions called parishes, to ecclesiastical teachers, with adequate endowments; but, in a free country, it can do nothing more. It ought not to do even this. It cannot, and should not, compel the individuals or households of such parishes to receive such teachers; and these teachers can only offer their services to the parishes collectively, and to the inhabitants and families particularly. But all this, substantially and in its religious elements, a voluntary confederation of churches, or separate and independent churches by mutual agreement, may do. They may divide the whole country between them—though we think they ought not—and may offer their services to the several inhabitants and families. Without national recognition, allocation and endowment, the apostles, daily and in every house, ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. This apostolical practice may be imitated, as well by voluntary as by compulsory religionists. The voluntary christian minister cannot announce himself as the servant of the state; but he can do what is better and more befitting; he can announce himself as not a political functionary or instrument, whose salary is to be forced from the people and whose operations are to be sustained by physical force, and in disregard of choice and conscience; but as simply the minister of our Lord Jesus Christ and his church, seeking only the spiritual and eternal welfare of the people, and supported solely by their free and cordial contributions. He may present himself at every door and seek an entrance into every house, where, at least, no other christian minister has already been pastorally accepted, and as far as his ability and engagements allow. And how dignified, how christian-like, are such a position and procedure! This is what Judaism did not

accomplish or contemplate. It comprehended public functionaries, both secular and spiritual; but these were chiefly central and stationary, not going to the people with benefits but bestowing them upon the various comers and applicants; not creating spiritual societies distinct from the national federation, but acting as public and national officers, and recognizing the spiritual and political flocks as identical, or, rather, knowing only one flock. But this is not Christianity. The churches of Christ are not national but local associations; their officers are not *quasi* spiritual or political functionaries, but christian and church agents, not territorially central and collected but dispersed, not waiting for applicants but seeking for audience and acceptance, as the world's instructors and guides.

Neither the Jewish temple nor the Jewish synagogue is the model of the church. Learned men are fond of finding, or rather fancying, an analogy between them, especially between the synagogue and the church; but there is no warrant in the sacred writings for regarding the latter as the imitation of the former. The synagogue cannot be considered as the scriptural pattern of the church, for this single and sufficient reason that it is not scripturally delineated. How far, therefore, the ministry and ministrations of christianity resemble, in fact, those of the synagogue is properly an extra-biblical question; but that the resemblance is intentional and archetypal is an unproved proposition. It is vain to argue for three orders of christian ministers, as a resemblance to the three Jewish orders, high-priests, priests, and Levites. Jewish priests were typical and temporary; their sole antitype is Christ; and the only priesthood now is the proper and peculiar priesthood of Christ and the subordinate and common priesthood of all saints. Peter, addressing christians generally, says—"Ye are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." ¹ Ecclesiastical officers are not priests but pastors and teachers. We must not relapse into Judaism or derange and debase our glorious spiritual organism, by making the territorial a model for the local, the preparatory a rule for the perfect, the typical a standard for what is not even its antitype, the lower a measure for what is immeasurably higher and better, Sion the imitation of Sinai. Whatever be the nature of the christian ministry and the method of christian worship, we should not look for their origin and model in the weak and beggarly elements of a superseded system; but in the New Testament itself, which alone is the record and rule of the church of Christ.

¹ 1 Peter ii. 9.

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CHAPTER III.

PROSPECTIVE RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

THE ecclesiastical era of Christ's mediation is perfect and final. The apostle Paul contrasts it with the preceding, as a permanent and immoveable kingdom, instead of an economy shaken, superseded, and overturned. "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."¹ Peter, on the day of Pentecost, quoted, as then fulfilled, the prophecy of Joel, that, "in the last days," God would pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh. The ecclesiastical days, therefore, are the last days. Paul calls the period of Christ's advent "the fulness of the time,"² evidently intending to intimate the full manifestation of the divine kingdom; and, concurrently, he denominates the present era "the dispensation of the fulness of times," in which are to be gathered together "in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth,"³ in Sion and in Sinai. He describes the church as the body of Christ, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all."⁴

¹ Heb. xii. 27, 28.

² Gal. iv. 4.

³ Eph. i. 10.

⁴ Eph. i. 22, 23.

He ascribes glory to God "in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end,"¹ plainly denoting the constancy of the present ecclesiastical era. The two dispensations, the present and preceding, he also calls covenants, and contrasts them as new and old, as respectively constant and evanescent. "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."² He represents Christ as having appeared "now once *in the end of the world*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."³ "He taketh away the first [economy and its sacrifices], that he may *establish* the second."⁴ Christ's kingdom is now fully established and revealed, for he has "for ever sat down [on his redemptive throne] on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting [not new evolutions, but full and final achievements, or] till his enemies be made his footstool ;"⁵ that is, till the general resurrection, when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed and, therefore, all enemies be put under the Redeemer's feet, or converted into his footstool.

The divine government of mankind from the fall to the judgment is distinctively RESTORATIVE. It is remedial in its end, mediatorial in its means, and merciful in its method. It was preceded by CONSERVATION, and will be succeeded by RETRIBUTION. God governed upright angels and upright man to conserve them in their original integrity and efficiency ; he governs fallen men to recover them ; and when redemption is consummated, by the resurrection from the dead, he will govern all angels and men to retribute them for ever. Retribution will be commenced in judgment, and consummated in the perpetual and universal administration of

¹ Eph. iii. 21.² Heb. viii. 13.³ Heb. ix. 26.⁴ Heb. x. 9.⁵ Heb. x. 12, 13.

judicial awards. If, then, the present ecclesiastical era of mediation be the immediate successor of Judaism, the remote successor of patriarchism, and the more remote successor of antediluvianism, it is also the full and final mediatorial development, whose consummating and crowning event is the resurrection, and whose successor is final judgment and justice, or ceaseless retribution in its inquiries and awards. How solemnly momentous and glorious is the position of the church, as the servant of Christ, completing the great process of boundless mercy, and preparing for the great process of endless justice! The church is identified with the fulness of time. It is the immoveable and comprehensive economy, the religious vehicle of all post-pentecostal ages, the very body of Christ, and "the end of the world." Upon us, in the church, "the ends of the world are come." Our predecessors could not, without us, be made perfect. We have the fulness of truth, the fulness of the Spirit, the fulness of time, and the fulness of the field. Our era is the world's day, the period of light and life, of ardour and activity, of hopeful aim, holy enterprise, and hallowed achievement. We inherit and consummate redemptive time. We wind up the drama of deliverance, and look for the dread and blissful reign of retribution. Not one of the illustrious prophets that preceded the harbinger excelled him; but the least in this christian and ecclesiastical kingdom is greater than he.¹ This kingdom comprehends the greatest of mankind. It elicits and embodies the greatness of Christ's strength; not, however, as though it were already perfect, but looking and waiting for the perfecting resurrection. In all the beauty and blessedness and splendour of the new Jerusalem, it echoes the Spirit's invitation, elicits the

¹ Heb. x. 9.

¹ Luke vii. 23.

Spirit's power, conveys the Spirit's warning, and hails the Saviour's final advent. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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PART IV.

The Operation of the Church.

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OPERATION OF THE CHURCH.

EVERY society exists or is formed for some end, to be accomplished by appropriate means. What sort of society the church is has already been considered ; her formation has been shown ; and in the study of her relations, we have ascertained the great end of her origination and continuance. We have now to consider by what means and methods she is to fulfil her task and accomplish the purpose and pleasure of her Author.

The operation of the church comprehends both organization and action, or the machinery with which she works and the work itself. The first is usually denoted by the term Polity or Government, and the second by History. The first is biblical, the second extra-biblical. The New Testament records the formation of the church but not its subsequent action and progress. It may partly predict these, but could not chronicle them ; and as they are to be found only in the compositions of uninspired writers, they can have no place in Biblical Ecclesiology.

The church is organised according to its nature and relations, and consists, therefore, of sovereign and subjects. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the king, as well as the creator of the church, and, accordingly, is scripturally compared to the human head, which surmounts

and rules the body. God the Father has "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." "Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body." "The church is subject unto Christ." "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."¹ "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church."² Because he is the divine creator of the church, he is its proprietor and rightful sovereign, and therefore calls it his: "I will build my church:" "The churches of Christ."³ Hence, also, he walks in regal aspect and attire among the golden candlesticks, the representative churches; holds the ecclesiastical stars in his right hand, which is the symbol of his strength; and dictates epistles and opens prophecy with sovereign authority. Whatever is Christ's is God's, because Christ is the mediatorial servant of God; and so the church is described as "of God," in several places,⁴ to denote that God is its creator and king. The apostle denotes the subserviency of Christ, as mediator, in his ecclesiastical headship, when he says—"Unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." So, also, Christ is said, with nice

¹ Ephes. i. 20—23; v. 23, 24, 30. ² Col. i. 18, 24. ³ Rom. xvi. 16.

⁴ Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. i. 2; x. 32; xi. 16, 22; xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15. Altogether, twelve places.

distinctness, to be "*as a son*, over his own house, whose house are we."¹

The operation of the church, therefore, in its complete constitution and in the largest sense of its name, is both ecclesiarchal and ecclesiastical, or capital and corporate, the operation of the head and the operation of the body. Ecclesiology takes no account of the operations of Christ before and beyond the church, except as illustrative of the church, but simply of his ecclesiarchal operations. He is the true and sole Ecclesiarch, the primus, head, or monarch, of his associated servants. How he rules, in and by the church, must be first considered; and then how the church operates in subserviency to him, to achieve his aim and fulfil his pleasure. It originated in him as creator, and operates under him as king, to convey his truth and to elicit his power, for the glory of God for ever.

¹ Heb. iii. 6.

CHAPTER I.

GOVERNMENT.

At this stage of our inquiry, we cannot proceed a single step, intelligently and safely, without ascertaining, first of all, the import and ground of government. The operation of Christ, as head of the church, is his rectoral supremacy or kingly government. The operation of the church, also, implies government. What then is government, and in whom is it rightfully deposited? If we waive these inquiries, or miss the true solution, we must tread in fogs and marshes to the end of our journey; and the logical terminus must be a precipice or a quagmire, rather than the sunlit summit of truth, the immoveable rock of justice, and the celestial temple of certainty and security. Nothing is more talked of than government, and nothing is so little analysed and accounted for, and so strangely exempted from definition. We have treatises on government, both civil and ecclesiastical, on its philosophy and its forms; but scarcely an attempt to tell us what it is and how we may identify and find it.

SECTION I.—*All rational government is care-taking.*

Such is the government of God, the first, the highest, the all-comprehending government. He governs all secular existence—in man, vegetable, and animal; not

by arbitrary and capricious control, but with curatorial wisdom and prudence ; and he governs all moral beings, in harmony with their nature and relations, and with curatorial intelligence, kindness, and justice. Only as care-taking, can either the supreme government or any subordinate government be justly and rationally apprehended. Parental government, which is the earliest and most natural of all human governments, is nothing but curatorship. Parents are entitled to take care of their children, for both the life that now is and that which is to come ; but they neither have, nor can have, any other rightful control over them. Sentient, intelligent, voluntary beings may be controlled as objects of care, but not otherwise,—not disposed of with arbitrary, absolute, and reckless sway. Political government, too, is a curatorship. It is the office and business of civil rulers to take care of the whole territory and of its owners and occupants ; but not to please themselves, or to seek their own private ends and interests, at the expense and injury of the people ; and not to exercise any power, to make or administer any laws, except in accordance with the simple purpose and process of taking territorial care. The moment we forego or forget this apprehension of government, as care-taking and nothing else, we are completely at sea, without chart, compass, or rudder, and are liable to inflict on others, or meanly endure from others, some rectoral injustice and perversion. Government must not be regarded as an undefinable thing, as susceptible of any latitude or any sense, but solely as an exercise of the right to take care of persons and things. It belongs to society, universal or terrestrial, secular or spiritual or mixed, domestic, political, ecclesiastical, or conventional. And, having clearly apprehended the nature of government, as rightful care, we have next to ascertain the foundation and reason of such care, the principles that

should guide us in distinguishing the right to take care from unwarrantable claims and usurped control. A ruler is a curator. What constitutes and sustains the right to take care of persons, and the duty of persons to obey?

SECTION II.—*All rightful care-taking is founded on ownership.*

The right to take care of property is perfectly obvious and indisputable; and this right is the foundation and reason of all government, even of divine. The Deity owns the universe because he made it, and he takes care of it, or governs it, or rules it, because he owns it. - The highest property is his self-ownership, and the next to this is creative ownership. The property of any being is what is proper or peculiar to him; and this, first of all, is himself, and next what he has originated or made. The whole universe is the property of God, because he created it: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath *founded* it upon the seas, and *established* it upon the floods."¹ "The sea is his and he made it."² "The Lord hath made all things for himself."³ Accordingly, "the gods [or claimants of supreme rule] that have not *made* the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."⁴ "Thou art worthy [*αἴτιος*, entitled, deserving], O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are [in subservience to thy control], and were created."⁵ As, in the first four of these quotations, divine propriety is founded on creation, so, in the last quotation, divine government is founded on

¹ Psalm xxiv. 1, 2.

² Psalm xciv. 5.

³ Prov. xvi. 4.

⁴ Jer. x. 11.

⁵ Rev. iv. 11.

creation. God is worthy of power, he is entitled to it, he owns it, it is perfectly proper to him, because he created all things. Everything in the universe is the property of God because he made it, and subject to God because he proprietarily rules it. Every being in the universe but God is property, because every being but God is originated. In relation to God, no creature can have any right; but, in relation to his fellow-creatures, every intelligent, sentient and free being has rights. First of all, he has a right to himself, to his existence, to his personal integrity or completeness, to his freedom, to all that he originates, produces or makes, and to all that he obtains by fair exchange with other proprietors, by the free gift of other proprietors, and by proper compact with other proprietors. His rights, therefore, are personal, productive, commutative, and compactive; or, in other words, everything belongs to him, everything is proper to him, that he is, that he originates, that he purchases from real proprietors, and that he agrees for with real proprietors, without violating the rights of others. His personal rights include life, limb, and freedom, which are synonymous with existence, integrity, and liberty. These are the highest rights, and their reverse is the highest wrong. The maintenance of our own rights, and conformity to the rights of others, constitute justice or righteousness; the reverse of this is injustice, unrighteousness, or wrong-doing. As all rights are either personal or relative, either original or derived, so are all wrongs. The highest wrongs we can either inflict or suffer are wrongs to the person,—injury to soul or body,—to vitality, perfection and freedom, both secular and spiritual. And next to these, in turpitude, are violations of derived or relative rights, by defrauding persons of their produced or purchased things, and by breach of treaty. The

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greatest of all crimes and wrongs is soul-pollution, and, therefore, the Tempter is the greatest criminal in the universe. Next to this is corporal-destruction, or murder ; and next to this is enslaving. Personal capabilities cannot avail us unless we are free ; and, therefore, the man-stealer, the man-keeper, the man-seller, the man-buyer, the man-owner, the man-enslaver, take rank with the greatest criminals in the universe, with Satan and the scarlet Harlot, because they trample on men's personal rights, their highest rights, and because the want of freedom renders life and limb of little value and avail. Tyranny or despotism, in all its forms and gradations, is Satanic wickedness, deepest and darkest maleficence, which no blackness can depict, which no language can strongly enough describe, which no estimate can exaggerate, and which cannot be hated and hunted down with too much earnestness and effort.

SECTION III.—*Proprietary curatorship is either direct or representative.*

The only direct proprietary government in the universe is *parental*. God is the universal parent and proprietor, and, therefore, the rightful universal ruler. Human parents are the proprietary rulers of their children. As God is the owner, because the creator, of all things, so parents are the owners, because the procreators, of their children. As such, they have a natural and unquestionable right to exercise domestic sovereignty. But besides divine and human parentage, there is no proprietary government, known to us, in the universe. Only God and human parents propagate intelligent existence. And this propagation is one of the highest aspects of humanity, and a part of that image of himself with which God invested man.

All other rightful curatorship is indirect, and therefore is an agency, a stewardship or factorship, a representative or delegated right. Parents often entrust a portion of their authority to others, to instruct and rule their children; and only as thus entrusted can any one be entitled to control the children of living parents. Civil or ecclesiastical government is also an agency or representative function; or else it is an imposition and a usurpation. Every actual government is necessarily one of might or right, or a compound of the two. It cannot, in the nature and relations of things, be anything else. Pretending to govern but not really governing, not able to govern, is a mere show or sham, that can elicit nothing but contempt. Professing to govern and entitled to govern, but not really governing, is a dereliction of duty, an omission of proper action, that deserves rebrehsion and dismissal. Claiming and attempting to govern, either without any right or beyond right, is an imposition and usurpation, a wrongdoing and despotism, that ought to arouse the strongest abhorrence, the most determined and decisive resistance.

Rightful rule over mankind, either as single or as social beings, over either an individual or a society of individuals, must be founded on the consent of the person or party ruled, or on the appointment of God himself. But on the latter foundation no fabric of human authority can now be based, because no miracles are now wrought to attest it, no species of divine interposition is now vouchsafed to prove it, and no part of God's word accredits it. No individuals, after the apostles, are named in the bible as entitled to bear rule; and no individuals, as has been shown, either did or could succeed the apostles. The general terms in which the bible sanctions and enforces government, both civil and ecclesiastical, must be taken either *absolutely*, on behalf

of all government, or *conditionally*, on behalf of government by consent of the governed. To take it absolutely is to take it as a licence to all manner of oppression, slavery and misgovernment, tyranny and wrong; and to take it thus is to misinterpret it, because it is to make the bible contradict both itself and the nature and relations of things, both the work of God and his explicit word. In harmony with itself and with man's unquestionable nature and rights, the bible can be understood only as sanctioning rightful rule; and what rightful rule is and in whom vested, it behoves every man accurately and honestly to ascertain.

The consent of the governed is the only rational, real and adequate foundation for any authority besides parental. The very word, authority, denotes the source of governing power. Authority is what belongs to an author, the control of parental authorship or the trust of consenting authorship. Parents are authors and, accordingly, have authority over their children; other rulers are factors, and receive authority from those who have natural and rightful control over themselves and their possessions. No one can have any rightful authority in the church, but by consent of the church; or in the nation, but by consent of the nation; or in the family, but by consent of the parents. The owners and occupants of a territory have a perfect right to create whatever form of civil curatorship they prefer, to abolish or modify an old one, or to institute a new; and the only limits to their rightful powers are inalienable individual rights. The members of a church have a perfect right to institute or modify an ecclesiastical curatorship; and the only limits to their power are inalienable individual rights and the revealed will of the church's Head. Both in the church and in the nation, there is no source of visible and public power but the people; he who rules in

a church, without the consent of the members, is a spiritual despot, an ecclesiastical tyrant and usurper, an enslaver of souls; and he who rules in a nation, without the consent of the territorial owners and occupants, is a civil despot, a political tyrant and usurper, a practical metempsychosis of Nimrod and Nero.

Popular consent is both formal and practical. Consent to a system of government, or to specific acts of government, or to specific holders of governing power, may be formally given, by voice or vote, with unanimity or by majorities, in general assemblies or by representative agents. Consent may, also, be given practically, as when a nation contentedly inherits a form of political curatorship, or quietly acquiesces in one. England, in the nineteenth century, has not formally consented to the Bill of Rights, to Magna Charta, to the Royal succession; but she has consented practically, because she has contentedly inherited these things, and has forborne to use her power of abrogating or altering them. The United States of America, in this century, have not formally chosen the measures and arrangements of their revolutionising ancestors; but they have practically chosen them, though they had full power and authority to do otherwise. The same distinction obtains in relation to ecclesiastical *regime*, as well as to civil. Churches formally appoint officers, as vacancies occur; or they practically accept the provision that is made for them, by the arrangements of their predecessors. The latter method may easily be so enlarged and elaborated as to leave but little opportunity of change and, therefore, but little freedom. The noblest of all governments is self-government, and it is as rational and rightful as it is noble. To this every individual and every association should aspire and advance. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."¹

¹ Prov. xvi. 32.

"All that believed were together, and had all things common." Churches and nations are at perfect liberty to make any change they please, in harmony with essential individuality and divine authority, and to institute preliminaries and provisions accordingly. From the decisions of any society, acting representially, there is no appeal now but to the members themselves, to the collective society, and no other appeal at all but to the judgment-seat of Christ. All non-parental authority is the result of co-operation ; it is the effect and fruit of society ; the efflux and creation of some human partnership ; and to be righteously claimed and exercised, it must be, either formally or practically, the representative agency, the created service, of the persons associated.

SECTION IV.—*The origin of government signifies either the origin of society or the origin of curatorship.*

Society itself is either a divine institution, or a human compact, or both together. The divine institution of society, among free beings, such as men, cannot mean their compulsory combination ; it means the creation of men with social aptitudes and tendencies, and the divine control of men by inspirational or providential means. Men themselves must freely combine to make an actual association ; and they do thus combine by marriage, by continued residence or emigration, and by ecclesiastical entrance. They cannot continue combined without some means and method of co-operation and common care ; and these are nothing but government. Government is co-operative and curatorial machinery, the substitutionary agency and action of society. Without it, a society cannot last. The members of a society cannot be

always together; and, therefore, they must either be wholly inactive, in the intervals of convocation, or employ persons to act for them in such intervals. They may be too numerous also, like the inhabitants of a large territory, to meet together; and, therefore, they must act vicariously or representatively. These representatives may, for various reasons, confine themselves to the simple enactment of laws, and appoint a smaller number or a single individual, as an organ or as a practical fountain of power, to administer the laws which they make and to use, as executive curator, the powers and provisions which they legislatively grant. From the very nature and necessities of society, both government itself and the forms and gradations of just government arise; society is the original spring of all human curatorship and the ultimate court in all questions of human jurisdiction; and rulers are simply the formal or practical curatorial representatives of human society. There can be no rightful source of social power but the origination of society and society itself. Nothing can be more foolish or fanatical than for any individual now to claim power and authority, in a society, *by divine right*. The society itself may exist by divine right, and may operate by divine law; but the rectoral operation itself is nothing less or more than the society acting for itself, taking care of itself, by one or more individuals, as a stewardship, a factorship, a service, an agency, a representation, either formally or practically appointed. The right divine of priests and princes, of kings and constables, is an absurdity too palpable to be recognized and too mischievous to be endured. Miracles alone can authenticate it; and, in the absence of these, it is a monstrous insult to the reason and rights of mankind.

Civil government, for instance, must always have originated as a popular creation, or a popular acceptance, or

a popular enslavement. The people of the United States of America created their civil government, on their revolt against Great Britain ; and their successors accept the creation. The people of Great Britain, so far as they are represented in the legislature, have created several new aspects and principles of territorial management. The Israelites accepted the divine laws from Sinai and the divinely-appointed leaders. But the government of Nero and of many other tyrants was an enslavement of the people. The notion of a compact between rulers and people, as the origin of civil government, is fallacious in theory and false in history. A compact necessarily implies two parties, between whom the compact is made ; and, to ascend to the origin, we must not only reach the compact itself, but also the distinction of the parties, and ascertain how such a distinction occurred. What is properly meant by the origin of civil government is not a compact between rulers and people, but the commencement of the distinction between rulers and people ; and this distinction, it is evident, the people themselves create, or accept, or slavishly endure.

SECTION V.—*Summary.*

Every government, then, is either rightful or wrongful, or, in other words, a government of right or a government of might. The foundation of every rightful government is ownership ; and the form of every rightful government is direct or representative ownership. Every direct proprietary government is parental, and is either divine or human. Every other rightful government is one of trust or representation, either formally or practically, by either proprietary creation or proprietary acceptance, or, in other words, by either popular choice

or popular consent—the people of a society being the proprietors. It is, substantively, the same thing to say that every rightful non-parental government is the vicarious or substitutionary operation of society, and, therefore, is either a social creation or a social acceptance. Every other non-parental government is a social imposition and usurpation, a wickedness in high places.

In the study of government, the first question is—what government is rational? and the second—what government is rightful? and after these—what government is useful? The great blunder of placing the third question before the second has occasioned endless misapprehension and filled the eyes of inquirers with dialectic dust. By a certain class of writers, we are perpetually reminded of the imperfections and failures and evils of popular forms of government, and of the strength, stability and efficiency of unpopular forms. This is all very good, if men are designed to be mere subjects of sway, if man is born merely to be governed, and if the highest state of man is quiet submission. But if man is to be the source as well as subject of all sway, except God's; if man is to govern as well as be governed, to govern by collective co-operation, and to be governed by individual submission; if after subjection to divine government, the highest state and style of man is self-government; if all rational government denotes care; if all care is founded on proprietorship; if all proprietary care is exercised either in person or by proxy; if all proxy or representation is either the creation or the acceptance of the people composing the society in which the care is to be exercised; then the first question concerning any particular government does not respect the *capabilities* of the rulers, or the *success* of the rulers, but the *rights* of the rulers. First of all, we should not ask is the government *useful*, but is it *rightful*,—not is it good, but is it just? The plea of utility

can never warrant or vindicate what is unjust. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" The owners and occupants of a territory have a perfect right to create or accept what form of government and what agency of government they please; and no man has a right to subvert or assail such government on the ground that it is less useful than some other government. He may endeavour, by reason and argument, to change the will of the people themselves and thus, through them, improve the government; but if he acts otherwise, if he assails with violence the curatorial representation of the people, and especially if he trample upon the people themselves with armed bands, with military legions, and force upon them another form of government, under pretence of benefiting them, or under any other pretence, he is a robber of rights, an enemy and oppressor of the people, A POLITICAL PIRATE, whom no words can sufficiently execrate, and against whom, as such, no opposition can be too indignant, determined and relentless. Let men do what they will with their own. If they fail or err, the failure or error is theirs. In the field of their own possessions and in the school of their own experience, they will improve and grow wise. They are accountable to none but God and subject to no control but his. What qualifies a man to rule is one thing, what constitutes him a ruler is another. Every claimant of social power is an impostor and a tyrant who cannot authenticate his claims by the miraculous attestation of God, or by the consent of the society in which he claims to govern.

Christ is the owner of the church, because he made it; and he rightfully rules it because it is his. The only rightful government in the church is the government of the head and the government of the body, the ecclesiarchal rule of Christ, and the ecclesiastical rule which the churches themselves create or accept, in harmony

with the Sovereign's rights and revelation. Every other government in the church is an imposition, an innovation, an oppression, a despotism and defraud, a robbery and wrong.

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CHAPTER II.

ECCLESIAARCHAL OPERATION.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, as Ecclesiarch or King of his church, operates legislatively and administratively. As ecclesiastical legislator, he enacts the laws by which, his kingdom among men is governed and discriminated; as ecclesiastical administrator, he conducts and controls the application and use of all the resources and possessions of his kingdom, in harmony with his laws. The legislation is invisible in its source and overt in its form, or theopneustic¹ in its origin and andricostic² in its expression, in one comprehensive word, biblical; the administration is invisible in its source and agency, as providential and pneumatical, and also overt or visible, as consisting in the events of Providence and the fruits of the Spirit. Strictly speaking, the communication of law is an administrative process, and, accordingly, legislation is the dictation of law, and administration the development. Law is dictated by Christ as the originator, owner and overseer of the church; and law is developed by Christ, in theopneustic influence, andricostic communication, ecclesiarchal administration and ecclesiastical obedience. The first two of these means of development belong to the study of inspiration, but the resultant church-law belongs to the study of ecclesiography.

¹ "All Scripture is *theopneustic*," "given by inspiration of God."

² *Andricostic*, human, from *ανδρικος*.

SECTION I.—*Ecclesiarchal Legislation.*

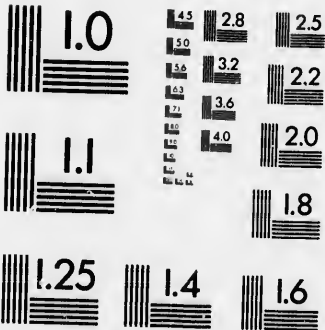
The will of Christ, revealed and registered in the collection of literary compositions called the bible, presents to the church two great aspects, or consists of two great elements, a code of regal precepts to be recognized and observed, and a message of regal instruction to be received and communicated. These are the church's creed and code. Nothing can be taught as the truth of Christ, and nothing can be pleaded as the law, will, or authority of Christ, but what is contained in his written word; and, therefore, to allege any secret communication of Christ or any inward call of his Spirit, as an ecclesiastical commission or command, is to add to his written will and to incur a fearful penalty. A man's belief, for instance, that God has called him, or inwardly moved him, to the work of the ministry, may be to him a reason for offering himself to the church, for that work, or a reason for accepting a call to it; but it can be no reason to a church to call him or to accept him, for this simple and sufficient reason that it is utterly unknown to the church, it is a secret transaction in the man's own mind or between the man and God, which nothing but a miracle can develop; and, consequently, such an alleged divine call or mission can give no man any authority to teach or to rule in the church of Christ, or in any other human society. It is fanaticism and folly to allege a divine call now, in this non-miraculous era, as a foundation or reason for ecclesiastical office and authority, and it is a sinful and most reprehensible attempt to add to the perfected revelation of God.

The laws of Christ consist rather of general practical principles than of particular precepts; and, accordingly, they transfuse the heart, without oppressing the memory, and operate as vital influences, not mechanical means.



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The great permeating practical principle of the church, as of the individual christian, is THE LAW OF LOVE. "Let all your things be done with love."¹ Love is the noble impulse, the pure and pregnant source, of all christian excellence. The church should be governed by love of God, love of the brotherhood, love of our neighbour; and from such love should spring continually the faithful conveyance of divine truth and the elicitation of divine power. It is not necessary now to trace the ramified influence of this love, but as the spirit of ecclesiastical law to ascertain its general aspects; the specific aspects and the more particular precepts will be found distributed through the subdivisions of ecclesiastical operation.

1. The primary ecclesiarchal law is SUBJECTION TO CHRIST, and the corresponding impulse or motive is *loyal love*. The law and the motive are thus indicated: "One is your master, Christ:" "the church is subject unto Christ:" "if ye love me, keep my commandments." The fear and love of Christ should prompt and characterize all ecclesiastical operations. The church can have no rightful power to frame or enforce any rule or regulation in opposition to Christ's supremacy, against his revealed will or without it, or to teach or maintain any doctrine additional or repugnant to the message which Christ himself has deposited in his house. The sovereign authority of Christ prohibits and annuls all counter claims and pretensions. Our sovereign Lord must be obeyed and honoured, whoever may choose to contradict or question, or whatever may be the concomitant or consequent difficulty and risk. In all ecclesiastical cases, direct reference should be made to the words of Christ, to ascertain his will; and no organization, ordinance or

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

officer, is to be recognized or respected that contravenes his rights and revelation. "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."¹

Love is an associatory emotion, for it comprehends the known associates of its direct and proper object. We cannot love Christ, without loving all the known associations of Christ, particularly the truth by which he sanctifies and sustains. To preserve, propagate and promote the truth, with fervent love and zeal, is the great office and business of the church. Nothing that can guard the truth from corruption, that can elucidate its meaning, that can multiply and diffuse its accurate transcriptions and translations, its due rehearsal and exposition, and that can worthily promote its prevalence, should be neglected by the church of Christ.

2. The second ecclesiarchal law is MUTUAL SUBJECTION; and the corresponding impulse or motive is *brotherly love*. The law is thus stated: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another:"² "submitting yourselves one to another."³ The motive is thus stated: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."⁴ "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love."⁵ "Love as brethren."⁶ The rule and the motive are thus combined: "By love,

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 3—5. ² 1 Peter v. 5. ³ Eph. v. 21. ⁴ John xiii. 34, 35.

⁵ Rom. xii. 10.

⁶ 1 Peter iii. 8.

serve one another."¹ This is the great law of ecclesiastical reciprocity, founded on ecclesiastical equality and loyalty, and is fraught with important and extended influence. Love to Christ binds the whole body to the head; and mutual love, co-operating, binds the members to each other. The law of subserviency to Christ precludes all just dispute about sovereignty in the church, for it secures that sovereignty to Christ alone; and the law of mutual subservience precludes all just dispute about priority or pre-eminence in the church, for it disallows such a position to any. Among scriptural churchmen, none is first and none is last, none is greater or less, for all are equal. Just distinctions in the church are not original and gradational, but created and operational. Christians are members one of another, not one above another or one before another. He who claims more power in the church than belongs to others, unless he has received it from the church, and he who claims more power, as the gift of the church, than the church has given or can lawfully give, is an ecclesiastical impositor and usurper, whatever may be his real or apparent piety, ability or services, and whatever may be the grounds and historical antecedents of his claims.

Mutual law involves the love of the church, agreeably to the precept—"Love the brotherhood." The service required of the christian, to his fellow-christians collectively or individually, is purely mutual and scriptural. Only as disciples of Christ in the church, are men to submit to each other and to serve each other, and only in conformity with the sovereign rights and regulations of the divine head. How admirably this mutual submission and service are adapted to promote union, peace and cordiality, must be evident at a glance. Where

¹ Gal. v. 13.

each is subject to each, and where none is before or after another, there can be no collision or conflict. The due observance of this law would speedily realize the exquisite picture of the psalmist: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

3. The third ecclesiarchal law is CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS, and the corresponding impulse or motive consists of *loyal love, brotherly love, and neighbourly love*. This law is stated and reiterated with great clearness and emphasis: "Let everything be done unto edifying"; "Let us follow after the things wherewith one may edify another."² "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort."³ Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are all intended "for the edifying of the body of Christ."⁴ "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without."⁵ "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:" "Go thou and do likewise."⁶ The second law requires mutual christian service; the third law expounds such service, as usefulness, and extends this usefulness to them that are without. Ecclesiastical brethren we are to serve with brotherly love; ecclesiastical aliens we are to serve, as known or as neighbours, with neighbourly love; and aliens as unknown or not neighbours, with loyal love, in obedience to sovereign precept. Our neighbours are not all men, as is often supposed, but those who are *nigh* us, according to both Greek and Saxon etymology. Vicinity to a house is denoted by the word *περιοικος*,⁷ from *περι*, near, and *οικος*, a house; *γειτων*⁸ from *γεα*, the land, denotes territorial vicinity; *πλησιον*⁹ is from *πελας*, near; and each of these words is rendered "neighbour." Our Lord's narrative of the good Samaritan simply teaches us that any

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

² Rom. xiv. 19.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

⁴ Eph. iv. 12.

⁵ Coloss. iv. 5.

⁶ Luke x. 27, 37.

⁷ Luke i. 58.

⁸ Luke xiv. 2.

⁹ Luke x. 27.

man is our neighbour who is near us, irrespectively of his national origin or party position. The wounded Jew and the journeying Samaritan were neighbours to each other, because they were near each other; and of all that saw the victim of injustice, the Samaritan alone was the consistent neighbour, because he alone performed a neighbour's part. We cannot love as ourselves, we cannot love at all, one who is not near us, or whom we do not know; but while brotherly love constrains us to benefit the brotherhood, neighbourly love to benefit the neighbourhood, the love of Christ should constrain us to benefit the worldhood. The universal promulgation of the gospel does not spring from the love of our neighbour, but from the love of our Saviour. The world needs the gospel, the church is charged to supply that need; and, therefore, the great business of the church is usefulness to the world.

The spirit of christian usefulness will produce true courtesy and kindness and generous self-denial. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour:" "Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good, to edification."¹ "All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."² What is lawful for us to do, what we have a perfect private right to do, may yet be of doubtful and dangerous social tendency, and should, therefore, be foregone. For the sake of usefulness we may not violate the rights of others, but we may relinquish some of our own. Private interests must often give way to public good, else love of country, love of christians and love of Christ are mere empty sounds. "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."³ So Paul would forego for ever his right to eat flesh, if the use of such a right made his brother offend; because to act otherwise were

¹ Rom. xiii. 10; xv. 2.

² 1 Cor. x. 23.

³ Rom. xv. 3.

to sin against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, and, consequently, to sin against Christ.¹ Even his life he counted not dear to him, if he could achieve the desired usefulness, by finishing the ministration assigned him, the publication of the gospel of the grace of God.² His own apostolical authority, he tells us, and consequently all other ecclesiastical authority, was given for edification and not for destruction.³ Accordingly, while he was solicitous, on the one hand, that the incessant person and his leavening influence should be expelled, he was solicitous, on the other hand, that the offender should be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.⁴ Thus did he endeavour to harmonize his rights and duties, his love of Christ and the church with his love of souls, adapting all his authority and gifts to the proper purpose, and furnishing a model of conduct to all churches and churchmen, in every age and place. The end of all ecclesiastical office and authority is "the edifying of the body of Christ," by sustentation and increase; and sooner than peril or hinder the accomplishment of that great end, all office and authority should be relinquished to the church that gave them.

4. The fourth ecclesiarchal law is PROPER ORDER, and the corresponding impulse or motive is *the same as the motive to usefulness*. The law is thus stated: "Let all things be done decently and in order."⁵ The three preceding laws prescribe what is to be done; this law prescribes the means and method, not in form and detail, but in spirit and substance; and the motives to the end are the motives to the means. The duty of proper order in a church implies power to maintain order, and, therefore, implies government and discipline. So far as inspiration dictates the details of duty, the church has

Rom. xv. 3.

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 10--13. ² Acts xx. 24. ³ 2 Cor. x. 8. ⁴ 1 Cor. v. 6, 7.
⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

but to interpret and obey; in other details, the church should deliberate and decide; and in all, the church should proceed "decently and in order." To the second class of details belong such matters as the locality, style, size and construction of an edifice; duration and intervals of convocation; order and agency of public ministration; method and agency of foreign evangelism. Church government is not a mere matter of taste and choice, for church ends make it essential, and Christ's law makes it imperative. There cannot be subjection and usefulness in the church without decency and order, and there cannot be decent order without government. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."¹ "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly."² "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."³

Christian order is as distinct from tyranny as it is from anarchy, and propriety differs as widely from worldly pomp or stately stiffness, as it does from indecency. Order is not enjoined for its own sake but as a means to an end, not for the sake of a governing few but for the welfare and efficiency of all; and propriety is not inculcated to generate or justify mere form and show, but as illustrative and promotive of christian holiness. As military authority, tactics, discipline and equipments subserve military ends, so proper order subserves the

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33.

² 1 Thess. v. 12—14.

³ Col. ii. 5.

usefulness of the church and the pleasure of her glorious head.

First of all, the head of the church decrees ECCLESIASTICAL SUBJECTION, both *subordinate* to himself and *co-ordinate* among church-members; secondly, ECCLESIASTICAL BENEFICENCE, to both *church-citizens* and *church-alien*s, whether the latter be near or far; and thirdly, ECCLESIASTICAL ECONOMY, including *decency*, or good taste, and *order*, or good method. The source of all these laws is Christ, "the blessed and only Potentate" of the church; the subject of all these laws is the church itself, the body of Christ, not the mere clergy or officers of the church, for Paul says "to the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord"—"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular;"¹ the sense of all these laws is most clear and comprehensive; and the spirit of all these laws is love, love to Christ, love to the brethren, and love to our neighbours. The church is "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," and to interpret and fulfil such law is the church's noble function and peerless glory.

SECTION II.—*Ecclesiarchal administration.*

The administrative agency of Christ is both pneumatical and providential. Absent from the church, in his humanity, he is yet present and effective in his divinity, by his world-wide power and by his hallowing Spirit. From his mediatorial throne, at God's right hand, he conducts and controls all the means and methods of his kingdom, "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

¹ 1 Cor. i. 2, and xii. 27.

It is unnecessary to repeat here what has already been said respecting the agency of the Holy Ghost, as the great awakener, caller, enlightener, purifier and energizer. It is only necessary to distinguish his operations, as such, in the WORKING of the church, from his operations, as such, in the FORMATION of the church, as the two are in several respects different and yet not always accurately discriminated. We must also distinguish his SAVING operations, in men *individually*, from his ADMINISTRATIVE operations, in his servants *collectively*. The latter only are ecclesiarchal. The operations of Christ and of his Spirit are one, and hence the epistles of Christ to the churches are "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Christ himself has "the seven spirits of God," that is, the perfect Spirit, that perfectly operates in and by the church and its individual members; and, accordingly, the Spirit is given to Christ, in the administration of his kingdom, "without measure."

Providential control subserves pneumatical. Over all the secular interests and affairs of his church, and over all its external and declinate relations, Christ presides; as he presides over the secularities of individual saints, numbering the hairs of their heads, ordering their steps, fixing the bounds of their habitations, and supplying them with meat, drink and clothing. He affords his church due direction and protection, in all secular changes and political convulsions, in fulfilment of his gracious assurance—"All things are yours . . . life . . . the world . . . things present."

1. Christ RESIDES in the church. The first churches are described as walking in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.¹ Paul, writing "to the church of God which is at Corinth and to them that are sanctified in Christ

¹ Acts ix. 31.

Jesus, to saints vocationally, with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," says—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."¹ He writes to the Ephesian christians, as "buildd together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit."² Peter says to believers—"the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."³ And to John, in the symbolic scenes of the apoc'lypse, Christ appeared, walking "in the midst of the candlesticks," resident and regnant among the churches; and described himself as having "the key of David," the control of the house by the command of the key, and, therefore, as "he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." He regally resides in his house, checked or controlled by no other power whatever. Whoever obtrudes himself into Christ's house, except as an occupant according to the law of the house, and whoever, in Christ's house, dares to deviate from Christ's own law of admission and exclusion, must not only fail in his attempt to injure the house, but must himself suffer the penalty of his misconduct. Nothing can be more cheering to the churches, large and small, than the assurance of Christ's constant and gracious presence: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Respecting a foul offender, Paul says to the Corinthian church—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."⁴ The assembled church is thus directed to act in the name and with the presence

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. ² Eph. ii. 22. ³ 1 Peter iv. 14. ⁴ 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

and power of its head ; and with the spirit of the apostle, because furnished with his inspirational and authoritative written directions.

2. Christ **COGNOSCES** the church. He constantly observes his churches and knows everything respecting them. To the church in Ephesus he says—"I know thy works, and thy labours, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil."¹ To the church in Smyrna he says—"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."² To the church in Pergamos he says—"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is."³ To the church in Thyatira he says—"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first."⁴ To the church in Sardis he says—"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."⁵ To the church in Philadelphia he says—"I know thy works."⁶ And to the church of the Laodiceans he writes—"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot."⁷ Hence it appears that the whole character, condition and circumstances of the churches are known to Christ, and that nothing can be concealed from his eyes of flame. How alarming is this to unfaithful churches ; and how cheering to the faithful !

3. Christ **PRESERVES** the church. It is at once the fruit and the instrument of his continuous sway. He promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and that he would be with it always ; and the unbroken continuity and unimpaired vitality of the church, after

¹ Rev. ii. 2. ² Rev. ii. 9. ³ Rev. ii. 13. ⁴ Rev. ii. 19. ⁵ Rev. iii. 1.
⁶ Rev. iii. 8. ⁷ Rev. iii. 15.

the struggles, convulsions and perils of eighteen hundred years, amply illustrate and verify his promise.

The apostles and primitive members of the church died, but the church has not expired. The tides of life have swept into the church and out again, have flowed and ebbed, through her and around her, during scores of ages, but her population has not perished or her battlements fallen. This is the more remarkable as the church is a purely voluntary and unworldly association. Its membership is not renewed and perpetuated by local or territorial birth, like the population of a town or country, but by personal choice; and it is itself not only morally unlike the world but morally against the world, maintaining an uncompromising and ceaseless warfare with the native tendencies and ways of mankind. It is in the world morally what the Jewish race is ethnically, everywhere peculiar and everywhere preserved, a stream that flows through every ocean but is absorbed by none. No other voluntary union has been preserved and perpetuated like this. Birth makes men citizens, Mohammedans or Pagans, but it cannot make men Christians or true churchmen. Only the continued power of divine truth and grace could maintain and multiply such associations as consistent churches. No plans that are formed, no cohorts that are assembled, in the gates of her foes, shall ever prevail against the church. Every possible species and amount of hostility have already been arrayed and expended against her in vain. Her foundations are in the holy hills, and neither earth nor hell can mine them or raze the superstructure. Her strength consists of the walls and bulwarks, the great salvation, which God has appointed. For eighteen hundred years, war has incessantly thundered at her gates and menaced her very existence, but she securely lifts her battlements to the skies and benevolently enlarges her power and

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4. Christ FURNISHES the church. He gives his revealing word and his renewing Spirit; and the result is "a holy nation, a peculiar people," to mount the ramparts and maintain the war. And he gives gifts to qualify for ecclesiastical office: "When he ascended up on high, he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" and not for a season only, but "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."¹ Christ gave ecclesiastical officers personally, by selecting and educating the apostles; he gives officers legislatively, by biblically authorizing the appointment and continuance of them; and he gives them administratively, in his providential and pneumatical operations, by disposing and assisting the church to elect, and the elected persons to accept and fulfil the trust. By his word, he calls all his disciples to useful labours, by his Spirit he qualifies them; and hence every true christian feels constrained to promote the prosperity of the church and the glory of Christ. But Christ calls no man, directly and specifically, in post-apostolic times, to a specific

¹ Eph. iv. 11—13.

ecclesiastical office. He leaves this direct and specific call to the churches, to whom it naturally belongs. There is not a single sentence of the New Testament that teaches the doctrine of a direct divine call to the christian ministry, in post-apostolic times. The formative officers of the church, the apostles, were directly and individually chosen of Christ; but the consecutive functionaries are not so chosen. Christ created the church; and the church, in subserviency to Christ, creates the ministry. When Paul tells the Ephesian elders that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers of the flock, he simply asserts a fact, but not the *modus operandi* or manner of the Spirit's agency, which, therefore, we must gather from other passages. Parallel passages are those relating to the confession of Christ and to the origin of civil government. "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost," because every man is indebted for all his knowledge of Christ to the recorded *revelations* of the Holy Ghost, and because he can perform no acceptable worship or service but by the *help* of the Holy Ghost. No man can truly call Jesus Lord but by the revealing and regenerating Spirit. And so no man can be an overseer of the church but by the Holy Ghost, that created and continued the church, that has revealed Christ's legislation for the institution of overseers in the church, and that conducts Christ's administration for morally qualifying men to act as overseers in the church. If Paul's words mean more than this, they mean an operation of the Spirit peculiar to apostolic times, which can be no precedent and rule to us. Because the Holy Ghost created and continues the church, he is the maker of its officers and agents; just as the civil powers are said to be "ordained of God," because civil association is God's ordinance. The language respecting the divine origin and ordination of civil rulers is, if there be any

difference, much stronger than the language relating to the appointment of church elders ; and it is a perversion of biblical language, in either case, to quote it in support of a direct divine call. The right divine of clergymen is parallel to the right divine of kings. As reconcileable as popular civil rights and the popular origin of civil power are with the divine sovereignty and the divine origin of civil government, so reconcileable are popular ecclesiastical rights and the ecclesiastical creation of the ministry with the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost and his institution of elders in Ephesus. God ordains civil rulers because he ordains the civil society that appoints or accepts them ; and the Holy Ghost makes elders because he makes the church that makes them. In neither church nor state is there a direct divine call, a call of individuals, to office and authority. No one is a rightful political ruler, unless he is appointed or accepted as such by the territory or nation in which he rules ; in other words, unless he is formally or practically elected by the people. And no one is a rightful spiritual ruler, unless he is appointed or accepted as such, unless he is formally or practically elected as such, by the people of the spiritual society or church in which he ministers. He has no power but what they give, and only while they give it. There can be no greater absurdity, no greater fanaticism and folly, than to make an alleged secret divine call the ground and reason of a public office, of a tutorial and governing function, in a church. To render a divine call thus broad and obligatory, it should be correlative and complete ; it should be at once to an individual to teach and rule, and to a church or churches to be taught and ruled by him. But no such double call has any sanction in Scripture or any actual recognition in the churches. The dogma of a partial divine call, a call to rule but not to be ruled, can be accounted for only by tracing it to gross igno-

rance, to fanatical folly, or to the pride and ambition of clerical caste; and, in any method of accounting for it, the stream has all the feculence of its source, the offspring is the worthy likeness of its parent.

In the selection and appointment of christian ministers, as in the various events of every christian's life, especially the more important events, we ought to recognize a sacred pneuma and a special providence. "It is God that worketh in us, of his own good pleasure, to will and to do." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," in fulfilment of his precept and promise—"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." The Spirit and Providence of God are doubtless concerned in the deliberations and decisions of the electing church and of the consenting elected person. The divine agency is not miraculous, but moral and providential; not analogous to the election of apostles, but to the guidance of all true christians; not such as to be an infallibly-ascertained rule of action or a formal ground of office and authority, but an important and encouraging means, to both parties, of deliberate and prudent christian choice. These distinctions well serve to illustrate our Lord's command: "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."¹ And they accord with Paul's language, in charging Archippus to "take heed to the ministry which he had received *in* (εἰ, not *from*) the Lord,"² and in describing differently his own ministry as that which he had received *of* (κατα, not merely *in*) the Lord Jesus."³

The operation of Christ, therefore, in furnishing his church with ministers, is both legislative and administrative. It is his law that his church should operate by

¹ Matt. ix. 38.

² Col. iv. 17.

³ Acts xx. 24.

appropriate order and agency. And it is the aim and achievement of his administration to promote the fulfilment of this law. This administration is both pneumatical and providential. By his Spirit, he secretly influences his faithful churches and faithful servants, in the bestowal and acceptance of office. And by his providence, he brings churches and individuals, who are fit for each other, together, and guides them both in the formation of the proper relations.

5. Christ RECTIFIES the church. He does this by extinguishing some corrupt churches and by reforming others. It depends on his own sovereign wisdom and will how far a church may degenerate, and how long it may continue degenerate, without destruction; but that destruction is the doom of incorrigible churches is clearly taught in the New Testament. Christ to the church in Ephesus says—"Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."¹ To the church in Sardis he says—"Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."² Babylon, the symbol and type of incorrigibly corrupt churches, is doomed to be "utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."³ As a tree is purified or pruned by the excision of dead or incurably decayed branches, so the church of Christ is rectified by the destruction of degenerate and offensive churches. The Jewish tree was hewn down with the Roman axe; and the fallen churches of Asia and Africa were wasted and destroyed by the Mohammedan sword.

¹ Rev. ii. 5.

² Rev. iii. 3.

³ Rev. xviii. 8.

Christ also rectifies by reforming; and the means of reformation and improvement are his own word and Spirit, his providential chastisements, and, as warnings, the fate of corrupt churches and of the church's foes. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."¹ To the church in Pergamos he says—"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them [the Nicolaitanes] with the sword of my mouth,"² the word of God. To the church of the Laodiceans he says—"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent."³ And to the church in Thyatira he says, of Jezebel—"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."⁴ Jezebel, originally the name of Ahab's wife, who introduced additional idolatry into Israel, and nourished four hundred heathen prophets, is a symbolical apocalyptic name. It probably denotes a corrupt religious party. That it denotes religion of some kind or form is evident from the fact that Jezebel called herself a prophetess; and that Jezebel was not a mere individual, is evident from her spiritual progeny: "I will kill her children with death." Children are imitators and followers; and it is these, not innocent offspring, that Christ threatens to kill. The constant apocalyptic symbol of true and false

¹ Eph. v. 25—27.² Rev. ii. 16.³ Rev. iii. 19.⁴ Rev. ii. 22, 23.

societies is a woman. The true church is the bride, the Lamb's wife; apostate churches are the scarlet harlot that sitteth upon many waters. So Jezebel is a corrupt religious party, answering to its prototype, Ahab's wife, by whom Israel of old was corrupted and misled. This party sought to seduce the christians of Thyatira into idolatry—"to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." Idolatry was a complicated and prolific evil, involving many sins in itself, and drawing others in its train, of which fornication was one, as well as a symbol of the whole. Chastisement was to be given to the Thyatiran seducers; destruction was threatened, in case of impenitence; and the grand result was to be the instruction and benefit of "all the churches."

6. Christ SUCCEEDS the church. It is the instrument of his power, and is absolutely and ceaselessly dependent on him. He operates, by his Spirit, in its convocations and ministrations. The church is not only to wield "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," but to pray always, with all prayer and supplication, "in the Spirit," by whom the requisite strength is given. The same Spirit of the living God that, by the apostles, wrote the primitive living epistles, "in fleshy tables of the heart," repeats and multiplies such epistles, by the church, from age to age. Now, as formerly, the souls of men are purified "through the Spirit in obeying the truth." Salvation is always "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," and both the church of Christ and individual man are always dependent on Christ for his Spirit's purifying power. The Spirit is Christ's own gift, which he pours forth, as the glorious fruit of his ascension and ecclesiastical installation, in fulfilment of his promise, and for the efficiency of his own truth. The symbolic stars are in the Ecclesiarch's hand; the weapon that conquers and converts the world proceeds from his

mouth ; he has the seven spirits of God, and by him the candlesticks are created, furnished, arranged, maintained and multiplied. He formed the vehicle, entrusted it with his truth, and enables it to diffuse the truth, with fidelity and effect. By his Spirit he presides in his assembled churches, to control and succeed their deliberations and deeds, according to his comprehensive promise that where two or three are gathered in his name, he himself is in the midst. By his Spirit he accompanies the messengers of truth and mercy always, even unto the end of the world. His providence prepares the way of his church and opens doors of usefulness for its agents and messengers. So a great door and effectual was opened to Paul ;¹ and so, before the church in Philadelphia, an open door was set, which no man could shut.² The church enters such doors and cultivates, with zeal and success, the accessible regions beyond, because Christ himself animates the church, goes with the messengers, and succeeds the means and ministrations. "God giveth the increase."³ "Not by might or by power, but my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."⁴ "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."⁵

7. Christ HONOURS the church. He gave himself for it, to make it "a glorious church." To the faithful but juvenile church of Philadelphia he says—"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."⁶ "The New Jerusalem is "a great city," "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," "having the glory of God," "and a wall great and

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 9.² Rev. iii. 8.³ 1 Cor. iii. 7.⁴ Zech. iv. 6.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 58.⁶ Rev. iii. 9.

high." The wall is jasper and the city itself pure gold ; the twelve foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones ; the twelve gates are pearls and the street is gold ; the Lamb, not revolving sun and waning moon, is its light ; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. God himself has magnified it, and the greatest of men occupy and honour it. Goodness is the highest greatness ; the highest goodness is the beneficent imitation of God, for "he that doeth good is of God ;"¹ and the church of Christ is great, because it is the dwelling-place of the Deity, the depôt of his truth, the social instrument and development of his highest designs and most glorious manifestations. The ecclesiastical Jerusalem is new, free, great, holy, heavenly, and the city of the living God.² "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."³ "The Lord saith . . . them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."⁴

¹ 3 John 11. ² Rev. xxi. 2, 10 ; Gal. iv. 26 ; Heb. xii. 22.

³ Isaiah liv. 17. ⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 30.

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CHAPTER III.

ECCLESIASTICAL OPERATION.

THE church operates, or ought to operate, according to its nature, origin and relations ; as Christian and local human society ; as the vehicle of divine truth and the eliciter of divine power ; as the body or social living instrument of Christ, in subservience to its originating and controlling head, and therefore in exact conformity to his written laws and in due regard to his pneumatical and providential sway.

Ecclesiastical operation, which comprehends ecclesiastical polity, is a web which cannot be disentangled, a labyrinth that can never be threaded, except with a single or local church, as the point of departure and the line of progressive inquiry, and with scripture only, as the sufficient and infallible guide. The controversies between episcopalians, presbyterians and independents have filled the air with clouds of dust and fogs of prejudice ; and our only method of escape is to climb the hill of revealed truth, which "midway leaves the storm," and upon whose glorious summit "eternal sunshine settles." Aids to biblical interpretation should be thankfully but independently consulted, while practical rivals of biblical truth, such as elaborate sectarian theories and party pretensions, should be quietly discarded. The inquiry is not what is old but what is true ; not what is customary but

what is canonical ; not what churches say but what Christ himself says. And just as all social science presupposes individual, so all comprehensive churchism presupposes particular churchism. To know man generally we must know man particularly. To know men we must know a man, we must begin with an individual of the human species, and we must never lose sight of an individual specimen. We may multiply but not disuse individual specimens. And to understand what the church is, how it began, how it is related, and how it operates, we must commence and continue our inquiries with particular or local churchism. It is thus that Christ teaches us in his word. He tells us of the church at Jerusalem, at Corinth and at other places ; and it is by the study of such ecclesiastical particulars that we are to prepare for ecclesiastical induction and generalization.

The operation of the church comprehends **THE NATURE OF THE WORK** which is to be performed, **THE MODE OF DOING IT**, and **THE OPERATIVE RESULTS** ; or, in other words, material, modal, and resultant operation. The material operation, or the work itself, consists of the duties which spring from the subordinate relations of a church to its head, from co-ordinate relations to other churches, and from extra-ordinate relations to the world. The modal operation consists of the original, the organical, and the local action of a church. And the resultant operation is the expansion of a church into the symmetry and size, the vigour and fertility, that achieve and embody the design and will of the Great Ecclesiarch.

SECTION I.—*Material operation.*

1. Towards Christ, or subordinately, a church should operate **EXECUTIVELY, NOT LEGISLATIVELY**. The first relation of a church and, therefore, its first duties are

towards Christ, because he is the church's creator and head. We cannot properly and accurately ascertain what a church is to do towards men, till we have ascertained its aspect and operation towards God. Guided by the usual distinction of social action or of government, as both legislative and administrative, the first inquiry obviously is whether both these or one only, and if only one which, belongs to a church. Upon the solution of this question the tenor of the whole remaining inquiry very greatly depends. If a church be clothed with legislative power, the field of its operation is exceedingly wide; if with executive power only, the field is both restricted and defined by the sole supreme legislation, and in this case we have only to ask what the lawgiver enjoins and allows.

The word law, so variously expounded and used, really signifies either method of action or indication of rectoral desire. Voluntary rules or modes of action, and the methods of nature's action or of natural change, exemplify the first signification; and the oral or written expressions of the desire of parents or of civil rulers exemplify the second. A law of nature is simply a method of natural change. A voluntary rule of life is merely a method of free action. But the law of a ruler is the indication of his desire. The law of God is the indication of his rectoral desire. Parental law is the indication of parental desire. Civil law is the indication of civil society's desire or of the desire of civil rulers. Whether the government be one of right or might, be just or unjust, the nature of law, in its governmental sense, is the same. What a ruler enacts, commands or legislatively requires, is the expression of what he desires his subjects to do. Law, therefore, has both a governmental sense and a merely methodical sense. It is with the first sense only we are now concerned. And in this

sense, law is of prime importance. The highest kind of government is legislation ; it is the first form and the formal fountain of all government. The right or power of legislation comprehends or implies the right or power of government in all its forms and stages.

It cannot be denied or questioned that Christ himself is the ecclesiarchal lawgiver. As the originator, owner and overseer of the church, as "head over all things to the church," he has, unquestionably, the right and power to legislate. And it cannot be denied that he has exercised his legislative rights and embodied his laws in the bible. The first of these laws to his church, as has been shown, is the law of subjection to himself. As Christ himself is the fountain of all ecclesiastical power, as "all power in heaven and earth is given to him," the church can have no rightful power but what Christ confers ; and the exercise of legislative power in a church, without his warrant, is a gross assumption and a flagrant infringement of his prerogative. Where, in his word, has Christ authorized his church to make laws ? Nowhere. The law of the church is not an ecclesiastical law, but a "royal law." "There is one lawgiver" and only one, rightfully, among churchmen. There is one authoritative and allowable law in the church and only one, the written will of Christ. No other law is needed, for this is clear and comprehensive. No other law is valid or permissible, for the Ecclesiarch allows no other. The church is the body of Christ, to which none but the Head is entitled to dictate. "One is your master, Christ," who alone makes laws for his spiritual house ; "and all ye are brethren," not lawgivers or lords. There was in Judaism no human legislation, because God was the sole legislator and because he gave ample written laws. And so there is no human legislation in the Ecclesiasm, because the Ecclesiarch does not sanction

it and because his written law supersedes it. Parents are entitled to give laws to their children and citizens to their country, because they are proprietors and because God has not furnished mankind with domestic and national laws. But the Ecclesiarch's legislation is perfect and exclusive. The scriptures are as complete for the church as for the individual believer. The sole function of the church, in relation to Christ, is *subservient administration*; and nothing is left to the decision of churches but matters of *executive detail*. The church is the vehicular and elective instrument of Christ; it is simply to receive and communicate the truth of Christ, to obey and elicit the power of Christ; and all this is service not sovereignty, obedience not dictation, law-fulfilling not law-creating. As christians, as churchmen, "we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ;" but we are under no other law. The scripturally constituted and conducted church knows no rabbi, no master, no father, no lawgiver, under Christ. Spiritual subjection to any human supremacy is expressly prohibited: "Be not ye the servants of men." Plurality as well as singleness of human masterhood is forbidden in the church: "Be not many masters," "for one is your master, Christ."

The right to create either creed or code is not given to the church; and to claim it is assumption and usurpation, an evident violation of the regal rights of Christ. The sufficiency of scripture is a doctrine of scripture, and an ample disclaimer of uninspired church standards. "The law of the Lord is perfect."¹ "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."² "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."³ "The holy

¹ Psalm xix. 7.² Psalm cxxxviii. 2.³ Isa. viii. 20.

scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that [without any other creed or code whatever] **THE MAN OF GOD may be PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS.**"¹ If scripture alone can perfect, can thoroughly furnish, the man of God, how impertinent and presumptuous is the introduction of any other rule or standard! We may have aids to the interpretation of the bible, but not authoritative substitutes for the bible; yet all uninspired ecclesiastical standards, creeds, canons, confessions, bodies of discipline and doctrine, are really and practically such substitutes. It may not be the design to make them such, but they really are such, or become such. They may be originated as simple aowals, but they always become authorities; and, as such, they necessarily eclipse and dishonour inspiration. The apocalyptic denunciation against adding or diminishing seems plainly to condemn all extra-biblical standards and authorities, because these cannot be framed by uninspired men without either excess or defect. Man may frame exegetical helps, but not authoritative church rules. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."² "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."³ The custom of the apostles and of "the churches of God," not the customs of classes or castes, are entitled to respect, in conformity to ecclesiarchal law.⁴

2. Towards other churches, or co-ordinately, a church should operate **FRATERNALLY, NOT CO-ORGANICALLY.** Apart from the formative power of the apostles, which was peculiar and temporary, no organic connection of

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 17. ² John v. 39. ³ 1 Peter iv. 11. ⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 16.

local churches has ever been divinely-instituted or divinely-authorized. As subordinate and executive, a church is related to Christ; and as co-ordinate and co-equal, it is related to all other churches. Towards Christ, a church should operate subserviently; towards all other churches, it should operate fraternally.

A church should operate with fraternal *freedom*. To operate freely is to operate singly and independently. The word church (*ecclesia*), in scripture, denotes either the totality of christian societies or a single christian society; and, accordingly, our choice lies between an absolute federation of churches, and the particular freedom and independence of churches, between the co-organization of all churches and the autocracy of each. The organic action of the whole church, throughout its whole range and duration, is of course impossible. Co-existence is essential to complete organization; but the church, in its totality, is not co-existent. "Part of his host has crossed the flood, and part is crossing now." Even a universal federation of existing local churches is either utterly impossible or too difficult to comport with the simplicity, elasticity and catholic adaptation of christianity. Neither the constitution of man himself nor the structure of his present planetary abode admits of a world-wide dominant or dictatorial federation. The dream of universal empire has never been realized by man and never can be, either secularly or spiritually. Local interests and attachments, and the essential individuality of man, will always resist a universal empire; and the barriers and demarcations of mountain chains, oceans, and desert wastes, will always obstruct such an empire, however wonderfully scientific art may mould and wield the energies of nature. The enactment and administration of laws by the whole world's centralized power, however that power may be created and

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constituted, is neither convenient nor allowable. It is not convenient, for it involves too much waste of time and strength and material, in collecting the world's representatives, in conducting the world's legislation, and in administering, by communication and enforcement, the world's decrees. And it is not allowable, because it is utterly unfriendly to the rights and liberties of mankind. Such a government, like all great centralized powers, would be sure to develop the evils and infirmities of lapsed humanity, in oppression and corruption, and would extinguish, in detail, all attempts at counteraction and cure, by employing its acquiescent forces to destroy the remonstrant. Its very universality would cut off, from the oppressed, all refuge and retreat. The undue growth of power, as respects width or intensity, always produces abuse; abuse of power always provokes resistance and precedes defeat; and hence, the undue centralization and increase of power invariably precede and promote their own overthrow. Powers weaken as they widen. The concentration of power, in its depositories, with the diffusion of power, over multiplying and expanding subjects, cannot long and safely pertain to man; their abolition is simply a question of time and manner. And as civilization and religion advance and spread, and as the intercommunion of nations and races becomes facilitated and strengthened, the time of abolishing tyranny becomes shortened, the manner simplified, and the abolition itself assured.

A universal ecclesiastical federation, then, a catholic church organization, is altogether inexpedient and impracticable. It would be, if practicable, the most hideous and mischievous despotism the world has ever seen, because it would be the slavery of souls and because, by the alleged authority of God for its acts, it would preclude all appeal and effectually stifle all means and

methods of counteraction. It would be a universal inquisition, a universal ecclesiastical despotism and dungeon. Every approximation to such dominion exemplifies and proves these views. For the same reasons, spiritual despotism, in all its forms and stages, is the most baleful. It seizes the soul, the source of action, and stupifies, fetters and freezes it. It claims the sanction of conscience and divinity, and thus cuts off all remedy and converts its own cruelty into ostensible excellence. Against no sort of assumption and ambition should the world so anxiously watch as against spiritual, ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, clerical. It is Satan transformed into an angel of light. It is the red-hot iron chain of Pandemonium, wrought perhaps into forms of exquisite beauty, gilt and burnished. It is the most deadly poison, though bottled and labelled as elixir, and redolent as the choicest perfume.

The same practical and fatal objections lie against any dominant ecclesiastical federation, less than universal and more than local. On what principle should it be circumscribed and defined? The relation of the church to the nation forbids and condemns the circumscription of an ecclesiastical alliance, according to political boundaries. The spiritual is not to be made conformable and coincident with the secular. Nor is the church to be moulded and organized according to the great divisions and distinctions of the globe. The New Testament furnishes no principle for either the circumscription or catholicism of ecclesiastical legislatures, and no warrant for their existence at all. The convocation of apostles, elders and brethren, at Jerusalem, belonged to the formative era of the church and can be no model for consecutive eras; it derived all its authority from the presence and participation of inspired men, or rather, from the Spirit of Christ speaking through them; and it can

be no precedent and parallel for uninspired and post-apostolical assemblies and agents.

Denuding the church of its unwarrantable legislative powers, it is natural to ask—What has an authoritative federation or an elaborate organization of churches to do? No power to legislate is no power to dictate, and is, in fact, no power to do anything but obey. The right of ecclesiastical legislation once disallowed and disproved, all authoritative church confederacies vanish into thin air or appear in the deformity of assumption and imposition. To teach and pray are the business of every church; no ecclesiastical dictation of this business is either necessary or allowable; and, therefore, no authoritative organization of churches is scriptural. The question is not what the apostles or their special assistants did, but what the churches themselves are authorized to do. The church at Rome had no right of interference with the church at Corinth, and *vice versa*; until the mystery of iniquity began to work, until ecclesiastical ambition and assumption began their course, until “the man of sin” began to seat himself in the temple of God, the house or church of the living God, showing and exalting himself, as if he were God. This man of sin is the symbol of all ecclesiastical usurpations, dominations, dictations, proud prelacies and paparchies. There can be no appellate court without legislative power to create it; the churches have no such power; and Christ, the legislator, has created no such court. Nothing like appeal from the adjudication of a church is even hinted at in the New Testament, in the most indirect manner, but the reverse. If an offending brother will not hear our own remonstrance or the remonstrance of one or two more, we are to tell the matter to the church to which both parties belong; and, if he will not hear the church, he must cease to be a member of it; he must

become "a heathen and a publican," instead of a brother and fellow-citizen. From the judgment of the church at Corinth, there was no appeal to the judgment of the church at Ephesus or Antioch. Each church was free and independent, though fraternally related. All individual christians and all individual churches are brethren, and, as such, distinct and unlettered. Ecclesiastical courts of review and appeal are altogether unknown in the New Testament, and were never heard of in the churches till Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome began to lift up their heads, and exercise control over other urban, as well as rural, churches. Each church, as well as each nation, is a free and independent connection, authorized and required to execute the will of Christ, and to pronounce final judgment in all disputes; with this difference, however, that a church is simply executive, and that a nation is both legislative and executive. It is just as idle and vain to complain of the hardship of finality in the one as in the other. There must be finality somewhere in the determination of all human disputes; and it is vastly better to end a dispute, where the rightful judiciary ends, than to prolong a dispute by the creation or acceptance of unwarrantable courts of review and appeal. From the judgment of a church and a nation there is no legal appeal but to the judgment-seat of Christ; and there ought to be no other, though there may be, and there is, a practical or moral appeal to Christendom and Humanism. A controversy confined to a single church is comparatively topical and temporary; but repleaded and reviewed in the successive appellate courts of federal churchism, it expands and matures its distracting influence, till the families and churches of a district, a province or a kingdom, become disturbed and distracted. The wind and waves of a lake soon spend themselves on the contiguous shore; the wind and waves of the

ocean may sink a distant ship. The churches of Christ are candlesticks, detached, local, self-sufficient in their relation to Christ; an authoritative federation of churches is an attempt to create a sort of monster candlestick. The stars of the churches are not united together, though comprehended in the Ecclesiarch's grasp. Each shines in its own orbit and by its own lustre. The folly and error of joining together what God has created and placed asunder are as great as the folly and error of putting asunder what God has joined together. Each church is a candlestick in the house of Christ, a city on a hill; and there is no warrant whatever for attempting to fuse the candlesticks or join the cities.

Every dominant or dictatorial federation of churches or of ecclesiastics, or, in other words, all co-organization of churches, is incompatible with the essential integrity, independence, and efficiency of local churches. The locality of the church, as has been shown, is as scriptural as its totality; and whatever cramps, impedes, or overlays individual churches is a perversion and abuse. So soon as churches, or church-officers, combine to wield a pervasive or comprehensive power, so soon the individual churches are fettered and obscured to the extent of that power, and threatened with a further and undefined extinction of their rights, liberties, and privileges. No local church can occupy a determinate and certain position, if it be subject to a human legislature and an appellate court. Its responsibility is then direct to man and only indirect to God, and its gravest judgments are but preliminaries and conditions of ultimate adjustments. Not thus has Christ created and constituted his churches, but unfettered and free, local and independent, single and self-sufficient in his almighty hand.

But the greatest and most fatal objection to all authoritative connexionism is its inconsistency with ecclesiarchal

rights. The power of general or comprehensive legislation and administration belongs to Christ alone ; it is his exclusive and inalienable prerogative ; he alone is head over all things to the church ; and whatever man or body of men claims or wields such power trespasses upon the crown rights and honours of Christ, seeks, so far and practically, to seize his sceptre and sit upon his throne. No agreement of churches or ecclesiastics can justify this, for it has no scriptural warrant, and the agreement itself is a conspiracy, in fact, against ecclesiarchal prerogative. There can be no extra-local church judiciary, no court of appeal and review, without power to create it ; such power is legislative and is either ecclesiarchal or ecclesiastical ; such power has not been conferred by Christ and such appellate court has not been instituted or sanctioned by him ; and hence church connexionism or co-organism is reduced to a form without power, or to a fraud and a pretence. As to authority from Christ, it makes no difference whether such connexionism is clerical, laical or mixed, assumed or delegated ; whether it be denominated a conclave, college, council, synod, assembly, convocation, conference or convention ; whether its members be orthodox or heterodox, sound or unsound ; the whole fabric is a human device, an unwarrantable assumption and usurpation, an infringement upon the corporate rights of local churches and upon the capital rights of Christ, a masterhood and lordship divinely-forbidden in the church, a prolongation or renewal of the old attempt and achievement to create a pyramid of ecclesiastical power and to assimilate the church to the world.

The proper operation of a church, the only authoritative operation, is single or local. Each church is bound and empowered to serve Christ, its creator and king, according to his own statute-book, the bible, the only statute-book of the church ; and each church is to

interpret for itself the contents of the bible. As each christian is bound and empowered to interpret the scriptures for himself, to instruct and guide him in his various relations; so each church is to interpret the scriptures for itself, in its relations to Christ, to co-existent churches and to the world. No other standard of truth or canon of duty is either needful or permissible. No federal dominancy is authorized to impose its interpretation of the bible, and no local church is allowed to accept such interpretation. Nor is any local church allowed to substitute, either wholly or partially, either directly or indirectly, its own written interpretations for Christ's written code. Biblical interpretation is a free and progressive process and should be performed by a church accordingly, as its relations and circumstances require. The interpretation of any one time is not to be imposed or accepted for all time, or as final and authoritative. The biblical text, freed from all corruptions, is final and unchangeable; but man's appreciations and interpretations of that text are not such and should not be imposed as such, in the creeds and confessions of local churches or of church connexionism. Can any uninspired composition be equal to the inspirational record? Can any antecedent christian or body of christians have had any greater right to interpret scripture than we ourselves have? Why should we bind ourselves to what Athanasius, Augustine, Ambrose or any one else has said or written, and not simply to what God-inspired men have written? Can any one church be more entitled to expound the ecclesiarchal revelation and rule than another? And can a church's interpretation of to-day be so peculiarly just and full as to preclude any exegetical attempt to-morrow, or any improved interpretation at any future time? The path of a church, like the path of a saint, in the exposition, execution and experience of

the divine will, should be like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Paul repudiated all control of Christian belief: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." We believe the bible, not because of the men who wrote it but because God speaks to us through them. He only has dominion over our faith; and, therefore, nothing but his own word can be rightly imposed or employed as a rule of religious faith and practice. Other compositions may be used by churches, ostensibly or intentionally and at the outset, as merely explanatory of the bible; but practically and eventually, they become rivals or opponents of the bible or, at the least, veils and shades of the bible; and from the very outset, they are substitutes for the bible, when they are adopted as rules of faith and practice, as tests of membership and ministration. Any church and any member of a church may express their apprehension of scripture, either orally or in writing; but they are not allowed to impose this expression as complete and unalterable or as the requisite expression of another.

The co-organization of churches, without a created constitution for faith and practice, has never been known and is plainly impracticable. A single church can operate without it, but not a connexion of churches or a territorial church, exercising legislative and appellate power. The very nature, the radical conception, of such a confederation involves extra-biblicism and is, therefore, unscriptural. Its boasted power to conserve divine truth is a fiction. It may humanize, it may stereotype theology; it may drive out diversity for a season; but it cannot prevent or destroy what it drives out and it cannot ensure itself, by all its stereotyped and salted orthodoxy, from degeneracy and corruption. If God's word cannot guarantee exemption from capital error, man's word

cannot, the co-organization of churches cannot. If Judaism never dared to create an extra-scriptural creed and code, the Ecclesiasm should not do it, but, renouncing traditionary or unauthorized belief, contend earnestly for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints.

The apostles themselves did not exercise general administrative power, in the churches. Their peculiarity consisted in the inspirational communication of truth, the miraculous authentication of truth, and the formation of the vehicle of truth. As inspired teachers, they told the churches what they ought to do, as well as believe, but they left the churches to do the work and to receive the truth freely; and they expressly repudiated dominion over their faith. They directed the church at Jerusalem to nominate deacons; Paul instructed the Corinthian church to expel the offender; and what they taught, as inspirational channels, each church freely and independently, as subordinated to Christ alone, received and practised. Even over christian teachers, the apostles did not claim the power of dictation and control. "As touching our brother Apollos," says Paul, "I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time." Language could not indicate greater freedom and independence than is attributed, in these words, to Apollos. Though not an apostle, he would not gratify the strong desire of even the apostle Paul, simply because he himself willed differently and waited for a convenient season. Modern ecclesiasticism, forsooth, would arraign, depose or severely censure such flagrant contumacy and insubordination as this. Federal ecclesiasticism is incompatible with this, and, therefore, is incompatible with scripture. It is a system of ecclesiastical degradation and enslavement, converting the local copartnerships of

Christianity into an unnatural and unwieldy confederacy, and substituting for christian equality and independence a complication and gradation of power, more or less aristocratic and usurpatory, derogatory to Christ and injurious to his people.

The independent or fraternally free operation of a church is a fulfilment of the primary ecclesiarchal law, which enjoins ecclesiastical subjection to Christ alone, and, therefore, forbids such subjection to any other. And ecclesiastical co-organism, sometimes called connexionism, is a violation of this law. Every church is a connection, and, therefore, what the New Testament disallows, is, properly speaking, not connexionism but co-organism, the organization of church with church; not the voluntary connexion or union of church delegates or representatives, without legislative or appellate or revisory power, but their union *with authority*. It is not the connexional principle that is wrong but the co-organical principle, if terms are correctly employed; the evil to be dreaded is not voluntary association but authoritative and dominant, not local connexionism but territorial. The choice lies simply between ecclesiastical independence and ecclesiastical co-organism, and there can be no hesitancy in choosing, if prejudice and policy be discarded and the teaching of the New Testament be earnestly and perseveringly sought.

A church should operate with fraternal *friendship*, as well as fraternal freedom. Though organically separate from all other churches, it is fraternally related to them, and should sympathize and co-operate accordingly. Fraternity denotes the friendship of common origin, as well as the freedom of co-ordination; and, therefore, on the one hand, it sanctions voluntary union, and, on the other, forbids authoritative connexionism. Brothers may help each other, but should not combine to coerce

each other. International relations are the relations of free and independent states, respecting each other's rights, sympathizing and assisting in each other's sufferings and wants. And inter-ecclesiastical relations are the relations of free and independent churches, not combining to dictate and coerce, but voluntarily and freely consulting one another, and helping one another, according to circumstances and ability. The churches of Christ are not permitted to conspire for the assumption and usurpation of sovereign legislation and control, or for the restraint and depression of local churchhood; but they are permitted to commune with each other, and to co-operate with each other, co-ordinately and freely. And such fraternal friendship as this may subserve momentous ends and interests. It may facilitate the education of the young, the training and preparation of ministers, the support of home and foreign missionaries, the relief and maintenance of aged and enfeebled ministers, the sustenance of small and feeble churches, the erection of ecclesiastical edifices in destitute neighbourhoods, and the relief of churches in lands or seasons of plague, war, or famine.

Such were the relationship and conduct of the primitive churches. They lived apart, in their several localities, but they loved as brethren: "In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability [by individual volition, not federal dictation], determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Which also they did."¹ "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the

¹ Acts xi. 27—30

churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality [or gift, or fraternal contribution] unto Jerusalem."¹ "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that, in a great trial of affliction [great famine, or great poverty occasioned by persecution] the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves [not prelatically, presbyterially or co-organically ordered]; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering [the friendly and fraternal ministering of pecuniary aid] to the saints."² "I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want: that there may be equality"³ "For as touching the ministering to the saints [by voluntary pecuniary gift], it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia [including Corinth] was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. . . . Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. . . . For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 1—3.² 2 Cor. viii. 1—4.³ 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14.

subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you."¹ The liberality of the churches, in all these instances—Antioch, Galatia, Macedonia and Corinth—was at once a fulfilment of inspirational precept and a free fraternal act. No organization or connexion of churches commanded it; no church or church-agent was summoned to pay an allotted quota, to account for deficiency, or to be censured for neglect. An inspired apostle instructed the churches in the duty of fraternal friendship, but never presumed to arraign and punish for neglect; there was no ecumenical council, no conclave of cardinals, no convocation of upper and lower clergy, no general assembly of ruling and teaching elders, no annual conference, to decree and enforce the charitable collection. The abundance of one church should supply the want of another church; and between neighbouring churches, particularly, there should be a reciprocity of sympathy and kindness; but there should be no combination of churches or of clerics to dictate laws to local churches, to arraign the disobedient, to hear appeals, and to wield a general and comprehensive power. Churches, like church-members, should sympathize and co-operate. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."²

Let us, then, duly appreciate the correlations of local churches and their consequent action. They are subordinate to Christ alone; they are co-ordinate among themselves; and as fraternally co-ordinate or co-equal, they should operate with ecclesiastical freedom and ecclesiastical friendship. Their freedom does not arise from

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 1, 2, 7, 12, 13, 14,

² 1 Cor. xii. 26.

estrangement but from social distinctness and completeness, like the freedom of political states or nations. Their friendship is obedience to divine direction, but not to human or ecclesiastical; it is not the result of a federation or organization of churches but of the common origin and fraternal kinship of churches; it is not the operation of co-organical office and authority but of local friendliness and love; and it is cognizable by no authority but that of Christ, and adjudicable at no bar but that of the last great day. No co-operation of churches is scriptural but what perfectly harmonizes with the rights of local churches and with ecclesiarchal pre-eminence, and is, therefore, a voluntary fulfilment of divine law. The manner of such co-operation is a matter of executive detail, to be considered and determined by the co-operating churches.

The fraternal friendship of a church is a fulfilment of the second ecclesiarchal law of brotherly love and the third law of Christian usefulness.

3. Towards the world, or extra-ordinately, a church should operate **EVANGELISTICALLY, NOT SELFISHLY**. A church operates towards Christ, as one above its ordinate; towards other churches, as in the same ordinate; and towards the irreligious, the non-ecclesiastical and non-christian, as without or beyond its ordinate or orbit. Accordingly, a church should serve Christ, befriend other churches, and benefit the world. The world, as distinguished from the church, consists of all without the church, and forms two great departments, the aliens of Christendom and the aliens of Heathendom, church-strangers at home and church-strangers abroad. To both these sections of the same large class, the church is related as a spiritual benefactor, an instrument of divine beneficence for salvation, a vehicle of saving truth and an eliciter of saving power. This beneficence may be

distinctively denominated evangelism, the communication of the good news, and forms the great and glorious field of CHRISTIAN MISSIONS, both domestic and foreign. Its source is the love of God to all men, its soul is the constraining love of Christ in the believing heart, its standard is the truth of God, and its sphere is the world. The charity of this evangelism should begin at home but should not stay there; it should "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The ecclesiastical vessel should circumnavigate the globe and gratuitously distribute its celestial cargo to every nation under heaven. The living waters that flow out, from under the temple, should deepen and widen, till they saturate and fertilize the globe. The river of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, should wind its way through every land; and the messengers of life should call from its banks, to every creature, to come to the waters and the conterminous fruit. The Spirit and the church cry come; every hearer should echo and obey the call; till all the nations are healed by the leaves of the life-giving tree and satisfied with the water of the life-giving river. Nothing can be nobler than the position of the church towards the world. It is the position of Heaven's selected almoner, of a universal dispenser of celestial treasure, of a messenger of mercy to a ruined race. The church is empowered to unfurl the banner of redeeming love in every land, to conduct the stream of life into every country, to kindle a light divine in every nocturnal shore and shade, to proclaim liberty to every captive, and to scatter the largesses of Heaven amid all the poor that perish. O blessed and glorious vocation! Well might angels envy such an embassy and eminence, and well might they weep, if either envy or sorrow could seize them, to see so glorious a function despised, so

godlike a work neglected. When will the churches of Christ fully awake to their honour and their shame, and send forth and sustain the messengers of mercy, with love and liberality, so as to hasten and ensure the evangelization of all mankind? "Say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth."

The evangelistic operation of a church is a fulfilment, to neighbours and foreigners, of the third ecclesiarchal law of christian usefulness. The difference between home-growth and missionary labour is purely circumstantial. Setting civil distinctions and considerations aside, as foreign to the office and work of a church, the difference between domestic and foreign missions is a difference of distance. With this may also be combined difference of language and manners, climate and comfort, and perhaps some more of the numerous practical and circumstantial diversities of our race.

SECTION II.—*Modal Operation.*

4. By original constitution, a church should operate COLLECTIVELY, NOT BUREAUCRATICALLY. If a church be, as has been proved, a partnership of equals, if one of its divine laws be mutual subjection, and if its proper operation be the independent execution of Christ's will, then its proper aspect and style are *an executive christian republic*. Let those describe it in fewer and juster terms who can; and let those who dislike and repudiate such an estimate, first overturn the premises on which it is based and from which it springs. The members of a church are originally on a level; who can prove an original and scriptural difference? They are to be co-ordinately and mutually subject; who can prove any other constitutional and original subjection? A church

is simply an executive society of Christ ; who can adduce ecclesiarchal authority for any other function, for any legislative power? A church is fraternally free, and therefore singly and independently constituted ; who can prove an authorized organization of churches? And who, then, can evade the obvious conclusion that a church is an executive equi-partnership of Christ? As such and in its various divine relations, its office and work are to interpret and obey the revealed will of its divine head. And the manner of such interpretation and obedience, it is now averred, is, first of all, COLLECTIVE.

How else but collectively can an equalitarian and executive committee of Christ begin to act at all? Where all are equal, the exercise of power on the part of any one or more members, without general consent, would be a flagrant assumption, usurpation and imposition—an iniquitous bureaucracy. And how is general consent to be ascertained and expressed but by the convocation and action of all the members? Their consent, privately and separately, is not their church consent, and can be no warrant or sanction whatever for any church agency or office. There can be no ecclesiastical interpretation and fulfilment of scripture but by a church itself or by a church's representatives. It cannot be by the church, without church assemblage and action ; it cannot be by the church's representatives, until these are fairly and freely chosen by the collective church. For men to say that they are christian ministers and therefore the representatives of a church or churches, by a divine commission and without the concurrence and choice of the assembled church, is an absurdity, a falsehood and a fraud. It is practically adding to Christ's words. Scripture, it has been shown, does not warrant the doctrine of a divine designation and commission for the ministry, except moral and providential, in post-

apostolic times. Besides, such a commission can be of no social obligation and value until it is socially developed and demonstrated, and this can be done by miracles alone, or by a direct divine call to the church to obey, as well as to an individual to rule. A divine call to obedience is the necessary complement of a divine call to government. But the fact is that since inspiration and miracles have ceased, the only rational, scriptural, and valid ground of official authority, as has been shown, is the formal or practical consent of society itself. In a nation of great antiquity and slow growth, practical consent to agencies and forms of government may be sufficient; and it may be sufficient in any nation, if the nation desire no better and despotism do not prevent a better. But in a local society, like a church, easily convoked and consulted, the assumption of power, or the plea of practical acceptance instead of formal appointment, is altogether unwarrantable and wrong.

The collective or convocational action of a church and the importance of its membership are clearly taught in scripture. In the first church, at Jerusalem, "all" that believed were "together," and were co-ordinate church-members. And, frequently, afterwards, we find specific mention of "the brethren," or church-members generally, in connection with apostles and elders, and of their convocation for business as well as devotion. "The apostles and brethren heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."¹ Peter was directed to declare his deliverance from prison "unto James and to the brethren."² "The apostles and elders and brethren" were concerned in the council respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles.³ Timothy was "well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium."⁴

¹ Acts xi. 1.² Acts xii. 17.³ Acts xv.⁴ Acts xvi. 2.

"The brethren sent away Paul and Silas" from Thessalonica, and sent away Paul from Berea.¹ It was two unofficial persons, Aquila and Priscilla, that qualified Apollos for eminent usefulness as a christian teacher, by expounding unto him the way of God more perfectly; and when he was disposed to go into Achaia, it was "the brethren" that introduced and recommended him. Some erroneously suppose that Aquila was a christian minister, because Paul calls him his helper in Christ Jesus. But helpers are not always official teachers, and they are even distinguished from teachers and governments by Paul himself.² Paul would not suffer a woman to teach or to usurp authority, yet he calls Priscilla his helper: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus."³ The woman is thus placed before the man, probably according to merit, because helping evidently denotes cordial co-operation, either in office or out. "Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers."⁴ On Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, "the brethren received him gladly."⁵ He tarried seven days at Puteoli, in compliance with the wish of the brethren; and he thanked God and took courage, when he was met at Appii Forum, by the brethren from Rome.⁶ It certainly does not appear, from such a style and strain as this, that "the clergy" are everything and the people nothing; that the former constitute the church; that the people are to be kept without power and in "quietness," content with paying and praying; but that the churches themselves, the people, the brethren, are everything, for whom all officers are appointed and all ecclesiastical machinery and methods instituted: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or

¹ Acts xvii. 10, 14. ² 1 Cor. xii. 28. ³ Rom. xvi. 3. ⁴ Philip. iv. 3.
⁵ Acts xxi. 17. ⁶ Acts xxviii. 14, 15.

death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are [not the priests' or the clergy's, but] Christ's; and Christ is God's."¹

The church is not "the clergy," "the collective pastorate," "the convocation of the archbishops and bishops and the whole clergy," or even "the apostles." "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad, throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."² All the church, except the apostles, was scattered; so that the apostles were not the church but a part of it. The separation of Barnabas and Paul to the work of systematically evangelizing the gentiles, in obedience to a divine command, appears to have been performed by the collective church in Antioch. The historian mentions five prophets and teachers, not, we think, as the persons *by* whom but *from among* whom the separation was made. Why is "the church" so expressly mentioned, if it was not to the church the command was given? If we suppose that the command was given to the five prophets and teachers, it follows that it was given to Paul and Barnabas, as two of the five, to separate themselves, whereas the command is not to them but respecting them: "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul."³ The sense of a historian must be ascertained by his usage; and all the antecedent and subsequent statements of the author of the Acts plainly indicate the collective operation of the church, in the origination of everything not peculiarly apostolical. Besides, when Paul and Barnabas fulfilled their work, they returned to Antioch, whence they had been sent; and they "gathered the church together," not a clerical synod or the other

¹ Philip. iv. 3.

² 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

³ Acts viii. 1.

⁴ Acts xiii. 2.

three, and "rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the gentiles."¹ If the collective church had executively separated them and sent them forth, nothing was more appropriate than its reception of the report of their journeys and labours. And such is the evident sense of the whole account.

In the council at Jerusalem, respecting the circumcision of the gentiles, the elders and brethren were included. The question at issue was solved by the Ecclesiarch himself, through his inspired apostles, not by the wisdom of man; but the solution was so reached and announced as to prevent even the appearance of a precedent for depressing the people, under the name of "the laity," or for magnifying the people's officers, under the name of "the clergy." It was to "the apostles and elders" the deputation from Antioch was sent; it was "the church" that brought "on their way" the members of the deputation, "Paul and Barnabas and certain others;" it was "unto all the brethren" that these deputies, in their journey and by the news of gentile conversion, "caused great joy;" it was "of the church, and of the apostles and elders," as a part of it, that they and their news were received in Jerusalem; the assembled council consisted of apostles, elders and brethren, for though, in the sixth verse, it is said that "the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter," yet in describing the result, the people's inclusion is recognized: "then pleased it the apostles and elders, *with the whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch," with letters declaratory of the conclusion; and these letters were sent from and in the name of "the apostles and elders and brethren,"

¹ Acts xiv. 26, 27.

announcing what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This council is no precedent and authority for post-apostolical councils, because they cannot be constituted and divinely-directed as it was, and because the completeness of scri^{pt}ure renders them unnecessary; and yet the apostolical and inspirational council was so constituted, conducted and described as to recognize most fully the rights of the people. Even inspired men did not confer with closed doors or shut out the people as unfit to be present and participant. What, after this, can we think of clerical councils, which exclude the people as either members or witnesses? Estimated as mildly as possible, they are an insult and an injustice to the body of Christ, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Soon after Paul's last arrival in Jerusalem, James and the elders, in a conference with Paul, remarkably recognized the convocational or collective rights of the brethren.¹ Referring to the "many thousands" of christian Jews, they say—"What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come." Nothing so absurd and tyrannical as a law against public meetings was ever dreamt of by the apostles and the primitive ecclesiasts. "The multitude must needs come together;" it is their indisputable right and constant practice to assemble, deliberate and decide. Who can conceive the indignation, consternation and commotion of the early christian republics, if any official conclave had forbidden such right and practice? Any such attempt to wield the great "democracy and fulmine o'er" the church would have convulsed the brotherhood from centre to circumference. The apostles themselves neither would nor could assume such lordship, dictation and despotism, in the christian commonwealth.

¹ Acts xxi. 20—22.

The church of Christ, consisting of official and private members, not a class or clique or clerisy, filled the great apostle's eye and animated his heart, when he contemplated the glory and development of the latter days. The church, he tells us, is the body and temple of Christ, the object of his love and self-devotion, his bride, that is to be made spotless and faultless and glorious, the development of God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Consistently with all this, how absorbedly Paul cherished, cared, and edified the churches, teaching from house to house, and warning every one, night and day, with tears! With the fondness of a father and the gentleness of a nurse, he watched and wrought. On his way from Ephesus to Antioch, he landed at Cesarea, and went up and saluted the church.¹ The apostolical epistles are addressed chiefly to the churches, to the saints, and not solely or peculiarly to church-officers. Three epistles are addressed to two special apostolical assistants, Timothy and Titus, first for their own instruction and then for all christians; and there are three other very short personal epistles—to Philemon, to the elect lady and her children, and to Gaius. The great mass of epistolary and other inspiration is addressed generally. According to clerical pretension and assumption, all instruction to the churches should be communicated by and through "the clergy;" but inspired apostles thought otherwise; and one of the chief teachers of the primitive churches, Apollos, was fitted for his work, not by professors of theology but by two private church-members, Aquila and Priscilla. Theological tutors and colleges are not to be depreciated, but they ought not to be unduly magnified; and the pastors and teachers of the churches ought not to supersede or

¹ Acts xviii. 21, 22.

supplant the churches, or obscure the churches, or claim to be an aboriginal church caste or class, but confine themselves to their proper rank and office as the servants of the churches.

It is the right and duty of each church to convey divine truth. On "all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," Paul enjoins the task of "holding forth the word of life," in consistency with their office and character, as lights shining in the world.¹ This direction is not given to the bishops and deacons separately or peculiarly, but is embedded in a series of instructions that incontestably belongs to all. It is to the saints and faithful brethren that are at Colosse, not to ministers, that Paul says—"When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."² To "the church of the Thessalonians," not to preachers only, Paul says—"From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad."³ The faith or truth, for which we are commanded to contend earnestly, was once delivered to the saints, not to a clerical caste or class.⁴ From all these passages it is evident that divine truth has been deposited in the churches themselves, not among church-officers, and should be guarded and communicated by those churches with zeal and fidelity. The churches themselves are shining lights and should hold forth, sound out, read and cause to be read, the truth of Christ. The conveyance of divine truth, as the operative instrument of salvation, is the highest style of religious usefulness, and belongs to the churches of Christ singly and severally. Paul says to a

¹ Philipp. ii. 15, 16. ² 2 Coloss. iv. 16. ³ 1 Thess. i. 8. ⁴ Jude 3.

church—"Desire spiritual gifts but rather that ye may prophesy. . . . He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort. . . . He that prophesieth edifieth the church. . . . I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied. . . . Prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. . . . For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. . . . Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues."¹ This collation of passages shows that prophesying is teaching the church, and that every member of a church, if qualified, is eligible to this usefulness and should desire it: "for ye may *all prophesy*, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."² "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day."³

It is the office of a church to elicit divine power. The office of elicitation belongs to the church, not only generally, as has been shown, but also to particular churches and in relation to the apostles themselves. To the saints of Rome Paul says—"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me."⁴ To the church at Corinth and to the saints in all Achaia he says—"Ye also helping together by prayer for me."⁵ To the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus he says—"Praying . . . for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."⁶ To the Colossians he says—

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 22, 31, 39. ² Coloss. iii. 16. ³ Heb. iii. 13.

⁴ Rom. xv. 30. ⁵ 2 Cor. i. 11. ⁶ Eph. vi. 18, 19.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."¹ To the church of the Thessalonians Paul says—"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers."² Fervent and effectual intercessory prayer belongs both to individual believers and to churches, and was requisite for the apostles as well as for subsequent ministers. And on a careful examination of the various passages relating to intercessory prayer for spiritual aids, it will be found that the blessing sought is always the Spirit's power, in some of its aspects and effects. Every church needs this power, for its own edification and for usefulness to the world; and every church should at once communicate the truth and elicit the energy of the Lord, the Spirit.

The admission of new members belongs to a church.

Admission to a local partnership of equals is a momentous act, and the only competent judge of qualification for admission and the only adequate power to admit is the partnership itself. Agents may be employed to arrange preliminaries and obtain evidence, but the only adequate judge and acceptor of new applicants is the society into which admission is sought. Nothing is more obvious and equitable than this principle, in all secular and spiritual associations, and nothing is more scriptural as an ecclesiastical canon. To all the called saints in Rome, Paul says—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye:" "receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."³ He directed the Corinthian church to forgive and comfort the penitent offender, whose expulsion he had formerly enjoined; and he makes no allusion whatever to any source of ecclesiastical

¹ Coloss. iv. 12.

² 1 Thess. i. 2.

³ Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 7.

punishment or pardon, excision or incorporation, but the church itself.¹ To the churches of Galatia, he says—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual [not ye which are clerical or official] restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."² To the church of God at Corinth, he says—"Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?"³ This plainly implies that letters commendatory, letters of ecclesiastical transference and introduction, were both given and received by the churches themselves.

The oversight of members belongs to a church. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."⁴ "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all."⁵ The adjustment of differences that are privately undeterminable belongs to the church: "Tell it unto the church; and if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"⁶ Overseeing officers are the elected agents of the overseeing church.

The right and duty of excision belong to a church. Paul directed "the church of God which is at Corinth," "when gathered together," to "put away from among

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 7. ² Gal. vi. 1. ³ 2 Cor. iii. 1. ⁴ Rom. xv. 14.

⁵ 1 Thess. v. 14. ⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 1-3.

themselves that wicked person" and thus "purge out the old leaven." Elsewhere, referring to the expulsion of this person, he says—"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many."¹ Paul, as the inspirational channel of Christ's will, directed the church how to act in case of both transgression and penitence; and the church itself, as an executive society of Christ, fulfilled that will. The Corinthian offender was not put away or purged out by Paul, by a council, a conclave, a prelate, presbyterate, pastorate or pastor, but by the church itself. The punishment was not inflicted of one or of few but of many, because inflicted of the assembled church. "Do not ye," says the apostle, "judge them that are within?" It is impossible for language more explicitly to ascribe to the single and collective church the power of judicial inquiry, award, and administration, even to the utmost penalty, than is done in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. The legislator is Christ, and therefore Paul says—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" the medium of communication from Christ is the apostle, and hence he says—"And my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ;" the executive agent or servant is the collective church, and accordingly Paul says—"When ye are gathered together . . . deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh;" the design of such infliction is not the maintenance of power and prerogative, but the purity of the church and the salvation of the offender's soul, and consequently it is said—"for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Satan reigns usurpingly without the church, and therefore ecclesiastical expulsion is deliverance to Satan. Marriage makes of two "one

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 6.

flesh," and the destruction of the matrimonial flesh of an incestuous connection was to be achieved by expulsion, so as to promote the salvation of the spirit, during the day of the Redeemer's mercy, or before the night of death dissolved the literal and matrimonial flesh and destroyed the hope of the soul.¹

The judicial power of the church was not confined to this specific case. "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company [as a church] with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you [as a church] not to keep company [or religious fellowship], if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one see not to eat,"² in eucharistic or fraternal feast. A minister or officer of the church, whether called pastor, teacher, presbyter, prelate, bishop, superintendent or deacon, is not entitled to judge the church or any member of the church; but the collective local church is to judge him, when there is need of judgment. "Do not ye [the church] judge them that are within," whether official or unofficial?

"To the church of the Thessalonians" Paul says— "Now we command *you, brethren*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [the only lawgiver who speaks through us] that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."³ To all the saints of Rome, Paul says— "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."⁴ Other passages, also,

¹ 1 Cor v. passim.

² 1 Cor. v. 9—11.

³ 2 Thess. iii. 6.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 17.

devolve spiritual criticism and purity on the church: "Come out from among them and be ye separate."¹ "Have no fellowship [or church communion] with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."² There are the same reasons for the exclusion or cognizance of a partner, by the partnership itself, as for the collective consideration and acceptance of candidates for membership.

What an apostle did, or what Timothy and Titus did, as special helps of the apostles, in the formative and inspirational era of the church, is no precedent and pattern for later christian ministers. Paul delivered Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan, or excluded them from the Christian region into the Satanic, that they might learn not to blaspheme.³ Supposing that Paul did this by his sole power and authority, without the concurrence of any church—which is very unlikely and very discordant with Paul's style of conduct and manner of spirit—no ecclesiastic can rightly excommunicate in this manner, till he demonstrates his possession of Pauline endowments and powers. "A man that is an heretic," says Paul to Titus,⁴ "after the first and second admonition reject." The word rendered "reject," *ἁπαύρω*, signifies to avoid, to decline intercourse with, and is obviously parallel to the instructions to Timothy to "withdraw" himself from men of corrupt minds, and to "turn away" from persons that have a form of godliness but deny the power.⁵ This instruction may be intended chiefly to discriminate proper candidates for the ministry; and even if intended to apply to church-members, generally and always, its fulfillment must have passed from such special and temporary officers as Timothy and Titus to the churches themselves. Such persons as these words denote would

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 17.² Eph. v. 11.³ 1 Tim. i. 20.⁴ Titus iii. 10.⁵ 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 5.

now be rejected by the theological colleges of all evangelical and faithful churches ; and by the churches themselves, as candidates for membership.

The apocalyptic epistles to the angels of the Asiatic churches do not confide to pastors the power of church discipline. The angel of a church is evidently a symbol or figure of the whole agency and operation of that church, just as the agency and operation of all churches are symbolized by an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people. The ecclesiastical angel is a medium of communication with the whole church ; and, therefore, the object of address is not an individual, but a plurality of persons : " Behold the devil shall cast *some of you* into prison, that *ye* may be tried ; and *ye* shall have tribulation ten days : be *thou* faithful unto death, and I will give *thee* a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto *the churches*."¹ To pluralities, therefore, to the churches themselves, belong the powers and duties devolved by the apocalyptic epistles.

There is not a single passage, in the whole New Testament, that confides the power of church discipline to pastors, presbyters, or bishops, or that makes them responsible for the enforcement of discipline. They watch for souls as they that must give account for watching, but not for the souls themselves : " Every man must give account of himself to God." Souls are not slaves, and christian ministers are accountable for nothing but the fulfilment of their own duties. The teacher is answerable for his teaching, and the hearer for his hearing. Anything beyond this makes ministers cattle-keepers or slave-drivers.

¹ Rev. ii. 10, 11.

Baptismal and eucharistic celebration belong to a church. If baptism be the door of the church, the church alone can open it; if it be the symbol of the truth, the church is empowered to use it. If the eucharist be the expression of church communion, the church should observe it; and if it symbolize spiritual festivity and commemorate the festal Master's death, the church should accordingly employ it. Baptism may be administered by any one whom the church commissions to baptize. When the church was amplified with Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, the baptism of water was administered, but not by Peter, and yet there was no other apostle or church-officer present: "and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."¹ The Lord's supper is not to be administered, but celebrated or observed, by the assembled church. Accordingly, Paul instructs the Corinthian church, not Corinthian clergymen, respecting the origin and proper celebration of the eucharist.² The clerical consecration of elements—the peculiar sacredness of a sacramental space in a church or chapel—the exclusive right of a clerical order to "administer" the elements—the conveyance of a portion to the absent members—and the observance of the eucharist in private—are all unscriptural and superstitious, disgraceful to any church, and worthy only of the mystic Babylon and the dark ages, savouring more of fetishism and brahminism than of the pure intelligence and daylight clearness of Christianity.

Ecclesiastical secularities belong to a church. When complaint was made, in the first church, against the daily ministrations, the apostles at once abandoned financial management and the service of tables to the church itself. The secular possessions of a church consist of the

¹ Acts x. 48. ² 1 Cor. x.

voluntary contributions of its members, and the church alone is entitled to expend and use them. The erection, enlargement, repair and regulation of church edifices—the supply of symbolical elements and registrational materials—and the payment of ecclesiastical officers and servants—are all subject to the will of the assembled church and of the legally-constituted trustees. Civil law must always be respected, in matters of ecclesiastical finance, because the civil government has rightful cognizance of secular interests; and convocational decisions should always be scrupulously observed, because to the church, in equity, all ecclesiastical secularities belong.

The collective or convocational operation of a church is a fulfilment of the second ecclesiarchal law of co-ordinate subjection. To all members, in convocation, belongs the same original and inalienable right to speak and vote on every ecclesiastical question; and, therefore, to deny or impede the exercise of this right, to silence or deter any member of a church in his attempt to exercise it, is sheer oppression and injustice. And, on the other hand, this right should always be exercised with due deference to seniority, to qualifications and office, and to scriptural church customs.

5. By organical constitution, a church should operate REPRESENTATIVELY, NOT CHAOTICALLY. As simply executive, a church has but to interpret and obey the will of Christ; as independent, it is to do this freely; as world-related, it is to do this catholicly; and (as respects the manner of operation) collective and co-ordinate deliberation and decision are the beginning and fountain. But church-convocation is not the whole manner. In itself, more is implied; and in its results, more is required.

(1.) *A church needs Officers.* Its convocation, or business assembly, must have a chairman to conduct and a secretary to record its proceedings, or be chaotic while

it lasts, and unavailing when it closes. A church must have officers or agents, to act as representative caretakers and servants, in the intervals of its convocations; or else it will really accomplish nothing. A church must have teachers of truth and conductors of divine worship, in order to accomplish its vocation of communicating truth and eliciting power. Baptismal and eucharistic celebrations require persons to conduct them. The receipt and appropriation of ecclesiastical secularities must be confided to church-agents. A church unorganized is a church confused, formless and void, inoperative and short-lived. A church should act both collectively and representatively. In its convocations, it should create or constitute an appropriate agency, and continue or change that agency, as successive circumstances require. A collective church is at once the fountain whence all ecclesiastical office and influence flow, and the reservoir to which they return. And its organization and representative action are the fulfilling of the fourth ecclesiarchal law of decency and order, as well as conformity to the scriptural precedent for ordaining "elders in every church."

In every free and enlightened society, office is but the development of its principles and the instrument of its purposes. Social life achieves its ends by the organization into which it expands and grows. Officers are not appointed in any good and true society for their own sakes, but for the sake of the society itself. Kings and queens, presidents, senators, nobles, councillors, judges, jurors, and ambassadors, are not aboriginal and self-constituted functionaries, in a free and enlightened nation; they are the servants, the representative or substitutionary agents, of the nation. Under an absolute despotism, they are civil agents by imposition; under a practical and germinant civil freedom, they are civil agents, partly by

acceptance and partly by appointment; and under a formally and thoroughly free civil government, they are simply and solely the representative agents, the substitutory care-takers, of the nation or territory, by election. Society precedes government in time, and produces it by right. Rulers do not make a nation, but the nation makes them; and when a nation, or any other society, does not make its government and create its service, it is the victim of fraud and oppression or of its own meanness. The agency of a church, as of any other society, should be the spontaneous development and production of its vitality; and, unlike any other society, it should be conformed to the divine record and rule. Ecclesiastical agency should be strictly scriptural; and, with this condition secured, it may be anything which the church, in its relations, condition, and circumstances, chooses.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul describes christians as the body of Christ, in which every one holds place and office, though "all members have not the same office;" and he describes the offices as corresponding with the gifts of grace, and as consisting of prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and showing mercy.¹ A church is like a man; and the various corporeal members are the constitutional instruments, by which the one animating and presiding mind apprehends and operates. Every function and service of a scriptural church are but the operation of its hidden life and its heavenly head. A church does not consist of two bodies, the clergy and the laity, the ministers and the members, one official and the other obediential, aboriginally; but it is one body, comprehending everything essential to development and duty. The apostle does not distinguish ministry, teaching, exhorting and ruling from the body

¹ Rom. xii. 3—8.

itself, but describes them as parts of the body, as endowments and operations of the whole church. Those whose vocation is saintly in its nature and ecclesiarchal in its origin, whose locality is Rome, whose relation is that of "beloved of God" and "brethren" of Paul, are "members one of another," interpenetratingly, with "differing gifts;" it is these and such as these that are to prophesy, minister, teach, exhort, bestow, bear rule, and show mercy; these offices belong to the church, and on the church these various duties and operations devolve. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."¹ The apostle writes in a similar strain to "the church of God which is at Corinth," to the saintly by Christ and in calling, and to the callers upon Christ in every locality. He compares the Corinthian church to the human body; and he compares the various endowments, offices and operations of the church to the various members and functions of the body, and ascribes them all to the divine head and lord who created the body. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the

¹ Rom. i. 6, 7; xii. 1, 4—8.

ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand—I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet—I have no need of you. Nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism [discord or division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. NOW YE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR.”¹ In this last sentence, the apostle describes the Corinthian believers collectively and severally; together, they were the body of Christ; individually, they were members of that body. An account of divine gifts preceds this symbolical description of a church, and an account of ecclesiastical offices follows it. Office is the use of a divine gift and the occupancy of an ecclesiastical position. No one should hold an office in the church that has not the requisite qualifications, spiritual, intellectual and corporeal; and no one should claim or

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 12—27.

hold an office independently of a church, or as the gift of any part or party, class or clique in a church, but as the gift and trust of the church itself, the whole church, the body of Christ.

All ecclesiastical office and authority are from the church, for the church, and in the church; they are the delegated, the representative, the substitutionary, agency and operation of a church. Their nature and variety depend upon the nature and variety of ecclesiastical ends and relations. A church is a vehicle of the truth, and, therefore, needs teachers. It is an eliciter of divine power, by the prayer of faith, and, therefore, needs conductors of divine worship. It incorporates new members by baptism, and holds fellowship among its members by the eucharistic rite, and, therefore, needs conductors of these ordinances. Its operations involve continuous care-taking or government, and, therefore, it needs curators or pastors. Its agents, who are entirely devoted to its service and welfare, are entitled to secular supplies; its indigent members are objects of its kind consideration and care; and, therefore, it needs financial officers or deacons. It needs such officers as these last too, usually called trustees, for the management of the secular rights and obligations which arise from the possession of houses and land, in subordination to civil government. All these official services form two great departments, the spiritual and the secular; and hence the two species of ecclesiastical functionaries, "bishops and deacons."

(2.) *The proper officers of a church are Tutorial and Diaconal.* The proper and primary business of a church is spiritual, and consists of teaching and praying; to this everything secular is perfectly subsidiary. It is as inexpedient in the case of ordinary church teachers as it was in the case of the apostles, to "leave the word of God and serve tables;" and, therefore, the instruction and

the finances of a church should be in different hands. The first deacons were appointed in the first church "to serve tables," "in the daily ministrations" to the widows, while the twelve gave themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The result of this partition of ecclesiastical function illustrated its wisdom: "And the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."¹

Paul's classification of church officers, in his epistle to the Ephesians, is of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.² The three first species, we have seen, were special and temporary, or formative of the church; the other, pastors and teachers, is common and permanent, or promotive of the church. Paul's assortment, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, is more specific, but substantially the same. Having enumerated the various gifts of the Spirit, and described the church or body of Christ on which they are conferred, he proceeds to specify the various officers of the body: "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."³ All these are special and temporary, because either miraculous or formative, except teachers, governments and helps. Governments and teachers plainly correspond with pastors and teachers. By formational helps, we may understand evangelists; and by permanent or ordinary helps, we may understand assistant pastors or assistant teachers, or such other assistants as the duties and exigencies of a church may render requisite or expedient. From both statements of the apostle, it is evident that the permanent and promotive spiritual agency of the church consists of pastors and teachers.

¹ Acts vi. 7.

² Eph. iv. 11.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

The word deacon, *διακονος*, *diakonos*, simply signifies minister, and varies in its New Testament meaning, according to the nature of the object which it indicates. Its root is *diakoneo* (*διακονεω*, formed of *δια* and *κονεω*), signifying to attend, wait upon, minister unto, relieve, assist.¹ The New Testament derivations from this root are rendered variously, to minister, to serve, to use the office of a deacon,² to administer. Christ is called a deacon of the circumcision;³ the apostles are called deacons of God;⁴ the civil power is called the deacon of God;⁵ Paul calls himself a deacon of the gospel,⁶ and a deacon of the church;⁷ Tychicus is called a faithful deacon in the Lord;⁸ Epaphras is called a faithful deacon of Christ;⁹ Timothy is called a deacon of God,¹⁰ and, conditionally, a good deacon of Jesus Christ.¹¹ The work or business of a deacon or minister is called *diakonia*, and is rendered ministraton, ministry, administration, service. While the twelve gave themselves to the deaconship of the word, the seven gave themselves to the daily deaconship for the widows, the deaconship of tables. The same word denotes both secular and spiritual service, just as in the present day the translation, ministers, denotes spiritual church teachers; and the untranslated word, deacons, denotes church financiers or stewards. The term deacons, in the New Testament, without any adjoined word or phrase to qualify or determine its meaning, denotes such secular church officers as the seven in Jerusalem. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."¹² After describing the qualifications of a bishop, Paul says—"Likewise must the deacons be grave," &c.¹³ The

¹ 1 Grov. ² 1 Tim. iii. 10. ³ Rom. xv. 8. ⁴ 2 Cor. vi. 4.
⁵ Rom. xiii. 4. ⁶ Eph. iii. 7. ⁷ Col. i. 25. ⁸ Eph. vi. 21.
⁹ Col. i. 7. ¹⁰ 1 Th. iii. 2. ¹¹ 1 Tim. iv. 6. ¹² Phil. i. 1.
¹³ 1 Tim. iii. 8.

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diaconate is mentioned with other offices, in the epistle to the Romans (xii. 7), and is translated "ministry."

There were deaconesses in some, at least, of the early churches, for "Phebe our sister" is called "a deacon of the church which is at Cenchrea."¹ The female diaconry probably consisted of secular ministration to females, in accordance with the peculiar oriental separation of the sexes.

The diaconship was originally and chiefly financial, but not wholly so. That it was partly spiritual is evident from the diaconal qualifications, labours and usefulness. "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Stephen, one of the seven, is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," who "did great wonders and miracles among the people," who disputed for the truth with a "wisdom and spirit" which the adversaries were not able to resist, who nobly testified the truth before the council, and gloriously fell as the primus in the noble army of ecclesiastical martyrs.² A bishop and a deacon must alike be blameless, the husband of one wife, not given to wine, grave, not greedy of filthy lucre, and exercising domestic government wisely. A deacon, too, should hold the mystery of the faith, the truth of the gospel, in a pure conscience. Candidates or nominees for the office of both bishop and deacon should first be proved or tried, and, if qualified, appointed: "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."³ "They who have performed the office of a deacon well, procure to themselves an excellent degree, and great boldness in the faith [or truth] which is in Christ Jesus;" that is, "secure to themselves an honourable rank in the church, and great

¹ Rom. xvi. 1. ² Acts vi. 3—vii. 60. ³ 1 Tim. iii. *passim*.

courage in teaching the christian faith. For even the wicked must respect persons [in teaching] who show so much benevolence and activity, in relieving the poor, the afflicted, and the persecuted."¹

(3.) *Teachers and deacons constitute the official Eldership of a church.* The word *presbuteros*, (*πρεσβυτερος*), from *presbus*, (*πρεσβυς*), old, simply signifies older, senior, more ancient, more honourable; it is a correlative and comparative term, (literally translated elder,) whose opposite is younger, junior, less ancient, less honourable. An elder in a church may be a literal or an official elder—an elder by age or by appointment, or both at once. As a general rule, a bishop or a deacon in a church should not be a novice; and because, for weighty reasons, young Timothy was a special assistant of the apostles, at least of Paul, the latter says—"Let no man despise thy youth."² Generally, young men should be appointed only to *assist* in the church, as helpers of teachers and deacons, as secondary not primary officers; and because, in the first churches, the officers were generally men of experience, they are fitly denominated elders.

It appears that the term "elders," in the New Testament, comprehends both teachers and deacons. In the narrative of the Antiochian contribution, of the apostolical council, and of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, we read of elders in Jerusalem, as distinct from both the apostles and the brethren or church-members generally;³ and yet we have no account of the appointment of any officers in Jerusalem, except the deacons. It seems, therefore, that the deacons were the only elders; unless we suppose, without authority, that spiritual teachers, also, had been appointed in Jerusalem. At all events, we must regard

¹ Macknight's Translation and Commentary of 1 Tim. iii. 13.

² 1 Tim. iv. 12.

³ Acts xi. 30; xv. *passim*; xvi. 4; xx. 18.

the deacons as either distinctively omitted altogether or comprehended in the term elders. If Paul distinguished the deacons, in his epistles to the Philippians and to Timothy, can we suppose that the deacons are not indicated in the accounts of the church at Jerusalem, and that officers are indicated as "elders," of whose appointment not the slightest hint is given? On the contrary, the christian elders in Jerusalem were evidently deacons, or financial stewards, and, accordingly, to them was sent the Antiochian collection for the famine.¹

We are informed that, during the evangelistic tour of Paul and Barnabas, "they ordained them elders in every church."² As both teachers and deacons are requisite for every church, we must either suppose that the term "elders," here, includes both sorts of officers, or that the appointments in every church were scanty and inadequate. The latter supposition we cannot entertain. The same sort of remark applies to what Paul says to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."³ Deacons are "wanting" in every church, and, therefore, the appointment of elders, "in every city," includes the appointment of deacons.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."⁴ Both the process and the result, in this case, are twofold, spiritual and secular. The spiritual process is prayer, the spiritual result is the forgiveness of sins. The secular process is the medical application of oil, the

¹ Acts xi. 30. ² Acts xiv. 23. ³ Titus i. 5. ⁴ James v. 14, 15.

secular result is the recovery of health. How exactly does this distinction accord with the twofold import of the term "elders," as inclusive of both spiritual and secular functions!

Probably, as both official and senior, as more ancient and more honourable, the apostle John twice denominates himself "the elder."¹ He was probably the last living apostle, as he was the last contributor to the church's formation.

(4.) *Ecclesiastical Election is the proper Origination and Ordination of the eldership.* It has been shown that office or authority, in any society, must be either an original element or an originated distinction. It cannot be an original element in a church, because a church consists of equals, or is an equipartnership or a perfect democracy. Now as all social rights and relations are either constituents of society or creations of society, the elders of a church must be rightfully appointed either by the head of the church or by the church itself. There is no scriptural co-organization of churches or of ecclesiastics, to perpetuate an "order" or to appoint to church offices. A divine appointment of men to such offices would be a species of inspiration, for which there is no biblical warrant, and would require the development and demonstration of miracles, which have neither scriptural authority nor practical reality. Each church, therefore, must appoint its officers; or else basely and unfaithfully suffer men to obtrude themselves or be obtruded by others, as its teachers and deacons. Such obtrusion is a most reprehensible imposition and usurpation, on the part of those who perpetrate it, and a most dishonourable and blaneable truckling, on the part of those who suffer it.

¹ 2 John 1; 3 John 1.

The appointment of the twelfth witness of Christ was an election. The seven deacons too were elected by the church. "Then the twelve called [or convoked] the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not reason that we [the twelve] should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you [select from among you] seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we [we all, in convocation,] may appoint over this business. But we [the twelve] will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose [εξελεξαντο, they elected] Stephen," &c. "Whom they set before the apostles [not to be elected for they were elected already]; and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them."¹ The people appointed the deacons; the apostles did nothing but propose the election, and recognize it by hand-laying with prayers. As the whole multitude both selected and elected the deacons, we can regard the apostolic hand-laying only as a proper ceremony of ecclesiastical recognition or as a form of apostolical endowment; and it was not the latter, because the men chosen were endowed already. Nothing, too, is more common than for a public speaker alternately to indicate himself alone and the whole assembly, including himself, by the pronoun "we;" and when we consider the terms in which the appointment is described, it plainly appears that the expression—"whom *we* may appoint"—denotes the whole christian commonwealth then convoked, as consisting of the twelve and the brethren generally. And after making every proper and necessary abatement for the peculiar inspirational and formational power of the apostles, it is evident that the appointment of the first

¹ Acts vi. 2-6.

deacons is precedent and authority for the creation of eldership by church-election.

Paul admits the right of the Corinthian church to appoint the stewards and carriers of its liberality to Jerusalem. "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters [not myself by divine right, or an aboriginal officehood among yourselves], them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."¹ Referring, in his second epistle, to christian liberality, he describes the steward and carrier as "*chosen of the churches* to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord."² His own participation in this ministration was by the churches' choice and wish, for he describes the churches of Macedonia as "praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."³

In the narrative of the mission of Paul and Barnabas, mention is made of the appointment of elders. "And when they had ordained them [*αυτοις*, for them] elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."⁴ That these appointments were made by the co-operation of the two missionaries and the churches appears from the account of them, from the analogy of previous appointments, and from the nature of christian churches. The original word, translated "ordained," is *χειροτονησαιτες*, formed from *χειρ*, the hand, and *τενω*, to stretch, and evidently denotes either hand-lifting or hand-laying, a show of hands in voting, or an imposition of hands in installing; and without doubt denotes appointment. The chief question is by whom was the appointment made? The preceding verse tells us of Barnabas and Paul "confirming

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 3. ² 2 Cor. viii. 19. ³ 2 Cor. viii. 4. ⁴ Acts xiv. 23.

the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Here, then, is a nominative to the verb "ordained," consisting of Paul and Barnabas and the disciples, the last being indicated by the pronoun "them," and both the last and the two previous by the pronoun "we." Evidently, then, both Paul and Barnabas and the disciples were the party that ordained. If the implied pronoun "they," of the verb "ordained," do not denote the disciples who are mentioned in the preceding verse, then the expressed pronoun "them," following the same verb, does not denote the disciples: "*They ordained elders for them.*" For whom? Not for Barnabas and Paul, but for the disciples. If "for them" be "for the disciples," why does not "they appointed" signify that "the disciples appointed?" A careful and unprejudiced consideration of the passage, waiving the etymology of the word "ordained," must produce the conviction that elders were appointed in every church, not by Paul and Barnabas only, but by themselves and the disciples, for whose benefit the appointments were made.

On the same principles of ecclesiastical composition and precedent, we should understand the task assigned to Titus of ordaining elders in every city. He was not the sole appointer, not a sort of dictator to the ecclesiastical democracies, but his task, doubtless, consisted in proposing the appointments, explaining the nature of the eldership, and heartily co-operating, as an apostolical assistant, in the selection, tuition, election and installation of duly-qualified men. And to enable him thus to co-operate, an inspired epistle was sent to him.

Eldership, or office of any kind, is not *aboriginal* in a church, because there is no aboriginal distinction whatever in it: "all ye are brethren." The proofs of this

need not be repeated. The apostles are aboriginally superior in the whole church, but *without successors*; and since their decease, all officers in a church are its own creations and representations. And the ministry which a church thus creates is not self-perpetuating. Elders cannot ordain elders, deacons cannot make deacons, only the churches themselves can originate and continue such functionaries. Priesthood was a tribal and self-generating distinction, among the Jews, and it is now a self-prolonging caste among the Hindoos, but christianity ignores and repels it, as utterly foreign to its catholicity and philanthropy, its adaptation and equality. The proper priesthood of christianity is peculiarly and exclusively Messianic; any other priesthood is common to all the saints. The priestism and clericism of an aboriginal and self-generative church order is a contemptible and detestable figment and fraud, that has long darkened, debased and perverted the glorious church of Christ. Even an apostle says to the church—"Ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake."

Equally repugnant to Christianity is clerical conclave-ism, the co-organization of ministers to rule the churches, to subordinate the local and independent associations of Christ to a self-constituted bureaucracy, to exercise a legislative power and an administrative control that scripture nowhere warrants, that the integrity and efficiency of local churches repudiate, and that the sole sovereignty of Christ rebukes as usurpation and disloyalty.

The ministry of a church is not gradational but presbyterial. The teachers are chiefly spiritual but not magisterial, the deacons are chiefly financial but not servile, the two sorts of officers are brethren and elders, and should love and live accordingly. Neither in the original composition of a church nor in its originated

agency is there any rightful, any scriptural, masterhood, fatherhood, popedom, prelacy, archiepiscopate or archidiaconate. Clerical gradations find no basis in the temporary apostles and their temporary aids; and in the equalitarian composition of churches, in their sole subordination to Christ, in their internal co-ordination, in their collective and independent action, all church monarchy, aristocracy, clericism or caste, must sooner or later feel an explosive force that will sweep them utterly from the face of Christendom.

Election to eldership is the true ordination. The imposition of hands, among primitive christians, appears to have been a form of endowment or a form of recognition. The hand-laying of Christ, of his apostles and their special assistants, was a ceremony of either benefaction or acknowledgment, or of both together. After them, it can be merely an avowal, and as such may be practised or discontinued as the churches please. The imposition of hands does not make a minister or qualify a minister, it merely recognizes and exhibits him as such. The vote of a church to call a man to its eldership, and the man's acceptance of the call, constitute the only real, rational, scriptural ordination. To suppose that any virtue or authority flows from public hand-laying is sheer superstition. It may be a decent and desirable ceremony, but nothing more. It serves to publish and authenticate the call and the acceptance of the call, that constituted the pastor, or teacher, or elder; but it confers no new authority or qualification whatever. And only the church that calls is entitled to lay hands, as a recognition of ecclesiastical office. Whatever is meant by ordination, it must belong to the church that creates its own agency or elects its own spiritual and financial officers; and it is just as seemly and as scriptural for deacons as for teachers. The singleness and

independence of churches preclude any right of interference from without, or any assumption of power to ordain, on the part of other pastors. The hand-laying of a church, by its own officers or representatives, is the recognition of the ordained man's ecclesiastical relation; the hand-laying of the pastor or pastors of other churches is the recognition of the ordained man's fraternal relation. The church, by laying on its own hands, proclaims a man to be one of its elders; the elders of other churches, by laying on their hands, proclaim such a man to be their presbyterial brother. The elders of other churches have no right whatever to join in the ceremony of hand-laying, except by permission and invitation of the ordaining church and the person to be ordained, and even then simply as a mode of fraternal friendship and recognition. The presbytery of a church consists of its own officers, and the laying on of the hands of that presbytery is the only proper form of a church's public authentication and avowal. A church that has as yet no publicly-recognized elders may appoint some of its own members, especially senior members, to lay on hands in the first ceremony of public ordination. Or it may dispense with such a ceremony altogether, as the election of a minister or deacon is really his ordination. It were certainly better to discontinue hand-laying altogether than to have it regarded as constituting a minister, indisputably if not indelibly, and as conferring some sacred and mysterious influence. Rightly regarded, ordination is but a church's public recognition and authentication of her new agents by the hand-laying of her old ones. But it is by no means essential. Paul recognises Apollos as a fellow-minister and as a waterer in the vineyard, and yet there is no evidence whatever that Apollos had been formally ordained. "He taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John;" and to

qualify him fully for his work, Aquila and Priscilla—themselves unofficial and unordained—“expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

The case of Timothy exemplifies hand-laying in the twofold sense of endowment and recognition, and is illustrated in two distinct passages. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”¹ “Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.”² For the elucidation of these passages, it is important to note, first of all, that the gift is not office. Office or authority is never denoted by such a phrase as “the gift that is in thee.” An office may be figuratively said to be on a man, not in him, as a cloak or investiture, and hence the phrase of investing a man with authority. Besides, the term *χαρισμα* (*charisma*), gift, is not used to denote office or authority. It denotes personal capability or endowment, and is rather distinguished from office or calling, in the statement that “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” The gift to Timothy was to be stirred up, diligently used, but office is never so described. A man may stir up his intellectual, emotional and rhetorical capabilities; but he does not stir up his office, he simply discharges its duties. It seems probable that the gift in Timothy was the power of communicating the gift of the Holy Ghost, and this power he was not to retain in its dormancy but to stir up and use. “When Simon saw that, through laying on of the apostles’ hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying—Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee,

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

² 2 Tim. i. 6.

because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."¹ The phraseological and hermeneutical resemblance between these words and the language of Paul respecting Timothy is most obvious and striking. The gift of God in an apostle or in Timothy was the power that on whomsoever his hands were laid the Holy Ghost was conferred. This power was given to Timothy supernaturally, because it was the gift of God and because it was given by prophecy; and it was given apostolically, because it was given by the putting on of Paul's hands. The time of this remarkable endowment is indicated; it was the time of presbyterial hand-laying. When Timothy was publicly inducted into ecclesiastical office or publicly recognized, by presbyterial hands, he was supernaturally endowed by apostolical hands. The gift was conferred *with* (*μετα*, together with, along with,) the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, that is, at the same time as the presbyterial recognition of his ecclesiastical office; and it was conferred *by* (*δια*) prophecy, as the warrant, and *by* (*δια*) the hands of Paul, as the agent. Rightly understood, then, these two passages beautifully agree together, and elucidate each other. What one omits the other supplies. And, taken together, they denote the source, medium and time of Timothy's supernatural endowments, and the method of his official recognition. The presbytery installed Timothy as an ecclesiastical officer; contemporaneously with this, Paul, in fulfilment of a prophetic utterance or acting by the authority of "prophecies which went before on Timothy," specially endowed him for special usefulness as a special assistant of himself; and now, he charges Timothy not to neglect but to stir up his peculiar and precious power. From the two passages

¹ Acts viii. 18—20.

we learn to distinguish the hand-laying of endowment as apostolical, and the hand-laying of ecclesiastical recognition as presbyterial.

(5.) *Ecclesiastical Oversight belongs to the ecclesiastical eldership.* Such oversight is assigned by inspiration to elders collectively; and, also, to elders distinctively, as tutorial and diaconal.

"From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them— . . . Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, (*επισκοπους, episcopous*, bishops, shepherds, pastors,) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."¹ These words are valuable, as showing that the oversight of a church belongs to its elders; that this oversight consists in "feeding all the flock," not fleecing or lording or expelling it; and that as the elders consist of both teachers and deacons, the agency of the Holy Ghost is as much concerned in the institution of the diaconal as of the tutorial function.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."² From this it is evident that ruling belongs to all the elders, and that, while they agree in this, they differ in the method of ruling and in the practice or omission of teaching. All elders rule but all do not rule well, for ability to govern well is one of the rarest of human endowments; some elders act as religious instructors, and others confine themselves to the financial or secular duties of the diaconate. Paul's words to Timothy prove most clearly and conclusively that the oversight or government of a church belongs to elders,

¹ Acts xx. 17, 18, 28. ² 1 Tim. v. 17.

and that these elders are both economic and didactic, or both curatorial and tutorial.

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, [*συμπρεσβυτερος*, fellow-elder or co-elder,] and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, [or, with you,] taking the oversight, [*επισκοπουντες*, the episcopate or pastorate,] not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder [*πρεσβυτερος*, the elders]: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."¹ These words are invaluable, because they so fully elucidate the presbyterial function. By elders we are not to understand seniors merely, but church officers, shepherds, or care-takers of the flock; yet, as a general rule, such officers ought not to be young and inexperienced, and, therefore, the flock itself is addressed as youngers or juniors. The church is illustrated by pastoral life; the head of the church is the Chief Shepherd; the elders of the church are undershepherds; the church itself is a flock. The office of the elders is to feed the flock, as overseers or bishops, shepherds or pastors, exactly like the Ephesian elders. This pastorate is not a lordship but a tutorship, consisting largely of exemplification; for the pastors are not to oversee as lords, as law-givers, or judges, but as patterns or ensamples. The pastorate should be accepted and performed willingly; the desired and contemplated

¹ 1 Peter v. 1—5.

reward should not be secular gain, but an unfading crown of glory from the Chief Shepherd ; and the duties of the pastorate and of the flock should be performed in the spirit of christian humility, and in conformity with the co-ordination of christians and the concurrent law of mutual subjection. Pastorship in the church is the care-taking of equals, by their elected agents, and consists in christian instruction, example, stewardship, and attention,—not reluctant service, lordly authority, or proud presidence,—and belongs to both teachers and deacons.

“ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee : if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly ; for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.”¹ Paul tells Timothy to ordain blameless persons as elders or presbyters, for this reason, that a bishop must be blameless. An elder, therefore, is a bishop. The episcopal and presbyterial functions are the same, but bifurcated in spiritual and secular duties, or in the tutorship and the deaconship. The co-equality of ecclesiastical agency beautifully harmonizes with the co-equality of ecclesiastical constituency. The members of a church are equal as brethren, and so are the officers of a church as elders. A church is composed of fellows and is organised by the election of servants. These servants are like their constituents in equality, and their service is not a lordship but a curatorship, conformed to Christ’s supremacy and to his people’s co-ordination, and developed in spiritual instruction and secular management. Towards a church, elders are pastors ; towards Christ, they are stewards.

The oversight of deacons, separately considered, relates

¹ Titus i. 5—7.

chiefly to the finances or secularities of a church, including the receipt and appropriation of money, according to the arrangements of the church itself—provision for the decent and comfortable convocations and services of the church—and the accurate registration of church transactions. Besides all this, such deacons of a church as are qualified should assist the teachers in instructing, and in conducting public worship. And deacons who are not thus qualified can yet be co-operative spiritual overseers, by being “*patterns to the flock.*” If Christ went about doing secular good, as well as spiritual, “healing every sickness and every disease,” and occasionally feeding the hungry by miracle, if he conjoined secular and spiritual benefaction, we must not depreciate the diaconship on account of its secularity, or dissociate it, on this account, from spiritual service; and we should not attempt to exclude the more peculiarly spiritual officers of a church from all secular co-operation and service. Paul, an apostle, participated in the secular ministration to the saints, and highly valued it.

The oversight of teachers, separately considered, relates chiefly to the spiritualities of a church, and consists in feeding the flock with the milk and meat of the word, that it may grow thereby. And just as the feeding of a child or the feeding of sheep implies careful and constant attention to health, to idiosyncrasy or constitutional peculiarity, to healthy growth or morbid symptoms, to causes, times and places of disease and danger, to endemics and epidemics, so the feeding of a church, by a faithful teacher or teachers, implies the most affectionate and solicitous attention to the state of the church and of every member, the most careful adaptation of biblical instruction and exposition, with devout and diligent study to be a teacher without shame, rightly dividing the word of truth and watching for the fruits

of faith. The rule of a bishop signifies to "take care of the church of God,"¹ by faithful teaching and kind attention.

Paul's Ephesian classification of ecclesiastics combines teaching and care-taking; his Corinthian classification disjoins them. In the first, he tells us that Christ gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. "Pastors and teachers" are one class, described by two terms. Paul prefixes the word "some" to each class-term separately, except to "pastors and teachers," and to these he prefixes it conjunctively, or once for both. Hence it appears that "pastors and teachers" is a compound epithet for one sort of ecclesiastics. But to the Corinthians Paul writes of "teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues;" thus most expressly and emphatically disjoining the tutorial and curatorial functions. Writing to the Romans also, he distinguishes "him that teacheth" from "him that ruleth." And how admirably concordant is all this with the teaching of "other scriptures" respecting eldership! Some can rule but not teach, others can teach but not rule; and, accordingly, teachers and governments are disjoined. Rulers and instructors, or pastors and teachers, form one body of ecclesiastical representation, officehood or agency, one eldership or presbytery; and, accordingly, they are conjoined. The *disjunction* occurs in passages in which Paul *specifies* ecclesiastical agents; the *conjunction* is in a passage in which Paul *assorts* such agents, as special and ordinary. Thus minutely accurate and critically consistent are the teaching and testimony of inspiration.

It is a great mistake to suppose that ruling in the

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 5.

church, or the celebration of baptism and the eucharist, is more honourable and important than teaching and preaching. The great office and use of the church are to communicate divine truth, and hence the symbolical aptness of a candlestick or lamp-holder, as a container and radiator of light; baptism and the eucharist convey truth symbolically; ecclesiastical rule is valuable only as it subserves the promotion of the truth; and, therefore, no office in a church is or can be more dignified and essential than that of spiritual instruction. Christ on earth was "about his Father's business," because he "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."¹ The great business of the apostles, and of the church after them, is preaching the gospel to every creature. Peter preached to the gentiles but did not himself baptize them, in the house of Cornelius. The Son of God was revealed in Paul for this very end that he might be preached among the heathen; and, accordingly, Paul was not sent to baptize but to preach the gospel. While elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, they that teach, or that labour in the word and doctrine, are worthy of peculiar honour. Among them that God has set in the church, Paul places teachers before governments, not accidentally but designedly and formally: "first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; *after that*, miracles; *then* gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." He observes a similar precedence, in his epistle to the Romans.² Great care should, therefore, be used in the training, election, and settlement of church teachers. No candidates should be accepted without decided piety, without

¹ Matt. ix. 35.

² Rom. xii. 7, 8.

ability to learn and aptness to teach, without spiritual, intellectual and physical ability to appreciate and indicate, effectively, the things of God. Dolts, dunces and drones, ignoramuses and irreligionists, mere rehearsers and transcribers, should be kept out of so sacred a function as the instruction of the church and the world, for salvation, for heaven and eternity.

Three sorts of christian teachers are recognized in the New Testament, and the want of a distinctive appreciation of these three has occasioned much error and confusion. There are *inspired* teachers, as apostles and prophets, who were known by *miracles*; there are *church* teachers, known by the choice and *credentials* of churches; and there are *religious* teachers, accredited and known by their *fruits*. The first are theopneustic, the second ecclesiastic, and the third private. The last our Lord calls prophets; and he directs us to test them, as we test a tree, by the fruits they bear. Every christian, who thinks himself competent to teach christianity, has a right to teach it, without any ecclesiastical call or commission, not in his church capacity but his private; and it is the duty of those whom he attempts to teach, to test his competency and claims, by the fruit of his doctrine, his practice and his influence. This is "the liberty of prophesying," for which great and good men have ably and eloquently contended, which no christian should surrender, and which no church has the slightest right to question or infringe. The gospel is given to every believer; and, as far as he has ability and opportunity, he not only may but should promulgate and promote it. Even in the assembly of the church, "ye may all prophesy one by one;" how much more so out of the assembly and in the non-ecclesiastical relations of life! Accordingly, Paul exhorts christians generally to desire that they may prophesy. In the account of the

first persecution, we are told that the apostles were not dispersed, but that the dispersed disciples "went everywhere preaching the word."¹ These unordained, unconsecrated, unlicensed preachers of the gospel were divinely sanctioned and succeeded, for "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."

The things to be taught are fully and finally determined by Christ himself and are embodied in his book. A church, therefore, is not to determine what is to be taught but simply the tutorial functionary and sphere. A church may choose a teacher for itself chiefly or for those that are without, for home evangelism or for foreign, for constant or occasional service; and the elected teacher is not only permitted but bound to teach the whole counsel of God and nothing else, in his ecclesiastical capacity.

As the power of a church is exclusively executive, the delegated power of its eldership must be the same, and must be just so much only as the church confers. The stream can never transcend or supersede its fountain. What the church is and what it should do are determined by the head himself; but the method of operation, to a great extent, is left to the loyalty and love, the wisdom and discretion, of individual churches. Each church should organize itself, by the election of didactic and economic officers; and each church must determine for itself the amount of discretionary power that is requisite for its officers. Bishops and deacons have no power but what is given them by the church that appointed them, and what accords with the church's inspirational rule. A pastor is not a master, a deacon is not a dictator, presbytery is not prelacy or popedom; and it behoves all

¹ Acts viii. 1—4; xi. 19—21.

church-officers to remember the source, conditions and limitations of their power, and to use it with propriety, kindness and humility. The government of the church comprehends the supreme government of the general head, the self-government of single churches, and the substitutionary government of church-officers.

Let us, then, endeavour to comprehend and condense the oversight of a church. It is the oversight of a spiritual equi-partnership—a local church. It is the creation and agency of that church. It is lodged in the hands of the eldership or presbytery which that church elects. The eldership consists of spiritual and secular officers, called bishops and deacons, or ministers and deacons. The number of bishops and deacons, in a church, is a matter of ecclesiastical executive detail, as it is not biblically determined; and so, to some extent, are official names undetermined. The collective eldership of a church is charged with the oversight of that church. The distinctive spiritual eldership—the bishop or bishops, minister or ministers—is charged with the spiritual or didactic oversight, which consists chiefly in teaching divine truth and conducting divine worship. The distinctive secular eldership—the deacon or deacons, steward or stewards—is charged with the financial or economic oversight, which consists chiefly in monetary arrangement, receipt and expenditure. The didactic agency is not excluded from economical co-operation; and the diaconal agency is not excluded from episcopal co-operation. The teacher may aid in financial conduct, if he be skilful and prudent; and the deacon may aid in teaching and public worshipping, if he possess the requisite qualifications. The bishop or bishops and deacon or deacons compose the organical officehood, the representative agency, by which a church conducts its great process of care-taking and continuous co-operation.

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(6.) *The ecclesiastical eldership is entitled to ecclesiastical Honours.* All elders are worthy of honour, the elders that rule well of double honour, the elders that labour in the word and doctrine of special honour. The honour consists of either obedience or maintenance, or of both together. The apostle's reason for his award of special "honour" to diligent teachers is given in the adduction of scriptures, relating to sustenance and salary. "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."¹ No man can rightly labour in the word and doctrine without diligent and habitual biblical study; no man can conduct such study without the renunciation of secular pursuits; no man can abandon such pursuits without an adequate and guaranteed salary from the church in which he teaches and for which he labours; and, accordingly, it is a wise arrangement, an equitable exchange, a divine direction, that the bishops or ministers of the churches should be adequately sustained and paid. An unpaid ministry must always be an occasional and defective ministry; and a church that relies on it will droop and decline. It is simple justice and it is God's law that he who is taught in the word should communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things. The occasional labours of unpaid teachers may be made an invaluable auxiliary; but they cannot, rationally and scripturally, be made principal or sole. The objectionable phraseology of "lay-preachers" and "lay-agency" ought to be discarded, as well as the superstitious barrier and blind between "the clergy" and "the laity;" but the help which the phraseology denotes ought to be carefully developed, cherished and applied.

Men of secular business and habits, who are qualified by experience and practical sagacity, as well as

¹ 1 Tim. v. 18.

otherwise, are the most suitable for the deaconship, which is chiefly secular. The diaconal honour should correspond to the diaconal service. Men who devote to a church, gratuitously, the precious intervals or fragments of their time, the weight of their varied influence in society, and the valuable results of their habits and experience, should be highly esteemed and kindly upheld by the churches which they faithfully serve.

To didactic elders, in their primary spiritual service, and to economic elders, in their primary secular service, and to the collective eldership, in its general oversight, the members of a church owe the honour of scriptural obedience or submission. "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and labour-eth."¹ "Receive Epaphroditus [my brother and companion in labour and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministereth to my wants,] therefore in the Lord, with all gladness; and hold such in reputation," or according to the margin, "honour such."² "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."³ "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow. . . . Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief. . . . Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints."⁴ "Likewise, ye juniors, submit yourselves unto the elders."⁵

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

² Phil. ii. 29.

³ 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24.

⁵ 1 Peter v. 5.

The "honour" of maintenance was declined by Paul for personal or prudential reasons, in peculiar circumstances, but yet asserted as a right which he could at any time claim: "The Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void."¹ "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail, night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power [*ἐξουσίαν*, power, right, title—to be supported], but [in existing circumstances] to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."² In the introduction of the gospel among men, in the formation of the church, in the peculiar condition of some of the early churches, and in the peculiar circumstances and tastes of an unmarried apostle, there might be, and there were, sufficient reasons to waive the right to support, and seek in tent-making, or some other occupation, the means of subsistence and travel. Paul strongly asserted the right of church teachers to church support, and, in some instances, accepted support. "Now, ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity."³

In his address to the Ephesian elders, Paul reminded them of his self-support, as an example which they should copy. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15.

² 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

³ Philipp. iv. 15, 16.

were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring [as I have done] ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."¹ The probability is that most of the Ephesian elders, at that time were diaconal elders, who had no occasion for church-salary and no right to it, and to whom the apostle's example and exhortation were most appropriate and beneficial. But there is nothing whatever, in Paul's words, to affect the right of episcopal or tutorial elders to certain and sufficient salary.

(7.) *The ecclesiastical eldership is subject to ecclesiastical Cognizance.* Power to appoint is power to cognosce and dismiss. A church is as much entitled to dissolve as to create its relations to episcopal and diaconal agents, in conformity to scripture. The officers of a church, like those of a nation, derive all their power and authority from the society which they serve, and are as dependent on it for the continuance as for the origination of their functions. They are not to be regarded as a distinct and independent party, forming a compact with the church, but as the organization into which the church's life evolves and expands, the efflux of the church's light, or the influence and agency which the church incorporates and employs, and the channel of the church's purifying power. The true distinction is not of a church and its officers, but of its private and official members; just as we do not distinguish between the body and the hands, the body and the feet, but between the pedal or manual members of the body and the other members. A church does not work with its officers, but by them or through them, and is entitled to hear and determine, according to scripture, accusations against them. The

¹ Acts xx. 33—35.

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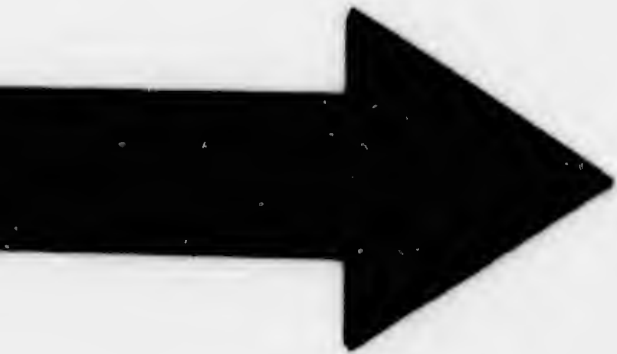
reasons for honouring elders are also reasons for peculiar care in trying them. "Against an elder [didactic or economic] receive not an accusation but before [or under] two or three witnesses."¹ Christ's canon of ecclesiastical judicature is that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;"² and it is due to such honourable officers as elders, that, without competent testimony, an accusation should not be entertained.

A church has cognizance of presbyterial doctrine, diligence, fidelity and piety. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."³ "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."⁴ "Let no man deceive you by any means."⁵ "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."⁶ "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."⁷ "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject."⁸ "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."⁹

The indelibility of the ministry is a fiction and an absurdity. The maxim—"Once a bishop always a bishop"—is the literary embodiment of sacerdotalism or clericism, and is a fit companion of another maxim—"No bishop, no king." The church that makes a bishop can unmake him. Ministers do not make the churches, but the churches make them, and by means of them

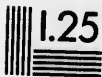
¹ 1 Tim. v. 19. ² Matt. xviii. 16. ³ Gal. i. 8. ⁴ 1 John iv. 1.
⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 3. ⁶ 2 John, 10, 11. ⁷ 2 Tim. ii. 5. ⁸ Titus iii. 10.
⁹ Rom. xvi. 17.





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edify and multiply themselves. There are no ministers or deacons in the abstract or in general; there can be no pastor without a flock, no teacher without pupils, no deacons without churches. A man is an ecclesiastical officer—bishop, deacon, teacher, messenger—so long as he is employed and recognized by some church or fraternity of churches, and no longer. The imposition of hands or any other imposition cannot imprint clerical indelibility, or make a man a minister for life, independently of an actual ministerial relation.

6. By local constitution, a church should operate CONGREGATIONALLY, NOT TERRITORIALLY. Christ has not divided the world into parishes or dioceses, or authorized any such distinctions or circumscriptions, or instituted any agency for effecting them. Territorial distinctions belong to no divinely-instituted society but national, and to introduce them into the church is to assimilate spiritual association to secular and return to the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism. The old economy was circumscribed because it was national, the new is catholic because it is local. Territorial church operation can be effected only by the nationalism of churches, or by a co-organization of churches, or by a confraternity of churches. The first has been proved to be altogether wrong; the second is in the same category; and the third disapproves of territorial churchism. A voluntary union of churches could only accomplish a voluntary partition of parishes, which would have no authority and short duration, and which might, from the outset, be an infringement and sacrifice of fraternal freedom and local independence. The barriers of territorial lines—parochial, diocesan, provincial, or national—should not be erected against christian philanthropy and zeal. A church is a vehicle of truth and an eliciter of power, for all mankind, according to its abilities and opportunities;

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and should not be put in the strait-jacket of national or co-organic churchism, or cooped up within the walls of circuit, district, parochial or diocesan confinement. From a voluntary compact for such confinement, there is nothing to prevent a withdrawal, on the part of individual churches, in succession; and if such a compact could be formed and kept, it might soon become the hedge of corrupt and stagnant churches, a formidable barrier to the introduction of any means of revival and recovery into a decayed parish, from an adjacent parish of life and fervour, that burns with holy zeal to reanimate its neighbour. Parochial circumscriptions are not only unauthorized but uncongenial to christianity, because they impose bounds and barriers to a love and zeal that are to know no limits but the limits of the world—the interests and necessities of every creature—that are authorized and commanded not to stay at home or in a defined region, but to go into the regions beyond, with the message and might of universal love.

Ecclesiastical operation is necessarily either congregational or chorographical, or, in other words, either local or territorial. The latter is of two kinds, implying a connexion of churches or a connexional church; that is, co-organic churchism or national churchism. Every established or civilly-endowed church is national; every legislative and judicial connexion of churches is co-organic; every national church is, at least, partly co-organic; but every co-organic church is not national, though it is territorial, because it involves the partition and allotment of spiritual fields, called parishes, districts or circuits. Now as our choice lies altogether between local and territorial churchism, the proper and pertinent inquiry is—does our inspirational rule and guide afford any further clue to a preference? Let us see.

The word church, in the singular, is used, in the New

Testament, either comprehensively or particularly, to indicate either the whole church of Christ or a local part, to denote either the ecclesiastical species of society or an individual of such society. The church of Christ, in its aggregate sense, has no operation for it has no co-existence; it is both a co-existence and a consecution of churches. The word church (*ecclesia*) is never used, in the New Testament, to denote a connexion or co-organization of churches, or a national church. So far the New Testament is clear and decisive. Let us examine the use of the plural form, *ecclesiai*, churches.

The plural form occurs in thirty-six places; in Acts xix. 37, the translation (of *ιεροσολους*) ought to be *sacri-legians*, not "robbers of churches." The word, churches, is used in various connections, to indicate *church-number* or *church-comprehension*, without any intercommunion, interdependence, or interchaining, of churches; it is thus used for general indication merely, in twenty-one places: "then had the churches rest;"¹ "confirming the churches;"² "so were the churches established;"³ "so ordain I in all churches;"⁴ "let your women keep silence in the churches,"⁵ the epistle being addressed to all that call on Christ, in every place; "whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches"—"show ye to them and before the churches;"⁶ "I robbed other churches"—"the care of all the churches;"⁷ "inferior to other churches;"⁸ "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches;"⁹ "what the Spirit saith unto the churches;"¹⁰ "all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts;"¹¹ "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto

¹ Acts ix. 31. ² Acts xv. 41. ³ Acts xvi. 5. ⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 17.
⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 34. ⁶ 2 Cor. viii. 18, 24. ⁷ 2 Cor. xi. 8, 28. ⁸ 2 Cor. xii.
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you these things in the churches."¹ The word churches is also used in connection with God or Christ, to indicate *church-subservience*, in four places: "the churches of Christ salute you;"² "neither the churches of God;"³ "the churches of God."⁴ The word is used in connection with saints, to indicate *church-character*, in one place: "as in all churches of the saints."⁵ The word is used in connection with gentiles, to indicate *church-composition*, in one place: "all the churches of the gentiles."⁶ The word is used in connection with territory, to indicate *church-location*, in seven places: "the churches of Galatia"—"the churches of Asia;"⁷ "the churches of Macedonia;"⁸ "the churches of Galatia"—"the churches of Judea;"⁹ "the seven churches which are in Asia."¹⁰ The word is used in connection with choice, to indicate *church-action*, in one place: "who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace" or gift.¹¹ And the word is used in connection with message, to denote *church-agencies*, in one place: "they are the messengers of the churches."¹²

In only one of these thirty-six passages, is the word "churches" used to denote church-action, and in that single instance it denotes the friendly co-operation, not the co-organic action, of the churches of Macedonia, in contributing money for the relief of the saints and in appointing one individual to act with others in the carriage and care of the gift. The co-operation, in this case, was not authoritative but voluntary, it was not for legislation or adjudication but for benefaction. Such connexionism as this and local church connexionism, and only such, are scriptural.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 17.
⁸ 2 Cor. xii.
¹¹ Rev. ii. 23.

¹ Rev. xxii. 16. ² Rom. xvi. 16. ³ 1 Cor. xi. 16. ⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 14;
⁵ 2 Thess. i. 4. ⁶ 1 Cor. xiv. 33. ⁷ Rom. xvi. 4. ⁸ 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19.
⁹ 2 Cor. viii. 1. ¹⁰ Gal. i. 2, 22. ¹¹ Rev. i. 4, 11. ¹² 2 Cor. viii. 19.

We never read, in the New Testament, of a co-organization of churches or of a territorial church, never of the church of Judea, Galatia, Macedonia, Asia, but of the churches of those territorial divisions; and when seven symbolical churches are indicated, it is as churches *in* Asia, because they were not an Asiatic co-organism or the only churches in proconsular Asia. Such a phrase as the Church of England, of Ireland or of Scotland, is altogether unscriptural and improper; what it denotes may be a political or conventional confederation, but it cannot be a scriptural church.

A church is always local and is always locally designated. *Churches* are described as *of* or *in* territory, but a *church* is never described as *of* a locality, but simply as *in* it or *at* it: "the church which was at Jerusalem" — "which was in Jerusalem" — "which is at Cenchrea" — "that is in their house" — "which is at Corinth" — "which is in his house" — "the church in thy house." Instead of "the church of Ephesus,"¹ the translation of the original (της Εφεσίωνης εκκλησίας) ought to be "the Ephesian church." And it is very remarkable and significant that Paul dedicated his second Corinthian epistle to "*the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.*" Corinth was a city, a locality, whose *church* he recognizes; Achaia was a territory, a province or a district, whose *saints*, not whose church, he recognizes. Thus studiously careful does Paul appear to avoid the application of the word church to territory, and, consequently, to avoid even the language of co-organic or territorial churchism. The adherents of such churchism would write to the church of Achaia or to the church of Corinth and Achaia; but Paul thought differently, and therefore wrote differently. Christianity ignores such a crude and clumsy contrivance, such a

¹ Rev. ii. 1.

religious fiction and figure, such a political or parliamentary creation, as the church of Achaia, Judea, England or France. Co-organic churchism is really the co-organization of church officers only, not of churches; and in some instances it is merely a co-organization of "clergymen" or "ministers." A national church is really the subjection of churches to political domination. Of co-organic or territorial churchism it can never be said, as it was of the church at Corinth,—“If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place;” or of the church at Jerusalem—“when they had gathered the church together”—“then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church.” A church is a local not a territorial partnership; it is a collectible not an imaginary association; and because it is local it is capable of catholic operation, propagation and prevalence. As soon may there be, in reality, the family of England as the church of England, a Presbyterian family of Scotland or of Ulster as a Presbyterian church of Scotland or of Ulster. The family and the church are local and edificial associations.

The theory of diocesan, or provincial, or parochial episcopacy is evidently unscriptural. All such episcopacy is territorial, while biblical episcopacy is purely local. All episcopal pre-eminence is contrary to scripture, which teaches the essential equality of elders or overseers. And all single and exclusive episcopacy is contrary to scripture, which teaches local episcopal plurality. All gradational clericism is contrary to scripture, which teaches that all church-officers are presbyterially one, that bishops are elders and elders bishops, and that deacons are elders and overseers. We read of “bishops and deacons” “at Philippi,” not of the bishop, presbyters and deacons; we read of presbyterial hand-laying

¹ Phil. i. 1.

and presbyterial ruling, of presbyterial bishops and of presbyterial oversight or episcopacy. We read of local churches but not of church co-organisms; of sending the gospel to "every creature," not shutting it up, by authority, in a kingdom, province, diocese, parish or circuit. Entrance into a church and continuance in it are purely voluntary and personal acts; and, therefore, it is a most unwarrantable and unscriptural assumption for any church or number of churches to claim the oversight of men, according to territorial lines. Volition, not territory, distinguishes the foes and the friends of the church; congregational attendance, not parochial dimensions, denotes the sphere of a church's operation.

Local and congregational operation is compliance with the proper order of the fourth ecclesiarchal law.

SECTION III. *Resultant Operation.*

7. As the comprehensive result, a church ought to operate **EXPANSIVELY, NOT STAGNANTLY.**

There are three sorts of local ecclesiastical operation—comprehensively and resultantly studied—namely, *circumscriptive*, *absorptive*, and *expansive*. A *circumscriptive* church, whether prelatically or presbyterially governed, is territorially limited and implies a federal and central power that distributes its agents among the defined and circumscribed parishes, dioceses or provinces of an island, kingdom, or country. An *absorptive* church operates on those only who constantly or occasionally come to its single edifice. An *expansive* church operates in assemblies which are circumjacent and subordinate to its primary and central convocation.

The distinctive principle of the first, in its general or federal aspect, is comprehensive distribution. It seeks to christianize all the inhabitants of a country by par-

tioning them among its agents. The federal and comprehending power, which is either national or simply co-organic, must be distinguished from the individual and local, which is distinctively circumscriptive. The parish priest, or district pastor, or circuit preacher, must not go beyond the lines of demarcation which his master or masters have drawn. Both the general and the particular characteristics of this system are unscriptural. Its principle of mathematical distinction is not in harmony with the vital action, the spontaneous expansion, that distinguishes christians, both as individuals and as churches.

The distinctive principle of the second sort of operation is attraction. Those whom it cannot allure within its walls, it can scarcely influence; and hence the frequent complaints that are heard of its stagnancy, tardiness and contraction. It never goes abroad, but is most regularly and punctually at home. It seeks to attract and absorb the surrounding population, by opening its doors, perhaps by special and alluring services, by ample and comfortable accommodation, by a courteous reception to those that enter, and by a faithful exhibition of truth to those that draw nigh. But it never sends out agents to walk about Zion, to invite strangers and stragglers, to explore the haunts and byeways of ungodliness, and assail sin in its own retreats. Instead of going to every creature, as Christ directs, and as the apostles did, it stands, with decency and dignity, in its own edifice, like Judaism of old, and says "Come." No wonder that it achieves but little, and is often lukewarm and declining.

The distinctive principle of the third sort of local ecclesiastical operation is vital expansion. An expansive church radiates around as a great central generator of light, or as a great central reflector of

heaven-descended light; and it increases and ramifies, like a vigorous tree sending out its roots and branches, and propagating its kind. It both attracts and assails; draws strangers within its influence, and goes forth to seek and to save them; defends its possessions, and pushes the battle to the gate of its enemies. The expansion of a healthy and vigorous church consists of both growth and propagation, the augmentation of its own health and happiness, and the formation of new and similar association. The natural limits of a church are the limits of a building or congregation, in which instruction and worship are audible to all. If the whole space of audibility or of purchaseable ground be already occupied, and congregational growth be in consequence prevented, the natural mode of expansion is propagation, the erection of another building, and the origination of another church, in some wisely-chosen locality. Subservient to all this is home evangelism, and contemporaneous with this should be the great work of foreign missions.

It appears, as a great result of the previous inquiries, that the eldership of the churches should be *stationary, not migratory*. As each church is independent of every other church, in its constitution and operation, it should organize itself by the creation of an independent, and therefore stationary, agency. As it is local, not territorial, it should have a localized eldership, not territorial and migratory officers. Presbyterian fixity is thus rather a resultant than a modal aspect of church operation, and it is perfectly compatible with the most zealous and catholic activity. The appropriate agency for the *edification* of a church is a *settled eldership*, and the appropriate agency for the *propagation* of a church is an *itinerant mission*. A church is "constituted and charged" to perform duties towards its own members and towards strangers. For those that are within, who are themselves

stationary, a stationary agency is best; for those that are without, wanderers from the fold and dispersed abroad, an itinerant agency is best. This distinction has the warrant of inspiration, of Messianic and apostolic example. Our Lord itinerated throughout Judea, to prepare for the creation of his church. He went about doing good, and was accused by his enemies of stirring up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to Jerusalem.¹ He employed the seventy and the twelve, to co-operate in his personal and itinerant preparation for the better covenant. He chose twelve apostles to found and form his church and promulgate his gospel; and to accomplish this task, they itinerated. They were empowered and commanded to put the world in possession of the evangelical and ecclesiastical economy; not to wait for embassies and applications from the world, but to go, of their own accord, into all the world and communicate with every creature. They could do this only by itinerating, and thus in reality they did it. Beginning at Jerusalem and among the Jews, they published the message of mercy and instituted the church, among Jews and Gentiles, throughout the world. But they made no provision for consecutive itinerancy; they took no steps and left no instructions to perpetuate their own method of diffusing the faith. They formed and furnished churches and left them, or assisted them, to provide for their spiritual wants and welfare, by the creation of a suitable agency, episcopal and diaconal. The apostles were not properly pastors but planters and propagators, founders and distributors. Hence the distinction—"Paul planteth, Apollos watereth." Itinerancy and pastorship are scarcely compatible. An itinerant shepherd, a travelling pastor, a wandering care-taker, a

¹ Luke xxiii. 5.

migratory guardian, of a settled localized flock, is a sort of verbal contradiction and a great practical blunder. Itinerancy is the proper method of preparing for a great and extensive change, and then of achieving it; the proper and only method of rapidly planting and propagating Christianity; the best method of reviving Christianity, in the lands and ages of its obscuration and decay; and pastoral stability is the proper method of conserving and maturing Christianity. The apostles instituted and extended Christianity by itinerancy; Wesley and Whitefield and their coadjutors revived Christianity in England, by the same method. But the method of origination is not the method of conservation and maturation. The efficiency and success of a pastor depend upon his local knowledge, and, therefore, he should be located; they depend upon his personal and particular knowledge of characters and circumstances, and, therefore, he should be settled, to acquire such knowledge; they depend upon mutual confidence and affection between himself and his flock, and for these, prolonged intercourse and the interchange of kind offices and sentiments are requisite. Every sermon and public service, every baptismal and eucharistic celebration, and every pastoral visit, contribute to unite and endear to each other the faithful christian shepherd and the true christian flock, to further and facilitate the pastor's usefulness and comfort, and the church's edification and extension.

Itinerancy is either in space or in time. Spacial itinerancy is the occasional or periodical visitation of several places. Chronal itinerancy is the regular transfer and exchange of visitors—annually, biennially, triennially, quaternally, or otherwise. Itinerancy in space, on a large scale, was the method of Christ and his apostles, especially of the latter, and may be denomi-

nated peregrination. Itinerancy in space, on a small scale, is perambulation, and is but another name for church expansion or ramification, which has already been distinguished as the proper resultant operation of a church, from circumscription and absorption. Chronal itinerancy is nomadism or migration. The combination of both chronal and spacial itinerancy, or, in other words, a permutatory and perambulatory ministry, is a most unapt and infelicitous method of ecclesiastical operation. Neither this combination nor permutation alone has any warrant in the word of God. The seventy, the twelve, the evangelists, or the prophets, were never periodically exchanged and removed.

A peregrine pastor, a travelling shepherd of an untravelling flock, an itinerant watchman, if such a thing can be, has to perform his work of care-taking in the dark and by conjecture. By accident, he may act seasonably and suitably, in difficult cases, but not from local and particular knowledge. So soon as his period of residence and intercourse has prepared himself for pastoral oversight and the church for reciprocal estimate and action, he is transferred to a strange locality and among a strange flock, to lose all the advantages of his recent observations, and to commence anew the fruitless task of acquiring a knowledge that must be frustrated as soon as acquired. Between himself and the flock there can be but little union and sympathy. He must feel himself and be regarded by the people as a bird of passage, a temporary transient auxiliary, not a friend and a pastor for life. What peculiar love can such a pastor have for a strange flock, for which he has never done or suffered anything, compared with the man who, for many years, perhaps for the choicest period of his life, has wept and watched and prayed for his charge, planted and watered it assiduously, and witnessed with ineffable

delight its stability and prosperity? The itinerant minister—permutatory we mean—is expectant of removal from the outset, and solicitous to secure an agreeable transfer; but the settled pastor regards himself as located for life, and feels his interests bound up with those of his flock. What effect such different relations must have upon the sentiments and habits of men, it is easy to discern and needless to declare. The practice of the apostles and of the first churches was to establish a settled eldership. “They ordained them elders *in every church,*” not in one church or in one place for every other, not by the score or the hundred, in some central town or city and during some federal assemblage, but for every church separately, and *in each church* for itself. So Titus was appointed and left by Paul “to ordain elders in every city.” Elders were not ordained collectively or by wholesale, for distribution among the churches; not annually for rotary service; not by a co-organised and self-perpetuating clericism; but in and by each church, to serve as its suitable and settled agency. The New Testament ignores migratory ministers as much as migratory deacons. The churches of Christ are not permutatory, and their officers should not be such. Each of the representative apocalyptic churches had its own angel, not travelling but stationary; all had respectively their own mystic stars, not “wandering stars,” not stars revolving annually, biennially or triennially, according to the will of a prelate, presbytery or stationing committee, in fixed and appointed orbits, and at regular intervals shooting athwart the firmament, into each other’s orbits, at the bidding of the master mind or supreme power. It is one thing to travel for the purpose of forming or reviving churches; it is quite another thing to travel for the purpose of feeding and maturing churches. An itinerant eldership can, at best, be only a nomadic pro-

vision for nomadic tribes; for settled and civilized nations it is a palpable blunder, however originated and intended, and however mitigated and guarded.

On the other hand, a church can best discharge its duty to the world by scripturally itinerant ministrations. It is itself located and requires for itself a local agency; it needs for itself a conserving and maturing ministration, and this should be settled and continuous. But for its aggressive operations on surrounding fluctuating diversified ungodliness, it requires an accommodating mission. The duty of churches to the world is to awaken and alarm the world, to summon and invite the world to Christ and to his church; and this duty is to be performed to each and all, by going to them, or, in other words, by a circulated message. A church is a located partnership and requires a located or stationary provision for its wants and welfare; but circumjacent ungodliness consists of benighted devious endangered spirits, to be summoned and gathered into the fellowship of the saints, and who, for this purpose, must be followed in their wanderings. Around the churches are deserts, from which the wandering sheep should be reclaimed by itinerating messengers of mercy. If the same man cannot feed the flock and perambulate the outlying desert, special provision should be made to seek and save that which is lost. The churches are begirt by lands of darkness and of death, in which immortal souls are straying, amid pitfalls, snares and foes, treading the verge of precipices and gulfs, pursuing with accelerating speed the downhill way to destruction; and it behoves the churches not only to keep the beacon-light of the gospel blazing from their towers, the trumpet of the gospel sounding from their walls, and the portals of their city constantly open, but also to send out, through all the waste howling wilderness, torchbearers to show the danger and the way of escape, and

trumpeters to proclaim continuously the impending ruin and the glorious refuge. The churches that provide for themselves, by an agency as settled as themselves, should provide for the world, by an agency as wide as the world, to perambulate the surrounding wilds and proclaim a common salvation and a general Saviour.

The vital expansion of a church, by growth to maturity, by proclamation and propagation at home and abroad, is the comprehensive fulfilment of all the ecclesiarchal laws. Blessed and glorious is such a church. "For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say—Peace be within thee."

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PART V.

The Unity of the Church.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

EVERY reader of the New Testament must perceive that some sort of unity or union belongs to the church. "We, being many, are one bread and one body."¹ "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."² "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."³ Both the subject and the predicate of church unity require accurate distinction. Scriptural church union must coincide with scriptural church nature; and as the term church (*ecclesia*) has but two scriptural significations, there can be but two sorts of ecclesiastical unity,—the unity of the whole church and the unity of a single church, or aggregate and local church unity. The subject of which unity is now predicated is the church of Christ. Our study is not the unity of the universe, or of divine government at large, or of redemptive government particularly, or of christians, or of Christ and believers, but only of Christ's church. The unity of all churches and of each church is our study; and by the nature of the subject, as scripturally indicated, must the nature of the predicated unity be determined.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 17. ² 1 Cor. xii. 13. ³ Ephes. i. 10.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNITY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.

ALL the churches of Christ are not formally one, because they are not co-existent. Consecutive associations cannot compose one association, domestic, national, or ecclesiastical. All the contemporaneous churches of Christ are not formally one, because they are not co-organic. Considered in time, the churches succeed each other; considered in space, the churches are free of each other; and just as the churches, comprehensively considered, cannot be one society, because not existing at one time, so the churches, considered contemporaneously, cannot be one society, because not co-organized. The federal or formal unity of Christ's entire extant church is as visionary and impracticable as unreal, and is a mischievous theory. Distinction and independence of churches are just as natural and necessary as distinction and independence of families and nations. An authoritative federation of all extant churches would be the spiritual embodiment of Alexander's and Napoleon's ambitious dream, and would soon degenerate into a most loathsome stagnancy or a most intolerable tyranny. The co-existent churches of Christ are not universally co-organized, and ought not to be nationally or territorially co-organized; and yet, without any co-organization, they co-operate, and with preceding and succeeding churches, they form one great

whole. The unity of the whole church is a fact, not a *desideratum*, an anticipation, or a project. It has not been left to men to make the churches one ; Christ himself both made them one and keeps them one. The ecclesiasm, from its rise to its close and throughout its whole extent, is scripturally indicated as one institute : " I will build my church." The Father gave Christ to be " head over all things to the church, which is his body ;" not a plurality of bodies but one, with one head. " For his body's sake, which is the church." In fourteen places, already quoted, we read of " the church," as comprehensive of scriptural churches, always and everywhere. The real churches of Christ are already one, always have been and always will be one, forming, in scripture language, " my church," " the church," " a glorious church," and " one body." The unity of the whole church is not something for us to originate or achieve, but to study and appreciate.

The churches of Christ are *genetically* one, or of one origin, because Christ is their creator and because their common rise is Apostolical, Pentecostal, and Palestinian. As human beings are one, because sprung from one original pair or, rather, from one person, so from the first church in Jerusalem, consisting of the twelve or of the one hundred and twenty, and of the Pentecostal converts, have all other churches been propagated. To be thus genetically one is to be generically one. All nations are of one blood, because descended from one pair ; and all churches are of one institute, because descended from one creative agency and instrumentality.

The churches of Christ are *archaically* one. They have but one head, which is Christ ; and he is described as " the head of the body, the church," and as " head over all things to the church, which is his body." The churches, always and everywhere, have one king as well

as one creator ; and, consequently, they have only one authorized and appropriate rule of action and message of salvation. As the fruit and instrument of one power, they have but one function,—to communicate divine truth and elicit divine energy, for human salvation and for the divine pleasure. Every inferior and preparatory form of religion is now superseded by the local and catholicized church : “ Other [Gentile] sheep I have, which are not of this [Jewish] fold : them, also, I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one [ecclesiastical] fold, and one shepherd.”¹ “ There is one body,” of which every scriptural local church is a member ; “ and one Spirit,” that originated and animates the body, “ even as ye are called,” by the one Spirit, “ in one hope of your calling ; one Lord,” the head of the body, who calls and incorporates and animates with hope, by the agency of his Spirit ; “ one faith,” or one revealed truth, the Spirit’s instrument, to be received in all with the same faith of belief and trust ; “ one baptism ” of the Spirit, by which believers are purified and replenished ; “ one God and Father of all,” the great author and end of mediation and mercy, “ who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”² ONE SPIRITUAL LIFE, as the grand result of all redeeming means and methods, pervades the churches of Christ, and develops itself in the combined similarity and variety of ecclesiastical service. One vegetable life evolves in the leaf and flower, the ivy and the oak, the lichen and the cedar, the lowly grass and the lofty bamboo, the simple daisy and the splendid aloe. One animal life is developed in the tiniest insect and the largest mammal, in the cuckoo and the condor, the humming-bird and the eagle, in the creeping beetle and the

¹ John x. 16.

² Ephes. iv. 3—6.

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stupendous mammoth. And one spiritual life, too, pervades the churches of Christ, amidst great diversities of opinion and discipline, feebleness and force, freedom and restraint. The pyramidal pre-eminences of Episcopacy, the confederations of Presbyterianism, the co-organized clericalism of Wesleyan Methodism, the circumstantial diversities of Congregationalism and the absorptiveness into which it sometimes lapses, and even the alliance of the church with the state, are found to co-exist with varieties of divine life. Let no one construe this into an apology for error or a depreciation of truth; but let the general fact thus asserted rebuke our sectarian prejudice and pride, and promote our brotherly love. All ecclesiastical fabrics and forms are not and cannot be equally scriptural, and deflections from scripture cannot be wholly innocuous; but churches are not each other's judges; and in the divine life and christian usefulness that are found to co-exist with various shades and stages of error, we should really rejoice; while, also, we earnestly desire and promote the full illumination and rectification of Christ's glorious church. We have no reason to expect that, in matters of executive detail, the churches will ever be uniform. Unity is not uniformity, either in our race or in the church; and diversity is not always divergence from truth, but frequently the wise adaptation of methods to uncontrollable circumstances. Every church should seek full conformity to what Christ commands; and in the executive details which Christ has left free, every church should exercise its utmost wisdom and prudence. Thus understood, ecclesiastical diversity is just as compatible with inclusion in the "one body" as individual christian diversity. The real unity of churches is in the life that pervades them and in the source and means of that life. The orbs in our solar system vary in their magnitudes, aspects, distances from the sun, periods

of revolution, as well as in other particulars; and yet they are all parts of one stupendous and harmonious whole. As there is one solar system so there is one ecclesiastical system; the central sun is Christ, and his churches are moving round him, at varying distances, and with varying rapidity and splendour, according as they approximate the exactitude and amplitude of his revealed will.

We must not confound *similarity* with *sameness*, in our estimate of church unity. The churches are all of the same Messianic, Apostolical, Pentecostal, Palestinian origin; they have all the same head and the same inspired rule and, accordingly, the same vitalizing Spirit, from the same God and Father; and they all have similar faith and hope, cherishing and developing a similar spiritual life. The unity of the vegetable and animal kingdoms is not identity but similarity; and such is the vital unity of the churches of Christ. Scriptural churches are not the same but similar; they are one genetically and generically, not numerically or contemporaneously or co-organically. They all spring from the same source, live in the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. Their origin, object and operation entitle them to be designated and described as the one body or church of Christ, making known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God.

The proper and practical expression of the unity of coeval churches is not uniformity or co-organization or formal alliance, but *fraternal friendship*. The first churches were one, though they differed respecting circumcision, meats offered to idols, and the observance of days. They availed themselves of every suitable opportunity to recognize each other and to assist each other. And though there was no confederating or comprehensive government of the churches, no formal bands or ligaments

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between them, they lived and loved as brethren. Their unity was not federal but spiritual—similarity of faith and reciprocity of love—and this unity of the Spirit they endeavoured to keep in the bond of peace. Churches should not suspect, avoid, asperse, or anathematize each other, but dwell together in unity, in the great field which they occupy and cultivate, for the Lord of the harvest. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."¹

¹ Psalm cxxxiii.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNITY OF A SINGLE CHURCH.

EACH scriptural aspect and element of a church must coincide with every other. If a church is to operate collectively, its collective deliberations and votes must admit of the existence and free expression of diverse estimates and judgments, of majorities and minorities. The whole church is a plurality of contemporaneous and consecutive churches, pervaded and cemented and controlled by Christ's invisible power, partly a plurality of living churches, whose spiritual life varies at once and at intervals; and a single church is or ought to be a plurality of living christians, with individual varieties and distinctions. The unity of a church does not consist, on the one hand, in the suppression or concealment of individuality, or, on the other, in mere formal combination; but in similarity of faith and hope and love, and in consequent co-operation and care. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. . . Be of the same mind one toward another."¹ "Now, the God of peace and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one

¹ Rom. xii. 10, 16.

another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."¹ "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."² "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"³ "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."⁴ "Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions [*σχισματα*, *schismata*] among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies [*αιρεσεις*, *haireseis*] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."⁵ Church union and division are strikingly and instructively illustrated in the apologue, already quoted at length, in which the apostle compares the church to the human body.⁶ The union of a church is not a chaos but an organic co-operation, a curatorial supervision, a wholesome discipline, a mutual affection, a common faith, and a peaceful bond. The criterion of union is the word of God; each church member must interpret this criterion for himself, in the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties; so must each church officer;

¹ Rom. xv. 5—7. ² Rom. xvi. 17. ³ 1 Cor. i. 10—13. ⁴ 1 Cor. x. 32.

⁵ 1 Cor. xi. 17—19. ⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 4—31.

and so must each church, in its collective and decisive acts. Violators of union or perpetrators of schism should be admonished, and if obstinate arraigned before the church, and if incorrigible excluded by the church. "I would they were cut off [from the church by excision] which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh [use not liberty licentiously or chaotically], but by love serve one another."¹ "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."² "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. . . . If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. . . . Do all things without murmurings and disputings."³

The quotation of other cognate passages is needless, and so is comment upon the foregoing quotations. The apostolical language shows plainly what union is, and what the violation of it—the sin of schism—is. The union or unity of a church is the scriptural concurrence, co-operation, and curatorship of its members; the

¹ Gal. v. 12, 13. ² Ephes. iv. 31, 32. ³ Philipp. i. 27; and ii. 1—4, 14.

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reverse of this is schism, whether it be schism that consists in internal discord only, or that ripens and results in factious separation and rival organization. Unscriptural separation from a church and rivalry with it differ only from the original schism, as the ripened fruit differs from the raw, or as the result differs from the means and methods by which it is reached. A church acts schismatically in unscripturally expelling one or more of its members ; and it acts faithfully in expelling unworthy and incorrigible members, agreeably to Christ's law. An individual also acts schismatically in creating needless discord in a church, in conniving at such discord, or co-operating with it, in needlessly withdrawing from a church for the purpose of opposing it ; and, on the other hand, he acts faithfully in opposing earnestly the declensions and corruptions of a church, in co-operating scripturally with others for its purity, and in separating entirely from an incorrigibly or seriously corrupt church, for the purpose of more effectually resisting it, and promoting scriptural churchhood, in conformity with Christ's own command : " Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."¹ Each church and each member of a church must judge for themselves what is scriptural union and what is schism ; and they must act accordingly, as amenable to the righteous and final Judge of all.

¹ Rev. xviii. 4.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY AND RESULT.

FROM the foregoing inquiry it appears that the unity of the whole church is a purely ecclesiarchal design and achievement, and that the unity or union of a single church—internal harmony and fraternal friendship—is simply a question of ecclesiastical operation and relation. The unity of all churches is their derivation from one source, their dependence on one head, and the consequent development of their divine life. The union of a church is the fraternal co-operation of its members and its own fraternal co-operation with other extant churches. Ecclesiastical unity, therefore, is but another name for certain elements and aspects of ecclesiastical nature, origin, relation, and operation. The church is not society, —christian, comprehensive, local, divine, vehicular, elicitive, independent of the nation and the family, executive, fraternal, evangelistic, synarchical, organistic, congregational, and expansive, and besides all these, united or one; but in all these it is already one; it is in some of these that its unity or oneness consists. The very nature of the whole church, from Pentecost to Judgment, is its general or comprehensive unity. The scriptural constitution and operation of each church form its single or particular unity. We have not to study first the nature, origin, relations and operation of the church, and then its unity; but in studying those we study this; and

the only utility of making church unity a separate head of inquiry is to group and condense some of the results of previous inquiries. There cannot be a greater mistake than to make unity a distinct aspect and object, to desire it and strive for it alone, as if there could be scriptural churches without unity, or as if unity was to be super-added to the constitution and proper action of churches. It is not for man to make the whole church one, for Christ himself makes it one. It is not by the co-organization of local churches or the formation of leagues that the several churches are to become truly united. Each church is united in itself, when its own constitution and conduct are truly scriptural. And each such church is united to other churches, when it cherishes and exercises towards them fraternal friendship. If the New Testament enjoins or indicates any other unity or union of churches than these elements and aspects, let it be clearly and promptly shown; we ourselves can discern no other and can neither expect nor desire any other. The glory and blessedness of one vast society, comprehending all that is great and good, are not terrestrial but celestial, not present but future, not mediatorial but retributinal, not anterior to Judgment but subsequent, and will be the everlasting experience of the Judge's invitation and award: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

PART VI.

The Destiny of the Church.



DESTINY OF THE CHURCH.

THE church is the destined means of universal liberation, life and light. The duration of the human race, from the Fall to the Resurrection, is a progressive emergence and improvement. In this progress, the antediluvian era was preparatory; the postdiluvian era is practical. This practical and progressive era consists of three great periods, the Patriarchal, the Mosaical, and the Ecclesiastical. These are the *social* aspects and characteristics of man's mediatorial recovery and development. The first vehicle and development of social religion was the family, the house; the second was the nation, the territory; the third and last is the church, the world. The utmost expansion and prevalence are the aim and the destined attainment of the church, in accordance with its catholic and elastic constitution. As a local institute, it is fitted for any and every locality,—continental and insular, temperate and torrid and frigid. As a congregational institute, regardless of territorial lines and untrammelled by political or artificial distinctions, it is adapted to every plurality of two or more, in any part of the world. As a single and unfederated association, it can operate and flourish without the drawbacks and disadvantages of distant legislation and foreign control, and can practise and prosper in co-existence with all forms and phases of

civil society. Operating collectively, as an association of equals, a church teaches and exemplifies the noble lesson and prerogative of self-government, the rule of right instead of might, and thus silently and slowly, but surely, undermines every despotism, and effectively contributes to universal freedom and spontaneous activity. Operating representatively, it can act by its messengers, where itself or its offshoot has as yet no existence, and can thus disseminate its purity and power, its liberty and life, throughout all the earth. Operating executively, it has never to pause for tedious and difficult legislation, but always and everywhere walks by the same divine rule, and minds the same divine thing; it is everywhere practically one, and is sanctioned and succeeded by its divine and gracious head; it collides with no other society, is perverted by no foreign admixture or alliance, and quietly but surely approximates its glorious consummation.

Of all these operative aspects, the most remarkable and interesting, as related to the church's futurity, are freedom and universality. Man is the debased and miserable victim of tyranny—internal, diabolical and political. Christ purposes and promotes the emancipation of the world, and the church is the social vehicle and development of his redeeming might and light. No man can be a christian without being free from internal and diabolical despotism; and no church can be scripturally constituted and conducted without being exempt from hierarchical and bureaucratic despotism. The freedom of a church is a species of social freedom; and men cannot have one sort of social freedom without desiring every other, they cannot be ecclesiastically free without wishing and endeavouring to be politically free. The healthy appetite for freedom once created by christianity, the mighty love of freedom once implanted by

the gospel, the rational apprehension and possession of liberty once developed and verified in the church, civil tyranny cannot be long and quietly endured. Christianity, through the church, has rung the knell of every terrestrial despotism, and given to mankind at once the pledge and the power of perfect freedom. The present state of the world exemplifies these views. What nations are now really free but the nations that are most christian and most scripturally ecclesiastical? No pagan or Mohammedan country is free; no country that bows to the sceptre of the mystic Babylon and serves the scarlet harlot is free; and no country is free in which national churchism predominates and voluntary churchism is extinguished or persecuted. Nor is any country free in which co-organic churchism exclusively prevails. Let China and Japan, let Turkey and Persia, let Russia and Austria and Prussia and Spain illustrate and confirm these assertions. There can be no real civil freedom but through the enlightening, renovating, liberating, regulating power of christianity; the power of christianity cannot be duly developed within the gates and bars and dungeons of a domineering hierarchy and an absolute monarchy; there can, therefore, be but little freedom where the church bows her neck to the yoke of the state or prostrates her body that co-organized clerics and princely priests may walk over. Yet even there the seeds of liberty and life are sown, and though the vegetation be slow, the ultimate and glorious harvest is certain. Revelation announces the approach of universal emancipation and godliness. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall expand into a mountain and fill the earth. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. The leaves of the christian tree are for the healing of the nations; and into the new ecclesiastical

Jerusalem shall be gathered the nations of the saved, walking in its light, and the kings of the earth, with their inbrought glory and honour.

Great Britain and the United States of America, of all the nations of the earth, are most signalized and distinguished by gospel prevalence and civil freedom. England is inestimably indebted for her civil liberties to the Puritan Independents, and the United States of America are equally indebted to the Independent Pilgrim Fathers. These are the peculiar lands of voluntary churchism, in contradistinction to compulsory, and they both trace their pre-eminent freedom and vigour to Puritan independency, as contradistinguished from federal and nationalized ecclesiasticism. Charles I. would have rivetted for ages the chains and fetters of England, if the Puritan spirit had not nobly snapt and spurned them, and taught the nation and the world the true source of civil power, and the only mode of emancipation and safety. That spirit has never since died and, we trust, never will; that lesson and example have never been forgotten. The revolution of 1688 was but the fresh application and further development of the Cromwellian spirit; successive evolutions of English patriotism and liberty have consolidated and improved the political fabric; and now, in the nineteenth century, the people of England know that England is theirs, that all the political institutions and agencies of the country are theirs, that from their verdict there can be no appeal, and that to effect further disburdenment and development they have but to see and to command, in the calm and dignified spirit and attitude of Englishmen and Christians. Monopoly and Cliqueism are doomed in England, and must dwindle and disappear before the evolving and advancing intelligence and energy of the country. The persons and parties who cling to the relics

and remembrances of feudalism, who regard the people with jealousy and suspicion, and who would build up and buttress their pretensions in the style of old partizanship and by the formal fellowship of the altar and the throne, should awake from their dream and discern the coming change, so as to set their houses in seasonable order. The tide of reformation has fairly set in, and no feudal folly or party prejudice can stop it. The separation of church and state, in these kingdoms, is approaching, and will be accomplished when the people are prepared for it. Voluntary religionists have advanced from the position of a feeble persecuted party to constitute about a moiety of the people and to make their principles known and respected from the throne to the cottage and throughout the island. Free religion cannot now be ignored, haughtily put down, or violently suppressed. The educational struggle most significantly indicates the relative strength of religious parties and pre-intimates the full prevalence of religious liberty. The formation of the Free Church in Scotland is an important preliminary to perfect disenthralment there. National churchism in Ireland is tottering to its fall. And all these indications and prospects are the fruit of christian influence in general and of christian voluntaryism in particular. Christianity has greatly flourished in Scotland, where the bondage and serfdom of hierarchical power and purely clerical co-organism have been renounced and expelled, and in England where popular power in the Parliament has held clericism in check and afforded considerable scope to spiritual spontaneity. Christianity has achieved much less in Ireland, where clerical co-organism and Babylonish abominations have long predominated; but even there, there are signs of a wholesome and cheerful change. Scotland owes its civil liberties and safeguards not altogether to

Presbyterianism, Ireland owes its political freedom not at all to Popery,—but to their connexion with Puritanic and Protestant and Parliamentary England. The voluntaryism of England, pervading both religious and civil institutions, has fed and fostered the love of freedom, and eminently benefited the sister kingdoms. And when England is emancipated from the chilling and cramping influence of compulsion in christianity, when all the churches of Scotland are really free, and when Ireland emerges from the nationalizing of a small religious minority and from the tyrannizing of a Babylonish hierarchy, the gospel will go forth from these lands with multiplied messengers and untrammelled power, to aid and to hasten the universal emancipation and salvation of mankind.

The United States of America, both politically and religiously, are a most interesting study and a most important agency in the progress of mankind. They have solved most gloriously the great problems of self-government in politics and self-sustenance in religion. Can men govern themselves, without hereditary caste and feudal monopoly? Can churches support themselves, without state patronage and pay? Reason and Revelation say “yes,” and the United States of America say “done.” Savages cannot achieve the self-government of civilization, the long-degraded slaves of civil tyranny cannot leap into liberty or epileptically emerge into the growth of free life; but under the light and power of Christianity, men can apprehend and exercise their rights and steadily rise and advance into the manhood and freedom of self-government. The New England colonies began their course of independent nationality with all the preparation and appliances requisite for rational and healthy freedom, for they began without the blight of corrupted christianity and without the bondage of a domineering hierarchy, with Protestant and Puritanic christianity and

with English institutions. Not episcopacy or methodism or presbyterianism only, but the congregational puritanism of New England sowed broad-cast, in what is now the United States of America, those seeds of liberty that have germinated and expanded into such noble institutions and achievements, and that promise to ripen into a glorious harvest, more golden and luxuriant and large than appears elsewhere in the world. It is remarkable that that part of the American Union, the Southern States, which has been so little influenced by the Pilgrim Fathers, though pervaded by other forms of religion than theirs, is still darkened and blighted and withered by the crime and the curse of slavery. Congregationalism is spiritual self-government, and it cannot long and fairly operate without first enfeebling and undermining and then exploding the diabolical and debasing fabric of despotism. Its benefits are felt by many who are slow to discern and acknowledge their obligations. Scotland and Ireland showed little sympathy with the Puritanism of England. The solemn league and covenant of the one kingdom and the priestism of the other had little love for the best characteristics of Cromwell and his lion-hearted and liberty-loving hosts; yet English Puritanism has essentially aided in achieving liberty for the triple kingdom and for its American colonies and for its still affiliated domains. Its social and gubernatorial principles are quietly deepening and spreading in the world, while every form of religious co-organism is more or less upheaved and distracted by the intensifying love of liberty and the resultant struggles against spiritual despotism. Parallel to this, as we should *a priori* expect, are the movement and march of civil liberty, whose recent struggles on the European continent are only temporarily suspended, till with clearer vision and stronger purpose the contest shall be renewed, to succeed gloriously.

Many things betoken the approach of universal peace and universal freedom, though terrible struggles and tempests may intervene. The world is becoming better known to its inhabitants. Scientific art, wielding steam and electricity, has wonderfully facilitated human intercourse and will probably bring distant lands still nearer to each other. The intercommunion of nations lessens the chances of war and facilitates benevolent operations, as it makes nations sensible of their interdependence and varied advantages. Knowledge increases and circulates more widely. Japan will probably soon be opened, and China still more so, to the civilization and religion of Christendom. Free Trade has commenced its peaceful, uniting, fraternal operation. Christian missionaries are studding and educating pagan lands. The Jewish race evinces more wakefulness and energy. Despots are becoming more feverish and vigilant, and men in general are learning to appreciate the nature, origin, and conditions of both civil and ecclesiastical government. Despotism is throned on a slumbering volcano and is working against a briefly-suspended tide. The time will come, and it cannot be very distant, when men will awake as from a dream and ask—"Who are the rightful owners and controllers of these territories and their interests? Who but the people themselves? What right has any man or number of men to make laws for us, without our consent and election? Why should one or more individuals, of precisely the same nature and infirmities as ourselves, dictate to us and dispose of us as they please? We are not property but men; we are not goods and chattels but intelligent and free beings; the world is ours, not kings' and queens', not princes' and presidents', for God has given the earth to the children of men. As such, therefore, and as subordinate to God only, we will be serfs and tools no longer; we will

create our own form of government and appoint our own civil officers, or freely retain or freely modify our inherited or extant institutions. Where right can be ascertained, we will have it respected; and where right is not involved, utility must direct."

An analogous process, we fully believe, will take place among the churches. Associated christians, in various localities, are already strictly testing the claims and warrants of men who legislate and administer amongst them; and at no very distant time, Christendom will demand by what authority popes, patriarchs, conclaves, councils, convocations, conferences, synods and assemblies, wield a law-making and a law-enforcing power. It will be seen and felt that local independence is as much the right of the churches as territorial independence is the right of the nations, and that a local church is not the servant but the source of clerical office and authority. Members of local churches should themselves accept and elect their tutorial and economic agency, and cognosce and control their own interests and operations. Nor will church officers in consequence be degraded. The holders of office are also parts of the constituency and, therefore, included in the very source and well-spring of power; and in serving a church, as its chosen and responsible officers, they hold the highest rank and discharge the noblest duties that can belong to terrestrial men. The service of the churches degrading! Reception of power from a church, and responsibility for its use to that church, degrading! No, but the very reverse. Who loved the church, and gave himself for it? who made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant for his people's sake? "The servant is not greater than his Lord." "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." So the apostles heard, and so

hearing they obeyed, saying to the churches—"Ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake."

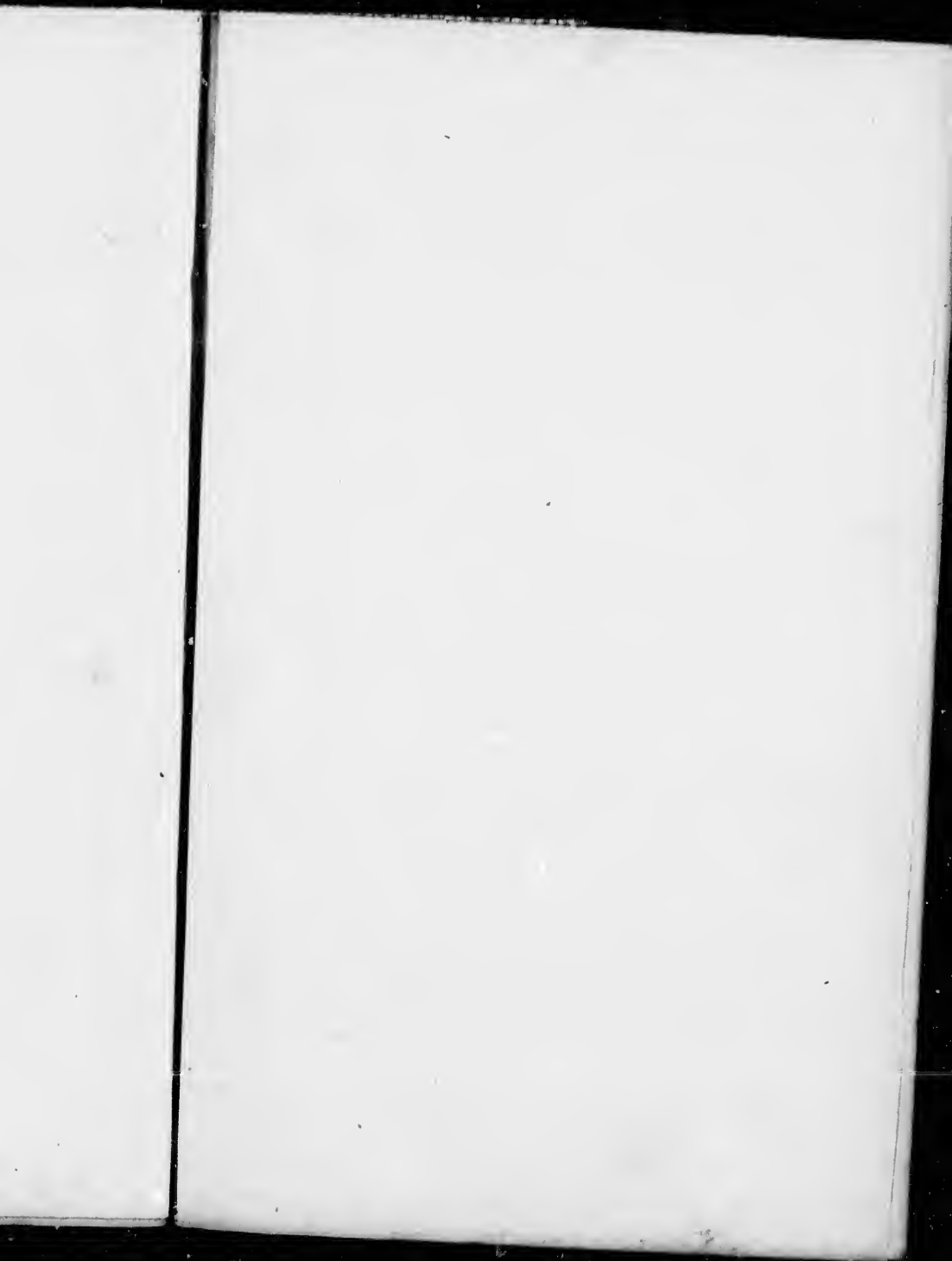
How peaceful and how pleasant will be the reign of fraternal freedom and fraternal friendship, among families, churches, and nations! Then "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." Then "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in," and "all Israel shall be saved." The controversies and confederations of churches and nations shall cease together. No triple leagues or quadruple alliances will then be formed or desired; for every church will be local in its economy and catholic in its friendship, as in apostolic days; and every nation will be independent in itself and fraternal in its intercourse. The sword will be converted into a ploughshare, and the sceptre will cease to be intruded into the church. Men will associate in their several localities, for spiritual worship and service, without regard to civil questions and distinctions; and the electing people and the elected magistracy will conserve and promote territorial interests, without respect to theological questions and ecclesiastical forms. Co-organism in the church will fall before co-ordination; and despotism in the territory will disappear before democracy. Men will everywhere shake off their chains, cease to be tools, and stand forth in their manhood and maturity as the co-equal sons of Adam and the ransomed sons of God. There will be no balance of power, either civil or ecclesiastical, for powers will become distinct and definite. The gospel and the church are the means of achieving these changes; the Agent is above, and his word is the warrant. The church will then be the New Jerusalem, as the apocalypse concludingly depicts her. The benefits of all ages and eras will then be combined. There will be religion in individuals, more perfectly than before the flood. There will be godliness in the family, above all

the piety of patriarchal times. Holiness will pervade the nation, beyond all Jewish fame. And the churches will combine the power of Pentecost with the perfection of Patmos, the purity of the apostolical churches with the prevalence of the apocalyptical Jerusalem. "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." "They shall know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are MEN, and I am your GOD, saith the Lord God." "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

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