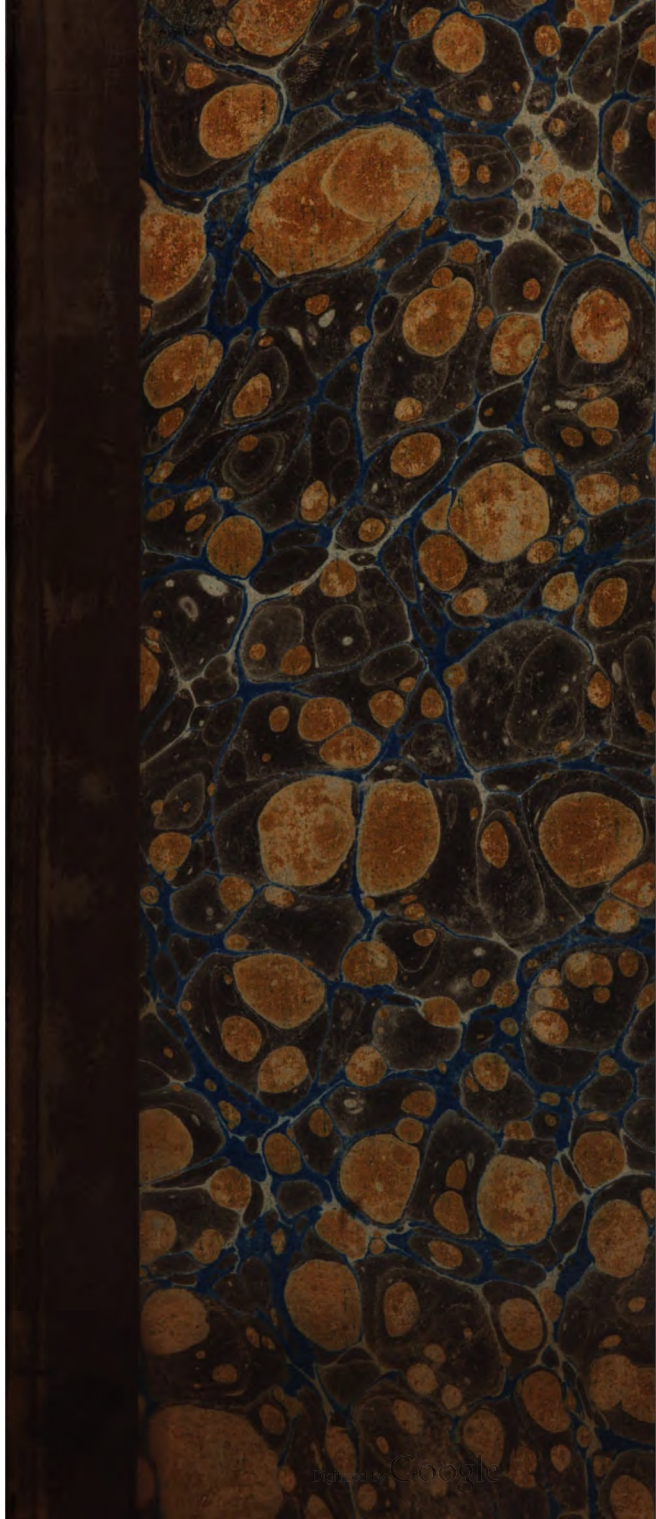

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>







enough
it is in
sober
the sa
let th
this is
the p
saints
more
by his
but to
except
interp
congr

To
they
still glitter as stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of glory, because
ers, and unconverted, proud Prelates of the Anglican communion to
would fall under an anathema for false or ignorant teaching, are the false teach-
angels of Lambeth above the angels of heaven; and if the celestial hierarchy
nounced even on an angel from heaven who preaches false doctrine; are then the
that ye have received, *let him be accursed*" (Gal. i. 8, 9). Here a curse is pro-
than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*. As we have said
again, "AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN preach any other Gospel unto you
previous wolves in his right hand for the benefit of the flock. "If," says Paul

43.68.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

EXAMINED

BY

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION:

IN AN ANSWER TO

LECTURES BY THE REV. JOHN VENN,

OF HEREFORD,

OR

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.



BY

R. MACKENZIE BEVERLEY.

LONDON:

R. GROOMBRIDGE, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1843.



P R E F A C E.

THE true statement of the doctrine of Christian ministry I have already endeavoured to establish ; and as in the little work which I published on this subject, the question is there discussed, according to such light as the Scriptures alone afford for the investigation, I have not thought it necessary in this reply to Mr. Venn to go over the same ground again, excepting where the course of the argument has carried me *incidentally* into the subject. They that are altogether strangers to the controversy, but may yet feel some interest in the questions involved in it, should first make themselves acquainted with the positions which Mr. Venn has endeavoured to undermine ; for the controversy is not of every day's occurrence, neither are the points in debate such as are to be found usually between churchmen and dissenters. The inquiry goes much deeper : the axe is laid to the root of the tree ; it is not the recriminations between the clergymen of the two Universities and the clergymen of the dissenting colleges, but it is the searching *principle* of Christian ministry, and of the true government of the church of God ; a principle which makes a deep incision into the very root of *all* clerisy, and causes the whole tree to shake, with all its branches, whether they be natural or whether they be ingrafted. I should therefore recommend the reader, who desires to understand the controversy thoroughly, to read some * publications in which the *principle* is stated ; for, without this preliminary, I can hardly hope that a perusal of the following pages, much less of Mr. Venn's Lectures on Ministry, will enable him fully to comprehend the true bent of the arguments on either side.

In the meanwhile, I would emphatically remark, that I have entered into this controversy for the sole object of assisting those

- * "Open Communion and Liberty of Ministry."
- "Ordination."
- "Christian Liberty of Preaching and Teaching the Lord Jesus Christ."
- "What is a Church?"
- "Christian Ministry."
- "Christian Fellowship."
- "The Blood of the Lamb and the Union of Saints."
- "An Inquiry into the Scriptural doctrine of Christian Ministry.—By R. M. Beverley."

All these may be had at No. 1, Warwick-square, Paternoster-row.

Christians, who, loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (Eph. vi. 24), are, nevertheless, in a situation most unsuitable for obedience, such as every consideration of the truths revealed in the New Testament manifest the Established church to be. I do not write for the world—for the water-sprinkled millions of the Establishment,—but for those within the pale of the church of England who are justified *by faith*, and by faith have peace with God. I would, if it were possible, have the whole controversy in the hands of those only who know the grace of God in truth; for, as the light of the tabernacle was curtained off by many veils from the gaze of the world, and was seen only by those who could draw nigh unto God, dressed in the white ephod, and bathed and anointed for the due approaches into the mysterious presence-chamber, so certainly ought the light of this knowledge, which is all concerning the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, to be the portion of those only who draw nigh unto God, that is, for “the royal priesthood.” But if we would at all vindicate the truths on which this controversy touches, we can not order it as we would; the world and the church are mingled together in the Establishment; grace and condemnation, righteousness and iniquity, they that are born of the flesh and they that are born of the Spirit are promiscuously blended together; and the children of light and of darkness are to be found both amongst the clergy and the laity; so that if we would speak at all of these things we must do it publicly, that the unseen and unknown individuals whose consciences we would reach may hear a public voice, and by it have their attention aroused. To write against the Establishment, *appealing to the world*, is, for a Christian, a serious mistake; it is, indeed, an easy task, and the theme is so rich and large that an active spirit may find therein boundless materials for censure; but the Christian may not be a censor of the world, nor assail those institutions which the laws of a kingdom sanction, with arguments calculated to excite the antipathies of a seditious age. This is a truth that Christians, I hope, are more disposed to admit than they were some years ago, for, if any thing has been discovered within the last ten years *by Christians*, it is surely this, that the heavenly vocation of the saints (Heb. iii. 1) will not allow them to be reformers, in the sense in which the world understands that word. It was, indeed, my ardent wish some time ago to be a reformer of the church of England; for being then still attached to it, and having had my attention awakened to the truths of the Christian religion, I was amazed with the discoveries of those defilements which, I supposed, the world had introduced into the sanctuary. With this feeling, and seeing all things dimly—“men like trees walking,”—I set about to blow a loud trumpet of alarm, that all who loved “our Zion” might arouse themselves to cast out the buyers and the sellers from the temple. That was the language then in vogue, and those were my thoughts. I was encouraged to the task by *many clergymen*; I repeat it, that in the years 1831—32, there were many of the clergy right glad to see

an adventurous and daring spirit leading the forlorn hope in attacking the keep of a spiritual Babylon. I could, if it were worth while, or if it were right, reveal to the world more than the world suspects of the clerical feeling in those days; for documents, proving this, still remain, and I, at that time, was frequently consulted by some of the clerical corps, with whom I had had no previous acquaintance, but who sought out one that seemed disposed to fight to the uttermost the battle of Ecclesiastical reform. But let these things pass, as, indeed, all the dreams of those days have passed away. The sober reality of increasing darkness, the disappointment of all grades of reformers, the increase of superstition, and the augmentation of priestcraft, now make it certain that the light of that era was the glare of a meteor, not the dawning of that morning which is to be without any clouds (2 Sam. xxiii. 4). Visitations of sorrow have sobered down the zeal of some, the love of this world has drawn others into apostacy, some have withdrawn into despair, others have retreated into superstition, some have "run greedily into the error of Balaam for reward," and others, comparatively a few it may be, have advanced onwards, *taught* every step of their way by grace, and now understand what it is to be wholly free, in body, soul, and spirit, from all man's innovations in the house of Christ: are released from all sects, liberated from all forms of clerical error, and yet more deeply and sweetly addicted to the service of THAT GREAT ONE, who, revealing to his elect that his government is through his word and Spirit only, emancipates them from human trappings to make them carry more faithfully his easy yoke and his light burthen.

I have said that some have retreated into superstition; it is indeed so. The Oxford Tracts were first published in the year 1833, and since that time the clerical propensities have been on the increase—the ideas of Ecclesiastical reform on the wane. The Established church is now manifesting a decided tendency to resume the Laudean policy; the materials for the work are legitimately within the reach of those clergymen who desire to revive the Levitical theory, and every thing seems to indicate that the dominion of the traditional school is probable, and that the sect of the Evangelical clergy must, ere long, entirely give way. The Oxford writers have clearly enough demonstrated that there is no reconciliation possible of the two schools, and the Record Newspaper, the organ of that miscellaneous party called, by courtesy, "Evangelical," openly denounces the school of the Tractators as "hateful and antichristian." Hence we see things coming to a crisis; and now, after three centuries of an unquiet life, the church of England is in this extraordinary position, that its own clergy are disagreed about fundamentals, and though, ostensibly, one regiment in the uniform of the surplice, are, in fact, two armies, drawn out in battle array to fight the quarrel of first principles.

But the Oxford Tracts have done this service, that they have put the question so intelligibly that it is now no longer possible for clergymen to retain that ambiguous position in which many have

hitherto been pleased to act as simple evangelists, preaching justification by faith and conversion to a baptized and regenerate congregation, and disregarding the manifest doctrines of the Prayer Book. The Bishop of London in his late charge, speaking as one that believes the Prayer Book, asserts its doctrines plainly; the Record Newspaper commenting on the Prelate's charge, declares that its statements are "most unscriptural" (Oct. 20th, 1842); and thus we see that the two parties are fundamentally opposed, and in a way never to be reconciled. It may be true, indeed it *is* true, that the statements in the Bishop of London's charge are "most unscriptural," but then they are most in accordance with the Prayer Book; and the Evangelical clergymen, who write leading articles in the Record Newspaper, forget their solemn engagements, which, on entering into their ministerial functions, they were obliged to read "openly and publicly before the congregation in their morning and evening service." "I do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England."

The Oxford Tracts have, for Christians, done another service; they have compelled their clerical opponents to give up the old saw of the Evangelical party, "the Bible and nothing but the Bible," for we now find the Record Newspaper (a document to which I unhesitatingly refer, as being the accredited and well-written organ of the Anti-Oxford school) driven to make the following confession, which indeed is of no small importance,—"**THE PRACTICE OF INFANT BAPTISM DOES REST EXCLUSIVELY ON TRADITION**; and it is a safe and legitimate use of tradition to bear witness to *the fact*, that the practice came down from the Apostolic age, and is therefore rightly maintained by the Church" (Oct. 20th, 1842).

It would be difficult to estimate the importance of this admission, for as a national form of Christianity, a national religion, a national priesthood, and all the errors in connection with these things, are of necessity based on the baptismal Christianity of infants; and as we find the Evangelical Clergy now at last declaring that the corner-stone of the whole fabric *rests exclusively on tradition*, we thus see that Christians who own no authority but the word of God, have the controversy cleared of many incumbrances, for they now can well understand how, even with the Evangelical Clergy, the points of debate are, in principle, the same that must ever be between Bible-Christians and the Church of Rome.

But the wise amongst the Evangelical Clergy have long ago perceived this, for in days when Puseyism was unknown, or rather when the Laudean serpent was still torpid, we hear such men as the Rev. J. W. Cunningham of Harrow utter this sentiment, "I wish to remind you, good Protestants of the Church of England, that you owe to Popery almost every thing that deserves to be

called by the name of a Church" (Velvet Cushin, 5th Ed. p. 17); a sentiment which, though uttered in the year 1814, and since that period most probably forgotten, might be taken as a motto for all the Oxford Tracts—so little do the Evangelical Clergy comprehend their position, till by the just teaching of providence they are made to feel it, by "discovering the foundation unto the neck."

And these things we say are benefits done to Christians, for however painful it may be to sift our principles, and to search out every remnant of chaff mixed up with them, yet still it is good for all Christ's disciples and especially for those in the Established Church, to have these discoveries made, that they may comprehend, that though by grace they are children of light, yet in actual position they abide in darkness. How true it is, that "the Church of England owes to Popery almost every thing that deserves to be called by the name of a Church!" Its externals and internals are Popish that is, *not Scriptural*, and if they are not Scriptural they must be Popish, for from Popery they came; or rather they remain what they always were, Popish, with Protestant ornaments attached to them. If, however, the word *Popish* should sound harsh, take one which is generic and which more accurately expresses the truth,—*traditional*, implying thereby that both Papists and Protestants are in possession of certain usages and opinions which are not warranted by the New Testament, but are of human invention. This is the discovery now in process, and it has been much aided by the Oxford Tractators, who indeed write for this one object, to bring Christians from the Scriptures into tradition. Hear how they plead the matter,—“There is not a single text in the Scriptures enjoining infant baptism—how is it that St. Paul does not in his Epistles remind parents of so great a duty, *if it is a duty?* There is not a single text telling us to keep holy the first day of the week, and that *instead* of the seventh. God hallowed the seventh day, yet we now observe the first—why do we do this? there is nothing on the surface of Scripture to prove that the *sacredness* conferred in the beginning on the seventh day now *by transference* attaches to the first. There is scarcely a text enjoining *going to church* for joint worship—.....there is no text in the New Testament which enjoins us to “establish” religion (as the phrase is), or to make it national, and give the Church certain honor, and power; whereas our Lord's words, “My kingdom is not of this world,” John xviii. 36, may be interpreted to discountenance such a proceeding.. ... There is no text which allows us to take oaths; the words of Christ and St. James seem plainly the other way.” In the same way they state, that the Scriptural warrant for giving the civil magistrate power to take away life, is questionable—that the Lord's supper is never distinctly called a sacrifice, nor the ministers Priests—that the word altar, absolution, and succession, are not in the Scriptures (i. e. for the Church of the New Testament. Tracts for the Times, No. 85).

Now these remarkable expressions might at the first hearing be

supposed to be uttered by those Christians whom Mr. Venn especially opposes in his Lectures on Ministry, whereas the authors are really Priests of a much higher school than Mr. Venn himself, their object being this, to prove to Churchmen that a long list of items which they possess and reverence is not in the Scriptures but in tradition, and that therefore they must be prepared to go to the school of tradition to understand the doctrines and practices suited to persons in such a position.

Now these discoveries I say are useful, and the Tractators themselves are in this respect benefactors to true Christians; for if all sorrow has come into the Church by mixing up truth with error, joy and peace can alone be recovered by our understanding with acute perception, every grain of the mixture, which after all is mechanical and not chemical. I hold every one to be a benefactor who (though unintentionally) helps us to discover the existing mystery of iniquity, which is simply this, mixing truth with error, and not, as is generally supposed, annihilating truth. This peculiarity constitutes perhaps the actual dominion of the woman who has on her forehead "Mystery; Mother of Harlots"—her adulteries and whoredoms meaning, that she who takes a name of truth joins it with deeds and doctrines of falsehood. The proper Antichrist will take another course; he will hate the Whore and her principles, and stretching forth into a wider compass of impiety, will openly seek to annihilate the truth, disdaining to mix it with his lies.

Let us therefore be glad when the truth is agitated; I hail it as an auspicious event that clergymen any where feel themselves compelled to come forward and discuss the great question of ministry. Good must be done by it. If the truth is not with the Clergy, it must be made more manifest that such is the case by the stir they make; and the more conspicuous this becomes, the more plainly will unemancipated Christians perceive the necessity for seeking a more excellent way.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EXAMINED,

&c.

It is to be deemed a happy circumstance that Mr. Venn has published his lectures on "the Christian Ministry," for as he has been urged by untoward circumstances to bestir himself, and to meet that which, as a clergyman, he feels to be an alarming evil, the secession of many influential persons from the Establishment; so in order to combat that evil, has he been constrained to study *the fundamental question* with much more care than the Clergy usually bestow upon it. After learning with accuracy the principles of those Christians whose emancipation had disturbed the venerable slumbers of the Establishment in Hereford, he comes forth from a four years' examination of the question prepared to make such statements as may, in some way, meet the supposed evil; for it is the views of those whom he chooses to call "the Plymouth Brethren" that he has to oppose, and against which he has to raise, if possible, some effectual barrier. The old hackneyed controversy between the Episcopalians and the Dissenters is in this quarter quite out of date: Mr. Venn thoroughly understands this: he perceives that the principles of these seceders take so high a ground, that they leave in a region far beneath, the litigations of the Congregationalists, and the murmurings of the sects; and that therefore if he is to write with any effect, he must make himself master of these principles, which have in them a power to unsettle the affections of the most devoted and most valued adherents of the Established Church. Mr. Venn's lectures indicate an acquaintance with the subject, such as we should in vain seek for in the querulous and ignorant misrepresentations of other opponents; indeed we may say, that he is the only writer either amongst the Clergy or the Dissenters, who seems to understand precisely what he has to oppose; and it is for this reason that there is some satisfaction in answering him, as we have now at least to deal with one of whom we may not say

Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos.

I would also at the outset acknowledge that Mr. Venn has exhibited considerable tact and ingenuity in managing his arguments; for though his strategy is such as could scarcely claim applause in the school of ethicks, yet in the science of special-pleading he has shewn himself no mean proficient; and by the expedients of that science, he has done the best that can be done for his very difficult and delicate case.

Mr. Venn has not only proposed to himself the task of confuting the seceders, but of representing the Church of England as true and

sound according to the New Testament ; and this certainly is no easy matter. He has had to sustain the double duties of a gratuitous opponent and a clergyman ; he has had to prove not only that we are wrong, but that he is infallibly right ; and thus having to attack from a very weak position, he has, as much as it was possible, endeavoured to conceal his own weakness, whilst he was assailing the strongholds of his opponents. Indeed, here it is that his art is conspicuous,—*the concealing his own weak points*. We shall soon see that his warfare is mainly directed to this ; and that, thoroughly understanding the vulnerable points of his own clerical position, he begins with making arrangements to draw off his opponents to another quarter, that they may not direct their attention to those objects where it would be dangerous to meet them. And yet, such is the difficulty of Mr. Venn's case, that if he is confuted as a clergyman, he will lose all : he has so bound up the question with the interests of the Establishment, and so staked the case he has to prove on the claims of the Establishment, that if we demolish those claims, we utterly confute him, in the whole scope of the question. The controversy with Mr. Venn, as a clergyman, and as he has been pleased to manage it, is not truth in the abstract, but clerical, ecclesiastical, priestly representations of the truth ; so that if we prove that his clerical views are erroneous, artificial, and unsound, then it will follow that all his efforts to convict secession of error come to nought ; as his object is not so much to vindicate the truth of the New Testament, as to convict and condemn secession from his own sect.

The whole question will be found indeed to turn on the very existence of clerisy ; for if the right views of ministry are established, it follows immediately that the division of the Christian body into clergymen and laymen, is a fundamental error. We deny that any clerical body at all may exist on the authority of the New Testament ; this is a proposition of general application wherever the clerical elements are to be found ; but we are quite prepared also to meet Mr. Venn in his arguments for the clergy of his own communion, whose claims to clerisy are on the same footing with all others,—a revival of Judaism, and consequently an extinction of the Evangelical principle. “The Plymouth Brethren,” says Mr. Venn, “continually complain that we make a most dangerous and unscriptural distinction, when we divide the Church into the clergy and the people :—the word *clergy*, they observe, is applied in Scripture only to the whole Church. Here, however, they quite mistake the matter. The word *κληρος*, *lot* or *inheritance*, is applied to the people ; the word *κλήρικος*, or *clergy*, is formed from it, and signifies one who has the charge of the *κληρος*, or *lot* or *people*.” (1st Lect. p. 15.)

This, as a specimen of criticism, is a strange passage ; for Mr. Venn hereby seems to be ignorant that Clerus is the proper word for the body of the Clergy ; and if so, we do *not* “quite mistake the matter,” for we then affirm, that they who have departed from the Scriptures have taken a word which is there applied to the whole body of believers, and appropriated it to those intruders in the fold,—*Clergymen*. The proof that Clerus means the body of the clergy, in the language of the traditionists, is abundant. Turn to Cyprian, and you will find the word often so used by him, as for instance : “Cleri sacrum venerandumque consessum,” Ep. 55 ; and in this sense it is continually used in the Canon law, and in the Latin copy of the xxxix. articles : “qui articuli confirmati sunt subscriptione Archiepiscopi et Episcoporum superioris domûs, et totius *cleri* inferioris domûs in convocacione.”

If, however, there were any regard to Scripture truth and language

in this matter, the gross and barbarous word clericus would mean a christian ; for if clerus is the whole lot or heritage of God, a clericus must be one of that heritage, and not one " who has charge of the lot." This, however, is the fact in the apostacy ; they have robbed the heritage, taken possession of names as well as of things, and have called the intruders the clerici. The depredators have arrayed themselves in the clothing of the sheep. The true clerus is now unknown and forgotten, and an unlicensed order of Levites has taken their name as well as their privileges. If we were to use Scripture language, the word " clergy" would mean the whole body of the faithful ; but no one now would understand us. In the same way the word Church, in ordinary language, far more frequently is used concerning dead buildings and the clergy, than for its proper signification, the elect people of God ; and thus in many ways we find that " the heathen have come into the inheritance, and the holy temple have they defiled."

We now begin, without further preface, to examine Mr. Venn's statements.

In the Church of England there are three grades of clerical character,—Bishop, Priest, and Deacon ; and these three Mr. Venn is of course bound to find in the Scriptures, and to find them, too, such characters as we see them in the Establishment. The ordinary proof of this is very well known.—Clergymen usually refer to the common passages in the New Testament where mention is made of the Bishops, as 1 Tim. iii. " This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work," &c. And thus proving the Bishop, and taking for granted that the seven men chosen at Jerusalem to serve tables were Deacons, and shewing also that besides Bishop and Deacon, there were other Pastors, the case is ordinarily made out, that there were three grades, to the satisfaction of those reasoners who are not over solicitous for any logical or convincing proof of the truth of that which they are blindly determined to believe. A foundation of the orders so loose and unsafe as this, Mr. Venn dares not trust, for he has examined the difficulties of the case, and quite understands that all will be jeopardised, if the Establishment is allowed to rest on such a basis. Hence he has adopted a theory already proposed by some Protestant Episcopalians, (the Roman Catholics are never reduced to such sad expedients,) that the word Bishop in the New Testament does not really mean Bishop, and is not to be applied to the Episcopal office ;* and that the word Priest, as used by the Establishment, does not mean a Priest, but something else ! Mr. Venn would therefore invent a new nomenclature for his three orders,—“ Uninspired Apostles, Presbyters, Deacons ;” and in this new costume he thinks he is able to make his three grades stand their ground.

The reason of this strange and startling metamorphose we will now examine. The advocates of Episcopacy, who read the Scriptures with a superficial glance, think that they rest secure in their faith in Bishops by simply referring to the passages where the Bishops are mentioned ; but it will soon be seen that the Episcopal faith is rather confuted than confirmed by such passages. We must, therefore, first clearly put before us the point to be proved by the Episcopalians ; it is not merely finding the word Bishop but finding the office like to that

* " Let it be distinctly understood, that the superior officer universally now called ' a Bishop' had not that title appropriated to him in Scripture, and that the Bishops were in Scripture were in most, probably in all cases, the ordained elders, (i. e. priests.)" (1st Lecture, p. 34.)

which now exists. Now a Bishop is not an overseer of one church in a town or village, and still less is he associated with other Bishops in towns and cities, but he has a diocese, that is, he is the ruler of very many churches in a province or county, as the Bishop of Hereford, the Bishop of Durham, and the Colonial Bishops of Calcutta, Jamaica, &c., &c. We are therefore to find in the Scriptures the *diocesan* Bishops and the priests or the elders of many churches under them: as in the diocese of Hereford, some hundred priests under the government of the Bishop, and so in the other dioceses.

We turn then to Scripture, and we find the Bishops thus spoken of.—“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and deacons” (Phil. i. 1). Now Philippi was a city of no very large dimensions: Christianity had not been established in it very long (say twenty years), and yet we find Paul writing to the Bishops of the church there: these obviously could not have been the diocesan Bishops: to have two or three prelates (there may have been a dozen or more for aught we know) in one city, puts an end to the theory of dioceses and Episcopacy, and this is one reason why Mr. Venn is anxious to unmitre the Bishops of the New Testament, and to make them descend a step lower.

But here, again, a little further explanation will be wanting. We shall soon see that the elder or presbyter and the Bishop are synonymous terms in the New Testament; the proof is redundant and undeniable. Now, if we find the elder and presbyter to be the same as the Bishop, then it will follow, by many other passages of Scripture, that there were many Bishops in towns and cities: hence this is again a reason for degrading the Bishops of the New Testament, for if they are allowed to be that which the Scriptures say they are—*Bishops*, they will confute the *Diocesan* Episcopacy. Thus, then, we have reduced the boasted three orders down to two, preparatory indeed to a further reduction; as it will be seen, ere very long, that the grade of Deacon is a mere dream of tradition.

That elder and Bishop are synonymous in the New Testament is apparent many ways. When Paul sends for the elders of the church at Ephesus, he calls them Bishops. “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops (*ἐπισκοπους*).” The translators obviously had a motive here for concealing the word Bishops; and it is to keep out of sight the fact that elder and Bishop are synonymous terms that they have substituted the word “overseers;” for if the many elders of Ephesus were Bishops, as the Scriptures assert they were, then the theory of diocesan Episcopacy would be incurably damaged.

In the epistle to Titus the identity of these titles is again manifest: “I left thee in Crete that thou shouldst ordain *elders* in every city as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless for a *Bishop* must be blameless” (Tit. i. 7).* In this way the elders which Paul and Barnabas chose in every city of Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 23) were certainly Bishops. Again, in 1 Pet. v. 1—2 we find the same fact. “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder:—feed the flock of God which is among you, *taking the oversight* willingly.” In the Greek it is *ἐπισκοπουντες*—“acting the Bishops over them” (1st Lecture, p. 17). Now it is remarkable that though the translators of the Bible conceal

* The hundred cities of Crete.

the word Bishop in Acts xx. 28, yet in another place they unscrupulously introduce it with manifest violence to the true meaning of the passage,—“His Bishoprick let another take” (Acts i. 20); for in this latter passage it was, perhaps, in their esteem, more safe to leave the vacant chair of Judas to be occupied by the succession of prelates, than to allow the mitre to the many Bishops of Ephesus. In the former case they consecrate the traitor, in the latter they degrade a whole bench!

But it is this view of the question of Episcopacy that has compelled Mr. Venn to adopt the theory of two or three writers of his sect, and to erase from the Episcopal order all the Bishops of the New Testament, as he has been fully convinced, by the publications of his opponents, that diocesan Episcopacy may not stand on the Scriptural “Bishop.” Hence we find the second section of the first lecture thus headed:—“The office and authority of the Elder of the Bible, and priest of the Church of England.” It is his object to prove the elder the same as the priest of the Establishment, but as we have seen that elder and Bishop are convertible terms in the New Testament, Mr. Venn must, by some means or other, surmount this difficulty, in order to give his “priest” a Scriptural existence; for if the priest be the Bishop and the Bishop the priest, the Episcopal figment is ruined, and the whole case lost in the very outset.

It is necessary thus minutely to explain the argument, as I have found that even churchmen do not always comprehend Mr. Venn’s drift; and, indeed, it would be difficult for any one not conversant with the turns of this question to understand Mr. Venn’s object and the true motive of his distinctions.

But the obstacles in the way of this theory are insurmountable, and that for many reasons.

1st, The Prayer-book of the Church of England has authoritatively settled the question of the Bishop contrary to Mr. Venn’s views. In the consecration of Bishops, the epistle appointed for that ceremony is 1 Tim. iii., “This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work; a Bishop must be blameless,”—to the end of the 7th verse; or instead of that portion of Scripture an option is given of reading Acts xx., from the 17th verse to the end of the 35th verse of that chapter. Now, these are passages, selected by authority, to illustrate the consecration of the genuine Bishop of the Establishment, Mr. Venn’s makers and rulers; and yet these are the very passages which prove the identity of the Bishop and elder, and which Mr. Venn has rejected from his Episcopal plan!

But this is not all: the prayers in the same office of consecration interweave the identical passages which Mr. Venn finds himself obliged to reject;—“that when the chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive the crown of glory.” These words are from 1 Pet. v. 4, which the Prayer-book thus applies to the prelates, but which Mr. Venn expressly states, does not apply to them, but to the elders or priests only (1st Lecture, p. 17,—note). So, in the same office we find these words: “the church of Christ which he hath purchased with no less price than the shedding of his own blood,” taken from Acts xx. 28,—Paul’s address to the Bishops of Ephesus. By which instances it is undeniable that the Prayer-book does appropriate the passages of Scripture in which the Bishops are named, to the Bishops now existing; from which it will also follow that Mr. Venn and the Prayer-book are at issue, and that his case is so difficult that he dare not follow that *vade mecum* of his faith to which he has professed his solemn assent and consent.

2ndly, To erase the Bishops of Scripture from the Episcopal order is running counter to such an immense array of Episcopalian writers,—is contradicting such an army of Archbishops, Bishops, Doctors, and teachers of Mr. Venn's own church,—is so completely an expedient, and that of the most hazardous and empirical order, that I feel persuaded Mr. Venn will be compelled, if his Lectures draw attention, in high places, to sing a palinody on the subject, as it never will be endured that a clergyman who comes forward as the particular advocate of the Establishment may set aside the Prayer-book, and contradict the general voice of antiquity. Far better will it be to allow the seceders to promulgate their opinions, than thus to throw overboard those sentiments which have been hallowed by the esteem of ages, and stamped with the seal of canonical authority.

If, however, the difficulty is great for the Episcopalians in this quarter, to obviate these statements of the New Testament, by which we clearly see that the Bishops and elders were one and the same characters, there are, nevertheless, *many** of that party who have candidly confessed the difficulty, and have acknowledged that the Scriptures are against the three orders. Mr. Scott, in his commentary, says, "Paul addressed himself to the *saints* at Philippi with the Bishops and deacons; hence we learn that the distinction between presbyters and deacons was *not then generally established*, but that the pastors of the church were distinguished from the deacons, who managed the secular matters of the charities of the church: much labour and learning have, indeed, been employed to set aside the conclusion, but with little success." This is important testimony; for not only does it give up the three orders, but informs us that decided Episcopalians have laboured hard with all the learning they could bring to bear on the question to set aside the fact which the Scriptures assert, and yet all their learned labours have been unsuccessful. Mr. Venn, aware of this untoward circumstance, sees no other course to pursue than to erase the Bishops altogether from the Scripture, and to give them a Scriptural existence by first carefully expunging their names and record from the pages of Scripture.

Milner, in his Church History, makes the following acknowledgment: "Nor is it difficult to conceive what was the most customary mode of church government in those times. In vain, I think, will almost any modern church set up a claim to exact resemblance. At first, indeed, or for some time, church governors *were only of two ranks*, presbyters and deacons; at least this appears to have been the case in particular instances, as at Philippi, and at Ephesus, and the term Bishop was confounded with that of presbyter."

Neander in his Church History confirms this view,—“A council of elders was generally appointed to conduct the affairs of the churches; but it was not necessary that it should be strictly composed of those who were the most aged, although age was taken very much into the account. Besides the usual appellation of these forms of the Churches (namely *πρεσβυτερῆ*), there were many others also in use, designating

* "It is demonstrable that at that time the terms bishop and presbyter were partly convertible."—Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, by Professor Burton. "It is unquestionable that the terms bishop and elder, or presbyter, were in the first instance, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the same order in the ministry."—Waddington's Church History, i. 36.

their peculiar sphere of action as ποιμενες, shepherds, &c. : and one of these appellations was επισκοπος, denoting their office as leaders and overseers over the whole church. That the name of Episcopus (Bishop) was altogether synonymous with that of Presbyter (Elder), is clearly collected from the passages of Scripture where both appellations are interchanged. The interchanges of the two appellations is a proof of the entire coincidence. If the name Bishop had originally been the appellation of the President of this Church Senate of *primus inter pares*, such an interchange could never have taken place."

The authorities of Ecclesiastical writers to the same effect are numerous,—Calmet, Mosheim, Basnage, Beausobre, Dallœus, and Vitringa; amongst the Roman Catholics, Tillemont, Baronius, Mabillon, the fathers of the Council of Trent, and the Canon Law; besides many of the Greek and Latin fathers. Amongst writers of the Establishment, besides those already quoted, I would refer to Archbishop Usher; Bishops Hall, Cousins, Taylor, Beveridge, and Tomline, as claiming for the Bishops the passages of the New Testament rejected by Mr. Venn, to say nothing of a crowd of Episcopalian writers who, without scruple, either directly or incidentally, take the same line.

But besides all this, we have Archbishop Cranmer, the founder and inventor of Mr. Venn's Church, solemnly deciding against the three orders, and asserting the identity of Elders and Bishops. This curious and interesting testimony is found in the records appended to Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation. The record is entitled "Some Questions concerning the Sacrament?" "Qu. Whether Bishops or Priests were first, and if the Priests were first, then the Priests made the Bishops." Cranmer answered,—“The Bishops and Priests were at one time, and were no two things, but both one office in the language of Christian religion.” The rest of this testimony, as being in another view of the question, I reserve for a subsequent place.

3rdly, The third difficulty in the way of this scheme is this,—that as it has expunged the Scriptural word “Bishop” from the Episcopacy, so it has left no Bishop at all to be found any where in the New Testament, except by the most vague conjectures, and difficult inventions. And where then *are* the Bishops? would naturally be the next question. Mr. Venn says that we are to find them in the words “Apostle” and “Angel,” and that wherever we find that word Apostle not applied to the twelve, but to some other persons, we are to understand that Bishops, the true Prelates of the Establishment, are indicated. Hence he tells us (1st Lecture, p. 36), that Prelates* are meant in the following passage,—“We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often proved diligent in many things. . . . whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ.” The word messenger Mr. Venn would translate “Apostle,” and then have us believe that they were Prelates. Out of such unpromising materials is Mr. Venn constrained to evoke the mitre!

But see the absurdity of such an exegesis: here are brethren alluded to, but not named, whom, together with Titus, Paul had sent to carry a collection of money from the Corinthian Church to the Saints at Judea. The proper Greek word for persons despatched on such a mis-

* I am obliged to use this word to prevent confusion. The Prelate is to be understood as meaning *Mr. Venn's Bishop*. The word Priest I prefer to Mr. Venn's “uninspired Apostle” or “Angel,” particularly as this last title has become too celebrated in Irving's sect.

sion was *αποστολος*, or messenger, or *persons sent out*, which, indeed, is the strict meaning* of the word Apostle; and these Mr. Venn appropriates for his scheme of prelacy, simply because the word *apostolos* is used in the Greek concerning them, and because the exigencies of his argument compel him to find the Prelates somewhere, and by any means; or, as we commonly say, by hook or by crook.

But for a moment let us suppose they were Prelates, how strange a use to make of such dignitaries, to send a party of them on this long journey on a mission of charity, and yet in writing to the Corinthian Church not even to name them! Supposing that some noted person of this age, and in the diocese of Hereford, were to write a letter in Greek to his friends, and to say that he had sent certain brothers as messengers (*αποστολους*) with a collection of money to the Churchmen at Jerusalem, would it not be a most whimsical commentary on this letter, if some centuries hence a very learned and hard-pressed Presbyter were to declare that these messengers were Apostles and Angels, and therefore Prelates; and that they were therefore most probably the Bishops of Hereford, Worcester, and Gloucester, as being the neighbouring Prelates where the letter was written; and yet, absurd as this would be, this is really and truly the very essence of Mr. Venn's commentary. †

In the same line of argument, Mr. Venn tells us, "Paul speaks also of Andronicus and Junia as *of note among the Apostles*." Rom. xvi. 7. (1st Lecture, p. 34). The italics are those of Mr. Venn, whereby it would seem that we are to understand that Andronicus and Junia were Prelates. It is, however, hazardous to venture Prelates in names of a doubtful gender; for though Junia is supposed by some to be Junias, abbreviated from Junilius; yet it is quite possible, and asserted positively by some learned men, that a female is there indicated. "Mary;" in the preceding line, is a female close at hand, and Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), who "laboured much in the Lord," seem, though females, to have been at least as useful in the church as Mr. Venn's uninspired Apostles.

Again we have Phil. ii. 25 urged for the same purpose,—“I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier; but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.” Here again Mr. V. would translate the word messenger Apostle, and then apply to the word so transformed, the meaning of Prelate. Dr. Bloomfield's note on this text is as follows,—“It is not agreed whether *αποστολος* signifies messenger, or bishop, or teacher, or minister. The first mentioned sense, as adopted by Theodoret and some eminent modern expositors, seems to demand the preference; for the other significations *there is very slender proof*.” Very slender in-

* So translated in John xiii. 16. “The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent (apostolos) greater than he that sent him.” I know not why Mr. Venn has not appropriated this passage for his Prelates. It is far better for his purpose than any he has selected: only as the context connects it with washing the disciples' feet, it might perhaps be inconvenient to associate such practices with the princely dignities of the Prelates.

† Dr. Bloomfield's more prudent commentary is in these words,—“Messengers or Legates of the Churches, persons sent to despatch their business, according to the primitive sense of the word.” G. Testament.

I would here take this opportunity of rendering a testimony to the general honesty of purpose in Dr. B's notes on the Greek Testament. The learned expositor is indeed a firm Episcopalian, and his doctrinal views are none of the clearest, but I can find no where that he sacrifices his character of scholarship or integrity to his clerical zeal.

deed ; for though indeed Mr. Venn is following two or three adventurous polemics in the line of argument he is pursuing, yet the grave and sober of his party have, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, decided otherwise, either in the general argument or in detail.

4thly, The fourth difficulty is, that all Mr. Venn's *sketch* of Episcopacy is confuted by the Scriptures, and by that antiquity to which he so confidently appeals. I say *sketch* of Episcopacy, for there is a peculiar and distinct geographical plan which Mr. Venn with much care has devised, to be in harmony with the rest of his scheme.

"St. Paul was the Bishop over all the Churches which he himself planted The same authority which St. Paul retained over the churches which he himself had planted was exercised by the other Apostles over the Churches which they had respectively planted As the Churches increased in number, and St. Paul became himself unable to superintend them, he appointed Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete (i. e., he appointed them to be uninspired Apostles, or Angels, or Prelates), and perhaps other individuals in some other of the most important districts, investing them not only with the chief authority, but with precisely the same executive power that he himself exercised as governors (not legislators) of the Church. The Apostles do not appear to have exercised any power which they did not transmit to others, unless it be that of inflicting bodily diseases." (1st Lecture, p. 36).

We may without hesitation advance in opposition to this, that Paul was not a Bishop, that is, not a Diocesan Prelate in any system of Churches, or any Church any where on the face of the earth ; and 2nd, that Timothy was not Diocesan Prelate of Ephesus, nor Titus of Crete.

But first let us notice, that as in our last paragraph we have seen Prelates only through the medium of words bearing a double meaning, so when we come to something more particular, we find only two Prelates in the New Testament upon whom Mr. Venn fixes with confidence as really representing that which he is seeking.* These two Prelates are Timothy and Titus. I shall therefore take the case of Timothy as being far the strongest, and having examined the case of Episcopacy as illustrated by his name, pass on, for brevity's sake, to other points of the argument.

Timothy was Bishop or Prelate of Ephesus—so says tradition, so says the spurious note at the end of Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, and so says Mr. Venn. (1st Lecture, p. 37.)

Now in the 20th chapter of Acts, where we have the record of Paul's interview with the elders of Ephesus, and where we find that he calls them "Bishops" (*ἐπισκοποι*), it is not by one word intimated that there was a Superior or Prelate over them all, or that there was any other person to whom they were to refer or appeal, or whose care, government, or counsel, was to be their guide or help in any way. He tells them, (the Elders,) that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers or Bishops,—he warns them of coming evil, of false teachers, and grievous wolves, about to arise from amongst themselves, that is, from amongst the overseers,—he urges them both to look to themselves and to the flock, and to act the part of good shepherds to God's Church,—he tells them to watch, and to beware, and to take heed ; but

* Mr. Venn speaks with caution and reserve about the Prelacy of St. James,— "there is SOME evidence in Scripture, and undoubted evidence in history (i. e. tradition), that St. James alone, our Lord's brother, was acknowledged as the superior, or Bishop of the Church." (p. 36.)

not one syllable does he say about the Prelate, though according to tradition, and Mr. Venn's own acknowledgment, Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus before the event took place. This is abundantly sufficient to dissipate all this elaborate delusion; for supposing that some pious Clergyman, endued moreover with the spirit of prophesy, were, in quitting Hindostan, to call together all the Clergy at Calcutta, and to tell them that he knew that evil in doctrine and practice was about to arise amongst them,—that the flock was about to be devoured, &c.,—and that in consequence they must watch, and take care, and look to themselves, and remember his words; and let us suppose, moreover, that he should never allude to a Bishop, or refer to him as the principal person concerned, never name his office, or own his existence; should we not at once say that it was clear either that he despised the Bishop as a worthless character, or that there must have been no Bishop at the time he was so addressing the Clergy?

This is so plain that it can not be denied; and surely a child may apply the argument to the case of Ephesus, a *diocese without a Bishop*; and the most important of all the then existing dioceses next to Judea.

Now if Mr. Venn would take Scripture as he finds it, he would have many Bishops in the city of Ephesus: but as this would damage the theory of diocesan Episcopacy, he turns the Bishops into Priests, and reserves for us *in petto*, behind the curtain, an uninspired Apostle, a grand dignitary never brought forward in the Scripture history, and never alluded to.

Again, the Epistle to the Ephesians was, by Mr. Venn's acknowledgment,* and by the certain facts of history, written after that time, when, if ever, Timothy must have been consecrated Prelate of Ephesus. Not a syllable is said in this Epistle about the Prelate; Timothy is not named as ever having been on the Episcopal throne; nor is there any other prelate mentioned in any way. Mr. Venn would perhaps find the Prelate in the fourth chapter,—“He gave some Apostles,”—let that for a moment stand; but still Mr. Venn has to account for the fact how there is no reference to the Prelate's government, authority, or name, and that especially when, according to tradition, the Episcopal throne was occupied by a person so famous in the churches, and so beloved by Paul. It is *impossible* that Timothy ever could have been Prelate of Ephesus, if we will take the Epistle to the Ephesians as having been indeed written by Paul. I say it is not possible that such an event should have ever taken place, and that no allusion should be made to it; and whoever will put the circumstances of the case fairly before him, must come to a similar conclusion; for we have only to change names and places; we have only to put before us the importance of the Prelate, and his large power in the Establishment, to see that it must have been impossible for any such character to have existed in the Church at Ephesus when Paul wrote his Epistle to that Church.

But then comes the fact of the consecration of the Bishop of Ephesus. This requires a little examination, for assuredly it is an event of importance in the theory of the Apostolical succession. In Paul's first Epistle to Timothy, we have this well known text, “Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,” v. 15; and again, chap. i. 18,

* 1st Lecture, p. 15.

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."

From this statement we have two facts established, that Timothy had a gift conveyed by the hands of the Presbytery, and that the direction of the prophets had singled him out as a recipient for the gift.*

Now if Mr. Venn would have allowed the Elders to be Bishops, here would have been an Episcopal consecration, as far as imposition of hands is concerned, in canonical form, of an "uninspired Apostle," by a bench of Bishops; but as he has decided that the Scriptural elders or Bishops are a grade lower, that is, are priests, he cannot allow that the Presbyters really did convey the gift to the Prelate; in short, he seems to contradict the Apostle; for this is his comment on the transaction:—"BUT if we refer to 2 Tim. i. 6, we there find the Apostle using this language to Timothy,—'Stir up the gift of God which is in thee by putting on of *my* hands.' It is evident, therefore, that the gift of God—whether by this expression is meant the Holy Ghost or any office of the ministry—was conferred on Timothy by St. Paul, *though the hands of the Presbytery were laid on him at the same time.*" (1st Lecture, p. 42.) In other words, the Presbytery did *not* convey the gift, but Paul did; they put their empty hands on his head, Paul alone conveyed the gift, which is a contradiction of Scripture, for the Apostle himself distinctly asserts, as we have seen, that the gift was given by the hands of the Presbytery. But who that is not shackled with a theory does not see the plain reconciliation of the two passages? Paul considered himself an elder, even as Peter calls himself an elder (1 Pet. v. 1), and as he was sensible that Timothy had received some peculiar gift when he and the elders, in obedience to the direction of the Prophets, laid their hands on Timothy, he at one time says, it was by his own hands, and another by the hands of the elders, because both he and the elders imparted the gift simultaneously.

Mr. Venn, however, does not allow† this transaction to be Timothy's *Episcopal* ordination, contrary to the general interpretation of the fathers; and I presume it is for this reason that the Presbyters or Priests are principal actors in the scene which of course is not allowed in the consecration of a Bishop. Bishop Beverige, however, whose authority may without any scruple be placed higher than that of Mr. Venn's, says in his annotations on the apostolical canons, that in this passage we are to understand, not Presbyters properly so called, but Bishops, (Cotelieri, P. A. 1, 452,) and Chrysostom's ‡ commentary is to

* "The only well-founded interpretation appears to be that of the ancient and most modern expositors, who refer these words to the revelations made by the Holy Spirit to Apostles, or persons possessing the *χαρισμα* or spiritual gift, called the *προφητεια* (of the existence of which we have indubitable evidences in the New Testament), which were virtually *directions* as to the persons proper to be designated as officers and teachers in the church." Bloomfield in locum.

† "Had the laying on of the hands of the Presbyters or college of Elders alone constituted the formal ordination of Timothy as *Elder*," &c. (p. 42), that is, Mr. Venn considers this as the conveying of Priest's orders to Timothy, and not his Episcopal consecration.

‡ ου περι πρεσβυτερων φησιν ευταυθα αλλα περι επισκοπων, ου γαρ δη πρεσβυτεροι τον επισκοπον εχειροτονουν.

Such, however, is the confusion and disagreement amongst the Fathers, that though Theodoret allows Timothy to be ordained Bishop, he nevertheless says that the ordination was by Elders or Presbyters, and therefore, of course, invalid by canonical law.

the same effect :—"Paul does not there speak about Presbyters, but about Bishops; for the Presbyter indeed did not ordain the Bishop." Theophylact and Ecuemenius give the same interpretation, and indeed very many others; for there is this manifest inconvenience in Mr. Venn's view, that the peculiar gift to which Paul refers thrice in his epistle to Timothy would be a gift of priesthood and not of episcopacy,—that his priest's orders would be made very prominent, but his episcopal consecration never noticed! far better then is it, with the Greek fathers and several of the Latins, to turn the Presbytery into Bishops, and consider Paul referring to Timothy's episcopal consecration; for although this would upset all Mr. Venn's plan, yet it is the less of two evils. The Greek Fathers do indeed thus damage the unity of Diocesan episcopacy by declaring Presbyters and Bishops to be identical (as indeed they generally do on other occasions); but Mr. Venn's interpretation goes to prove that Bishop Timothy was after all only ordained Priest, and therefore no Prelate at all.

I could, however, observe, that if we are to take 1 Tim. i. 18 and v. 15 as meaning either the Priestly or the Episcopal ordination of Timothy, then we have the Prophets introduced as an important, nay indispensable part of the transaction; and that if this be the type of ordination, where are we to look for prophecy in the deplorable farce of the ordinations which Mr. Venn would have us reverence as the true channels of apostolical authority? But now one word to this fable of Timothy's episcopate,—on what is it to be based? "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some not to give heed to fables." These simple words are enough with some to found a diocese and to enthrone Timothy Bishop of Ephesus. "I besought thee to abide in Hereford, and to teach some not to give heed to fables,"—if such words were written now and found some centuries hence, would they be considered enough to make the person to whom they were addressed Bishop of Hereford? Is asking a man to abide in a city, and whilst there to warn Christians not to give way to foolish and superstitious stories making him a Bishop?—yes, truly, with some it does all this; but if so, Paul had small care for the diocese, for in his Second Epistle to Timothy written from Rome, he says to the Bishop, "do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," and that Timothy was ultimately at Rome with Paul we find in his epistle to the Philippians and Colossians, in both of which Timothy with Paul salutes the saints from Rome.

But Paul says, "I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus,"—doubtless this was sending a new Prelate to take the place of Bishop Timothy! for if asking a person to stay a while in a place is making him a Bishop, much more must the sending of a person to that place be considered as sending him to take possession of his see. Indeed we have already seen that Mr. Venn generally puts the mitre on those who are on the move, as in the case of the brethren sent from Corinth to Judea, whom he has pronounced uninspired Apostles or Prelates; and it must be confessed that Mr. Venn's Bishops are by no means sedentary characters, as every one of them, Timothy, Titus, and the uninspired Apostles, are sent on very long journeys, and are seldom, if ever, to be found in their dioceses.

We conclude, therefore, that Timothy and Titus were in Ephesus and Crete* for a temporary purpose, and that their diocesan location there is wholly fabulous.

* Tillmont asserts that Titus was left at Crete for a temporary purpose, and

We have now followed Mr. Venn step by step in his cautious scheme of prelacy, and have seen how utterly it has failed when closely examined, though its failure is still farther to be made manifest when we enter into the question of antiquity. We have seen how to preserve diocesan prelacy, he has rejected the Scriptural Bishops, and has been constrained to find his Prelates by the most strained interpretations in other places of the New Testament; we have seen how, in this scheme, he is continually opposing Episcopalians both of the Romish and Anglican school; it now remains to see the dangerous admissions he is compelled to make in the further carrying out of his plan.

"That the elders, either individually, or as a body, had not the power of ordaining elders, appears from this fact, *that the Apostles in all their Epistles never give one single direction to them respecting the exercise of such a power.* (Mr. Venn's italics.) We have seen that there were Elders in every Church to which the Epistles were written, and if they had had the power of ordaining additional Elders or successors, surely some directions would have been given for the discharge of such an unspeakably important duty—*some allusion would have been made to it.*" (i. 42.)

Just so; Mr. Venn has stated the difficulty, which is in fact a confutation of himself; for now that we have examined the case, and have clearly seen that the elders were Bishops; and now seeing that there was no direction given to the elders respecting the exercise of their powers of ordination—a fact which Mr. Venn insists upon with positiveness, and which certainly is a fact—we come to this conclusion, that the exercise of such powers is not Scriptural, and that the Episcopal ordinations and consecrations are the inventions of man, and not the following of the precepts of God—they are the calves of Bethel, and not the ordinances of the sanctuary.

Again, Mr. Venn says, "though we are not expressly told in Scripture that the Apostles either appointed Bishops throughout the churches to succeed them, or made an arrangement for their appointment, yet there is no proof, or even intimation, that they did *not* do so, and every probability that they did; for if St. Paul thought it necessary to appoint two individuals, at least, to act as Bishops even in his own life-time, may we not infer that he appointed many others to exercise the office after his death? On the removal of the Apostles, for any thing we know to the contrary, all the churches, in cities at least, might have had their resident Bishops, or, at all events, might have been in the diocese of some Bishop." (2nd Lecture, p. 75.) This passage alone would be quite sufficient to convince any candid Episcopalian of the extreme weakness of the case as argued by Mr. Venn. What then! is prelacy so inconspicuous in the Scriptures that it ultimately rests on this fact, that we can not shew that it was not prohibited? and because we can not find that the Apostles did *not* appoint the prelates, are we therefore

that he placed *Bishops* in every city there, which is the truth, for Tillemont has the candour to confess that the elders mentioned in the Epistle to Titus were really Bishops: "for" says he, "it is certain that every city or town had its Bishop, according to the ancient order and discipline of the church" (Vol. i. 229). This, however, is not all; for not only were the elders in Cretian towns Bishops, but there was a plurality of them in every city,—*"I left thee in Crete to ordain Elders in every city, if any be blameless, for a Bishop must be blameless."* This not only explodes the whole scheme of Diocesan Episcopacy, but proves that Titus was no Bishop of Crete, for he was doing more than it is pretended any Bishop can do.

to conclude that they did? And is it reduced to such a poor argument as this?—"for any thing we know to the contrary." In this way, most certainly, the primacy of Peter, high mass, purgatory, holy water, and any thing you please, might be argued and proved; and in this way indeed, have I seen it argued by the old Laudian clergy, that as bowing to the altar and wearing surplices was not prohibited in the New Testament, we might therefore very justly conclude that they were at least permitted.

It is to be observed, in this passage, that Mr. Venn seems to have some misgivings about his other prelates, and reduces the list to "two at least;" these two, however, we have been obliged to deny, so that not one single Bishop remains on the stage, and we have to enquire where, after all, we are to find one of these dignitaries?

It is, however, amusing to observe the complacency with which Mr. Venn can build conclusions for his own views on arguments which he is anxious to shew do *not* prove the point he is aiming at. For thus does he, in a way peculiar to himself, set up a trophy of victory at the very time when, by his own arguments, he has confuted himself, and disproved all he had to advance.

"We certainly do not read in the Scriptures that the Apostles ever conferred the power of ordination either upon the laity or upon the elders of any church; and THEREFORE the strong presumption is, either that the Apostles, before their deaths, appointed additional Bishops, or else that they put such churches as had no Bishops in the diocese, under the superintendance of the existing Bishops. We have sufficient reason, THEREFORE, for concluding, from *Scripture alone*, that this original form of church government was intended to be permanent." (Ibid. p. 76.)

6thly, Another grave difficulty in the way of this scheme is this, that it throws the whole question of Church government out of the Scriptures into the region of tradition: and this Mr. Venn not only confesses, but insists on, for in his second lecture, forgetting what he had said (p. 76), that the case could be proved from *Scripture alone* (words which he had printed in Italics to give them force), he thus contradicts himself in page 95.

"But are our Bishops (Prelates) lawfully appointed? This is the important question. Now nothing can be *inferred* from Scripture respecting the appointment of Bishops to particular dioceses, any more than it can respecting their consecration (!!!). The example of St. Paul, in appointing Timothy and Titus, applies no more in the one case than it does in the other, since there is nothing in God's word to shew that the power which the inspired Apostles had of appointing Bishops over the Churches was transmitted to their successors. The doctrine of the Romanists, that St. Peter had a universal jurisdiction over the Churches, and that the Bishop of Rome succeeded him in that universal jurisdiction, I need not prove to be utterly destitute of Scriptural foundation, since all Protestant Dissenters reject and condemn it as much as the Church of England herself does—we must come therefore to history for the decision of the question."

Here then, at any rate, we have at last a confession of almost all we could desire. Mr. Venn had undertaken to shew from the Scriptures that the Church government was according to the ordinance of God: now he tells us that he can prove neither the appointment nor the consecration of Bishops from the Scriptures, but must go to history (i. e. tradition) to decide the question!

Moreover, he here, by express words (such is his inconsiderate-

ness), puts himself on a level with the Romish Church. The Papists cannot prove Peter's supremacy from the Scriptures, he says, neither can he from the Scriptures prove his Bishops to be lawfully appointed,—they must go to history, so must he; and thus having fairly thrown himself into tradition, I would leave him to the Roman Catholics to be dealt with as they think fit, as tradition is peculiarly their province. In the mean while, however, having seen my opponent brought by his own tactics exactly where I should have endeavoured to place him, I shall, nevertheless, say a few words on antiquity, that by meeting Mr. Venn even there, I may show that tradition is a very dangerous ground for an advocate of the Establishment.

7thly, In pressing the argument of antiquity Mr. Venn appears to me to be reckoning not a little on the ignorance of his readers, and on the difficulty of their consulting those Patristic authorities to which he refers. By a slight mention of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, and a few others, by giving their testimony in a most brief manner, and by briefly touching on the argument as presented by these ancient writers, he manages the case just as it suits him, though he can not expect that any serious inquirer will be satisfied by such superficial statements and elliptical explanations.

The epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, the date of which is fixed by Lardner A.D. 96, but by some others four or five years sooner, is a document of the highest interest in many respects; but for our subject in dispute, it has long been a cause of perplexity to the partizans of diocesan prelacy that the language it holds about church government is such as to make it apparent that the venerable writer considered the Elder and Bishop synonymous terms.

In reproving the Corinthians for their conduct to some of their elders, Clemens says, "the apostles knew that there would be a contention about the name of the overseer's or Bishop's office (*της επισκοπης*), the very word translated 'Bishoprick' in our Bibles (*Acts i. 20*); for this cause they, having received a perfect foreknowledge, appointed those who have been already mentioned, and afterwards gave direction that when they should depart (i.e. die), other men should receive their ministry. Now we think that those are unjustly ejected from their ministry who were appointed by them (the apostles), or afterwards by men of consideration (*ελλογιμων ανδρων*), with the full consent of the whole church, and who, without blame and in all lowliness, ministered to the flock of Christ quietly and disinterestedly, and for a long time were commended by all. It would be no small sin if we should eject from the overseer's or *Bishop's charge* (*επισκοπης*) those who without blame and in all holiness fulfil the duties of it. Blessed are those *Elders* (*πρεσβυτεροι*) who have finished their course before these times." &c.

This is a passage precisely similar in character and in proof to that in Paul's Epistle to Titus,—“I left thee in Crete to appoint *elders*, if any be blameless, for a *Bishop* must be blameless.” So that not only in the New Testament, but in the earliest writers of Ecclesiastical history, we find exactly the same language establishing the identity of the Bishop and the Elder, asserting that there were many Bishops in one church, and so confuting the Diocesan scheme.

Mr. Venn's remark on this is characteristic,—“It is true Clement no where expressly distinguishes the Bishops from the ordinary Presbyters, but then he MIGHT have included Bishops (Prelates) under the name of Presbyter and Overseer, which are terms of a comprehensive nature. St. Peter, though an Apostle, calls himself an Elder.” (2 L. p. 81.)

Here, then, Mr. Venn quickly turns round to the opposite point of

the compass; he had hitherto laid it down as a certain canon of criticism that the Bishop meant the Elder, now he suggests that the Elder MAY mean the Bishop; but let him take his choice as to this matter in the Epistle of Clement—let him choose his own translation—either way he must be confuted—for if the Elder is to mean Bishop in this Epistle, then we see clearly that there were several Bishops in the city of Corinth; but if Elder is to mean Elder or Presbyter, and nothing else, then Clement never mentions the Bishop at all, and then it will follow that the chief of the three orders is wanting; and the Prelate, the grand desideratum, is yet to seek. We need not, however, contend about this and other passages of the Epistle, for the mere fact that Clement does not address the Epistle to the Bishop, but to the saints—that he never refers to his authority or alludes to his existence, that he never desires them to consult their Diocesan or to seek his aid and counsel, would be abundant proof that there was indeed no Diocesan in existence, and no such person whom the Church of Corinth could consult. Thus is the case both positively and negatively proved against Mr. Venn by the Epistle of Clements.

Polycarp, who wrote his epistle to the Philippians about the year 116, and who is called Bishop of Smyrna in the current language of tradition, mentions only Presbyters and Deacons: Mr. Venn has in this case, as in the case preceding, nothing to offer against this inconvenient fact but the following evasive remark.—“This is considered by some as a proof that no third order existed at the time, but, as has been already observed, the term Presbyter was still used in that age in its more comprehensive form”—in other words, it MIGHT mean Bishop. Be it so: let it stand for Bishop or Prelate, then, as the epistle begins thus—“Polycarp and the elders that are with him, to the Church of God at Philippi,” and as he says farther on, “It is necessary that ye Philippians be subject to the Elders and Deacons,” it would follow that the Bishop of Smyrna had other Bishops with him in his Diocese, and that there were several Bishops at Philippi, which really was the case if that Church continued in the form that existed when Paul wrote his epistle to it,

Polycarp, therefore, and Clements Romanus, are both against Mr. Venn, and of this he is manifestly sensible.

We now come to Ignatius, the great forefather of Prelacy and the beloved of all Episcopalians. That there are three orders referred to in his epistles is indisputable, and that he invented these three orders seems to me equally certain. He suffered martyrdom about the year 116, in which year he also wrote his epistles. A few extracts from his epistles will convince any christian rightly instructed in the word of God, that Ignatius wrote excessively foolishly and unwarrantably on his theory of Episcopacy—that his language is wholly unlike in spirit and alien in thought to the language of Scripture—and that he is travelling into regions unknown to the inspired writers of the New Testament. The following are a few specimens:—“Let us take heed, brethren, that we set not ourselves against the Bishop, that we may be subject to God”—“it is evident that we ought to respect the Bishop as the Lord himself,”—“it is your duty to yield all reverence to your Bishop, according to the power of God the Father”—“I exhort that ye study to do all things in a divine concord; your Bishop presiding in the place of God, your Elders in place of the council of the Apostles, and your Deacons, most dear to me, being intrusted with the ministry of Christ”—“inasmuch as ye are subject to your Bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me not to live after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ who died for us”—“continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from

your Bishop"—"it becometh every one of you, especially the Elders, to refresh the Bishop, to the honor of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles"—"as many are of God and of Jesus Christ, are also of the Bishop"—"it is good to have due regard both to God and the Bishop. He that honors the Bishop shall be honored of God, but he that doeth any thing without his knowledge ministers unto the devil"—"I cried whilst I was among you, I spake with a loud voice, give ear to the Bishop, and the Presbytery, and the Deacons—and he is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man, but the Spirit gave forth to me these words, Do ye nothing without the Bishop."

This sort of rant, which pervades all his brief Epistles, and that to excessive tediousness of iteration, is such as ought rather to be concealed than quoted by Episcopalians, for who would not be ashamed of a Bishop writing letters in this style in these days? who would endure this from the Bishop of Hereford or Worcester? what Clergyman would not think that his Diocesan was disordered in his intellects if he were to venture to publish letters to his Clergy uttering such sentiments as these? and why then are we to tolerate these things in a writer of antiquity, one who ought, in theory at least, to be purer and more perfect as a teacher, owing to his proximity to the apostolic era—if we could by no means tolerate similar language from a writer of our own days? The doctrine of Ignatius about the Bishop, as it is unwarranted by the Scripture, and contrary to it, so is it very nearly, if not entirely, profane in some passages, to say nothing of his boastful preparations for death, and his assertions that he was inspired in what he was teaching about Prelacy. There are, indeed, other impertinences and absurdities in his Epistles well known to the learned, but which I can not here enter into, except to allude to them as affording additional proof that whatever might have been the zeal and piety of Ignatius, his judgment, caution, and humility, as a teacher, were so deficient, that all the instructors of the Church would do well rather to avoid than to imitate him as an example; and I am persuaded that no one ever has ventured to imitate his language or copy his style, however palatable his prelatial dogma may have been to the advocates of the mitre.

And yet after all, Ignatius disproves the very point at which Mr. Venn is aiming, for though he does indeed assert three orders, yet it is in such a way as to show that he supposed there was to be a Bishop in every city and town—every where, in short, where a Church was gathered.

"Let no one," says he, "do any thing which belongs to the Church, separately from the Bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as well established which is either offered by the Bishop, or by one to whom the Bishop has given consent. Wheresoever the Bishop shall appear, there let the people also be—as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the Bishop either to baptize, or to celebrate the Holy Communion, or to hold a lovefeast, but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, that whatsoever is done, may be well and surely done,—'it becomes the men and women who are entering into wedlock to be united with the consent of the Bishop,' &c.

The Ignatian Bishop, then, after all, is nothing but the parish Minister, with Elders and Deacons helping him; he is indeed, according to Ignatius, almost a divine character, but still a parish Bishop, personally presiding at all baptisms, ceremonies, and marriages, and love-

feasts, and personally consulted by all on all occasions; but what similarity Mr. Venn can find in this picture of the Ignatian Bishop to his antitype of the Diocesan Prelate, I know not. In short, the Bishop of Ignatius as little resembles an Anglican Prelate as he does the Pope; every thing is as unlike as it can be, so that the testimony of Ignatius, as being more explicit, is much more against Mr. Venn's scheme than even the testimony of Clemens and Polycarp, who only touch on the question incidentally, and that in very few words whilst engaged in discussing other subjects.

We find, however, in Ignatius, that which we find every where in the early era, that every Church had its Bishop, and, indeed, its Bishops, that is, more than one: though Mr. Venn must be sensible, that if even there were only one Bishop in every Church, this would be quite sufficient to confound the Diocesan scheme of the Romish and Anglican sects. In writing to the Philadelphians, Ignatius urges them to send one of their ministers on a special mission to the Church of Antioch, concluding his advice with these words, "if now ye be willing, it is not impossible for you to do this for the sake of God, as also the neighboring Churches have always sent on such occasions, some of them their Bishops, and others their Elders and Deacons." This is a distinct assertion that the neighboring Churches, the cities, towns, villages, or wherever Christians were congregated as a body, had their Bishops, &c.; so that let Ignatius say what he will to aggrandize the Episcopal office, still he is after all aggrandizing a Bishop whose diocese is the parish, and yet so unlike either our Prelates or parish Priests, that we may truly say, that there is nothing like the Ignatian Bishop any where to be found on the face of the earth. Viewed as a Prelate, he is not a Diocesan; viewed as a parish Bishop, he is invariably associated with Elders and Deacons, so that not to unite these characters with him, is in fact to run into *the sin*, against which Ignatius so emphatically warns the Christians of his age; and yet our Parish Bishop is a solitary being, sometimes indeed assisted by that non-descript clerical character called a Curate, whom he dismisses when he likes, and who is only a stipendiary assistant of the Parish. "The deacon" he never sees in his parish.

The Ignatian Epistles are, however, very instructive to the student of the mystery of the apostacy, and ought to be better known by Christians than they are, for in them we find brought out boldly and plainly the substitution of human appointments for the animating and controlling power of the Holy Ghost. Ordinances are in these Epistles set up instead of true spiritual power. The Holy Spirit is never once owned or named in any of the Epistles of Ignatius, excepting where he is speaking of the incarnation of our Lord, and his own pretended and boastful inspirations. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," has no place in this writer's mind. "Walking in the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit," he names not; the sanctifying agency and ruling power of the Spirit he owns not; and that, in short, which is the very life of the Church and the soul of all its government, he does not understand even in the very lowest degree. Such a phenomena as this can not be found in any of Paul's Epistles, or any of the penmen of Scripture. It is *indeed* turning over a new page of the Church's history, the Holy Spirit disappears; and in its place, as a most impertinent and offensive usurper, we have THE BISHOP, who, by Ignatius is, *in principle at least*, as much exalted to displace the divine government of the Church, as the Anglican Prelates are enthroned to confirm all worldly maxims in the Establishment.

"We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle," says the word of God. Ignatius says, "He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure: that is, he that doeth any thing without the Bishop, and the Elders, and the Deacons, is not pure in his conscience." (To the Trallians.) What a monstrous sentiment is here! what a rule for the conscience! what a turning of every thing up side down! Will Mr. Venn dare to defend this dogma? must he not emphatically, as a Christian, condemn it? Paul says, "the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Ignatius says, that a conscience is made pure by acting in concert with Bishops, his elders, and the Deacons,—a sentiment so improper and scandalous, that if it were uttered in these days by any Clergyman within the pale of the Establishment, it would be rejected with general disapprobation.

So much for Ignatius the founder of prelacy!

In very many other ways, I could, if it were desired, prove from antiquity, that the Presbyter and the Bishop were, in the first era, considered the same; as from Eusebius, who gives us the fragment of a letter from Ireneus to Victor, a Bishop at Rome. In that letter, Ireneus speaks individually of the *Elders* who, before the time of Victor, had presided over the Church of Rome; namely,—Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus; persons who usually are called Bishops in ecclesiastical history, and Popes by the Romanists. In all this letter, Ireneus confounds the Bishops and the Elders. The Gallican Church gives to Ireneus the simple title of elder, nine years after he had been "Bishop" of Lyons; and it is easy to shew that Presbyters must have ordained the first Bishop of France, even as Jerome distinctly asserts that the Elders or Presbyters of Alexandria created these Bishops; a custom which he derives from St. Marc, the founder of the Church of Alexandria.

The testimony of Jerome on this question troubles Mr. Venn, as well it may; it is a testimony directly and palpably in set terms against his views; the plan, therefore, that Mr. Venn has followed in this dilemma, is to allude to the testimony, but not to quote it, and then to offer his commentary on the allusion. "After all, it would be but *the opinion* of a learned man living nearly 300 years after the days of the Apostles, and not the testimony of an eye-witness" (2nd Lecture, p. 82). And yet Mr. Venn had confidently referred to history and antiquity to confirm his views! Let us therefore see what Jerome says, and at full length.

In a letter to Oceanus, he thus expresses himself,—“In both these epistles of Paul (to Timothy and Titus), whether it relates to Bishops or to Presbyters, (although amongst the ancients Bishops and Presbyters were the same, because the former name is one of dignity, and the other of age,) we find it commanded that they should not be chosen into the clerical body if they had been married more than once.” In his letter to Evangelus, commonly, though by mistake, called Evagrius, he treats the subject at length. The occasion of this letter, was the opinion of some that the Deacon was equal to the Presbyter. To this Jerome replies, by proving from the Scriptures that the Bishop and the Presbyter were the same:—"The Apostle," * says he, "perspicuously teaches us that the Presbyters and the Bishops were the same." For this purpose he quotes all the passages of Scripture which we have been

* "Apostolus perspicuè nos docet eosdem esse Presbyteros quos Episcopos."

examining;—Phil. i. 1; Acts xx. 28; Tit. i. 5; 1 Tim. i.; 1 Pet. v.; remarking, as he goes on, “by which it is most manifestly proved—manifestissimè comprobatur—that the Bishop and Presbyter are the same.” In addition to this he urges that John calls himself a Presbyter in his two last Epistles; he there remarks, “afterwards when one man was elected to preside over the rest, it was meant as a remedy for schism; lest every one of the Presbyters, by endeavouring to appropriate power to himself, should rend the church of Christ.” He then quotes the *custom of the Church of Alexandria, by which the Presbyters, from the days of Marc the Evangelist down to the time of Dionysius, had always elected one of their own body to be Bishop. He then asks whether the Bishop, excepting only ordination, does any thing that the Priest can not do? “The name of *Presbyter*,” says he, “is one of age; that of *Bishop* of dignity. Hence it is that Paul writing to Titus and Timothy about the ordination of the Bishop, says nothing about the Presbyter, because the Presbyter is contained in the Bishop.”

Again, in his Epistle to Titus, Jerome says, “Of old the Presbyter was the same as the Bishop, and before that contentions arose in religion by the instinct of the Devil, and that they began to say, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, the Churches used to be governed by the united counsel of the Presbyters. Afterwards, however, when each one thought that the person whom he had baptized belonged to himself rather than to Christ, it was decided in all the world, that one person chosen out of the Presbyters should preside over the others, to whom the whole of the Church should pertain; that so the seeds of schism might be removed.” And again, “as therefore the Presbyters know that *by the custom of the Church* they are subject to him who is set over them; so let the Bishops know that they are superior to the Presbyters rather by custom than by reality of our Lord’s appointment.”

This is in every respect a full and complete testimony: to plead, as some do, and as Mr. Venn hints, that Jerome elsewhere speaks in orthodox and canonical language of the three orders, is, in fact, only strengthening this testimony before us; for if in other places Jerome uses the established phraseology of his age, we see in these places where he opens out his heart, how he expresses his opinion on the true state of the case. In other passages he may, for the sake of decorum, talk as a clergyman; but in these he utters the sentiments he had imbibed as a commentator and translator of the Scriptures, and an ecclesiastical scholar.

* Eutichius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, (whose oriental name seems to have been Said Ibn Batrik, A. D. 930,) in his account of the origin of his Church says, “that the Evangelist Mark appointed twelve Presbyters to be with the Patriarch; so that when the Patriarchate was vacant, they might elect one of the twelve Presbyters on whose head the eleven were to place their hands; pronounce a blessing on him, and so create him Patriarch. Nor did this custom cease in Alexandria—namely, that the Presbyters should create the Patriarch—till the days of the Patriarch Alexander, one of their number, A. D. 318. He forbid the Presbyters henceforward to create the Patriarch; and he decreed, that on the death of the Patriarch, Bishops should be convened to ordain a new Patriarch.” This testimony is edited by Selden: it is a curious proof of the primitive custom, and of the change which took place in a later age. Pearson, among the Anglicans, and Petavius amongst the Jesuits, have endeavoured to explain away this evidence. I believe that a learned German, J. F. Rehkopf, in his lives of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, has satisfactorily answered all these clerical alarmists, and established the truth of the tradition.

It is truly remarkable that these *anti-Diocesan* doctrines of Jerome are quoted three times in the canon law of Gratian; and are thus stamped with canonical authority by the Church of Rome. This, perhaps, is to be ascribed to the fact, that Pope Urban II., in the year 1091, had, in the council of Beneventum, declared that the ancient Church knew only two sacred orders—the Deacons and the Presbyters; for it appears to be the policy of the Popes, sometimes to tell the truth on this subject, that they may thus throw the Diocesan Prelacy on tradition, and compel the Bishops to rest their pretensions on the supremacy of St. Peter, which is apparently the safest position for a Prelate to assume. I find that the* Papal canonists down to the middle of the 16th Century, and later, admitted the doctrine of Jerome without dispute; it was only about the time of the Reformation that some Papal writers, and after that many Anglican Episcopalians, asserted an original distinction between Elder and Bishop.

9thly, Having thus, though very briefly and imperfectly, gone over the evidence of history as bearing on the question which we have hitherto been examining—the nature and origin of the prelatial office,—we come now to another view of the subject—the present actual state of Episcopacy in the Establishment, which Mr. Venn is obliged to defend, but with such arguments as indeed manifest the pitiable weakness of his case. When Mr. Venn comes to the appointment of the English prelates he first tells us, that of old “the presbyters, either alone or in conjunction with the people, chose their Bishops, whilst in no early instances does it appear that the appointment was ever made entirely independent of them (the presbyters).” (Lecture ii. 95.)

This, however, requires a little examination, for it is scarcely all the truth. The appointment of a Bishop must, at least, be as important as his ordination; if, therefore, we are to hearken to Mr. Venn's arguments, and by them to be wooed back again to his church, he ought to shew that the appointment of *his* Bishops is Scriptural, or if not Scriptural, at least *decently* traditional; for as we have seen Mr. Venn already lead himself out of Scripture into tradition, he ought to be able in that region to put in at least a plausible plea. But here he is quite at fault; tradition here utterly fails him; it is not now the fragments of Ecclesiastical history managed for effect, and placed in light and shade as may best suit the argument, but it is the plain avowal of an utter dereliction of tradition—a candid confession, that in the matter of the Episcopal appointments we are neither in Scripture nor in tradition, but in Acts of Parliament.

Let us look a little at tradition on this subject. “The primitive Bishops,” says Gibbon, “were considered only as the first of their equals, and the honourable servants of a free people. Whenever the Episcopal chair became vacant by death, a new president was chosen among the presbyters by the suffrages of the whole congregation, every member of which supposed himself invested with a sacred and sacerdotal character.” This is his record of the primitive church. Afterwards, in describing the practices of the Christians in the age of Constantine, he says, “the freedom of electing the Bishops subsisted long after the legal establishment of Christianity, and the subjects of Rome enjoyed in the church the privilege which they had lost in the republic, of choosing the magistrates whom they were bound to obey. The right

* *E.g.* The Jesuit Jo. Paul Lancelottus: *institutiones Juris Canonici*. A. D. 1670.

of voting was vested in the inferior clergy, who were best qualified to judge of the merit of the candidates; in the senators or nobles of the city, all those who were distinguished by their rank or property; and finally in the whole body of the people, who, on the appointed day, flocked in multitudes from the most remote parts of the diocese, and sometimes silenced by their tumultuous acclamations the voice of reason and the laws of discipline."

About fifty years earlier than the time here referred to, we find Cyprian thus speaking of the election of the Bishops:—"Nor let the people flatter themselves as though they could be free from the taint of sin when they communicate with a priest who is a sinner, and when they give their consent to the authority of a lawless overseer, because *the people* obeying the precepts of our Lord, and fearing God,* ought to separate themselves from a sinful Bishop, nor have any thing to do with the sacrifices of an impious priest; since they, the people, have *especially the power either of electing worthy priests or rejecting those who are unworthy*, which privilege, we see, has descended from Divine authority."

This was the mode then of appointing the Bishops,—they were elected by the people and the clergy, and of course the people had it in their power to overwhelm the clergy by an immense majority, if they were so disposed.

In the Anglican church, however, the Bishops are appointed by the crown; the Queen sends the *congé d'elire* to a dean and chapter, who are compelled by law to elect the person named by the Queen.

Mr. Venn acknowledges that "many regret that the church of England should have *consented* to the nomination of its Bishops by the crown." These many are not only several pious Christians in the Establishment, but the clergy of the Oxford school, who mostly consider the union of the church with the state an abomination, and betray much more the sensibilities of their order on this question than we can discover in Mr. Venn, who gives us seven reasons for looking at the matter in a different point of view.

Amongst these reasons we are told that "neither Scripture, nor universal primitive practice, furnish us with any one particular mode of appointment." So, then, if Scripture (*according to Mr. Venn*), instructs us not in this matter, we are at liberty to invent something of our own! and fifteen hundred years after the abolition of the government of the Holy Spirit in the church of God, by the wilfulness of man, we may set up instead a *congé d'elire* of the Queen, and an appointment of the cabinet ministers; and Mr. Venn can contemplate this with complacency!

But in truth, this admission of the deficiency of Scripture as to the mode of Episcopal appointments, ought to be sufficient to convince Mr. Venn, if he were disposed to argue ingenuously, that he has here, as in other instances, confuted himself; for as he has insisted that it is impossible to suppose that our Lord did not appoint the ministry which he thought best for his church, and that if so appointed

* This, by the way, may be taken as an answer to Mr. Venn's 7th chapter of his second Lecture; in that chapter we are told that it is sinful for the people to reject an unconverted minister (p. 101); and that if the principle of rejecting such were admitted, "it would be fatal both to all ministerial authority, and to the unity of the church." Cyprian and Mr. Venn are, on this point, clearly at issue; but we may suppose that Mr. Venn could dismiss *his testimony* as being "only *the opinion* of a learned man of the third century."

this ministry was to be permanent, and as Mr. Venn is able, according to his scheme, to find the mode of appointment and ordination of the priests and deacons, but can no where find the appointment and consecration of the Bishops, to what other deduction can we come than that they were not appointed by man at all; or that, after all, that they were the same as the priests? The whole argument would require that if the mode of appointment of the less can be proved, much more ought the mode of the appointment of the greater to be capable of proof; the priest and deacon are creatures of the Bishop's creation; according to the diocesan figment, their life is owing to him; he is the head and they but the tail, but strange it must be to set up a perfect pattern of an animal to be continued by new creations, giving us rules for making the tail, but omitting the prescription for forming the head! Thus, however, it is with Mr. Venn's church. The prelatial head is a phenomenon that has, as it were, been going a begging for an appointment for sixteen hundred years. When the apostacy began to ripen and they began to make prelates, they gave the appointment to the Christian mob; then the prelates invaded the popular right of election; then the pope swallowed up the prelates; and then our Plantagenet and Tudor monarchs made the pope disgorge the mitre. Of the Tudors, Henry VIII. played at cup and ball with the church of England, remoulding it from year to year as it suited his fancy. Then came Edward VI., who appointed the Bishops by royal patent, inserting in their patents "as long as they shall behave themselves properly."—*quamdiu se bene gesserint*. Then came queen Mary, who undid her brother's work, and reconciled the Establishment to the pope. Then came queen Elizabeth, who again appropriated the Bishops and repulsed the papal pretensions. And now, we have at last settled down into the *congé d'élire* for England, and the immediate mandate of the sovereign for the Irish Church. If this can not wound the conscience of a pious Christian in the Establishment, what may?

Thus, however, has it come to pass, and it is a meet recompense of the error of those who have thus erred from the truth, that the Bishop, the fountain head of all ministerial life to Episcopalians, has ever been the prey to the strongest party, has ever been a tempting prize to the state,—has been bandied about from pope to king according to the temporary superiority of the contending parties, and the shifting superstitions of the passing age. In our age, when superstition has been absorbed by acts of parliament, the Episcopate is simply a mine of patronage to the government, and as such is understood to be, and reckoned on, both by the givers and the receivers; though for the deencies of deception, the ceremony of an Episcopal consecration is still varnished over with prayers and attestations concerning the Holy Spirit, which, not even Mr. Venn believes.

Mr. Venn's second plea for acquiescing in the actual state of things is, that though "the crown appoints, the Bishops only consecrate, and that this is a power for the exercise of which the Archbishops and Bishops must be responsible before God" (p. 99).

True, the Bishops only consecrate, but then if they refuse they incur the penalties of a *premunire*, a most severe punishment which they never yet have had the courage to encounter. The Dean and Chapter must elect, and the Bishops consecrate; and hence we learn from Bishop Burnet, that when James II. named for the vacant see of Oxford a most scandalous and wicked Clergyman, for the express purpose of bringing the Establishment into discredit, the Archbishop of Can-

terbury and his brethren hesitated for a while whether they should obey the royal mandate, but finding that the law was peremptory, and knowing that the king was not to be trifled with, they did actually consecrate that infamous man, though they had collected evidence, sufficient to convince themselves at least, that he ought rather to have been excluded from society than exalted to its highest grade. This striking instance may also be a sufficient answer to Mr. Venn's third plea, "that the Monarch must be a Protestant, and a member of the Church of England." To say nothing of James II., we have had in the case of Charles II., an example of a King, ostensibly a Protestant, but in reality a Papist; and how those monarchs acted we all very well know. If our present gracious Sovereign were to turn Roman Catholic (imitating the example of some of her nobles), it would puzzle the lawyers and the Bishops how to deal with such a case; and assuredly we may say, that if, in such a change, the sovereign were to act with prudence, the change of her faith would make no change whatever in the Establishment; as, after all, it is not "an individual, exalted to the highest rank," who creates the Bishop, but the Queen's ministers for the day—Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, or the Duke of Wellington; and if in the change of parties it should happen that even the Chartists should storm the Cabinet, then certainly the Chartists would appoint the Bishops, and there would be no remedy.

Mr. Venn's seventh, and last of his melancholy pleas for the actual state of things, is in these words:—"But whether we approve of the nomination of Bishopricks by the crown as the best method of appointment, certainly it is a *lawful* and *valid* one; for it has been chosen by the whole nation; and the crown therefore nominates *with the consent of both clergy and people.*"

No words can be wanting to interpret this argument, and therefore we may let it pass without analysis; but certainly as to the validity of the Episcopal appointments, *according to law*, there can be no question; and here Mr. Venn does well ultimately to retreat; for having been driven out of the Scriptures and tradition, or rather having driven himself out of those regions, in which he had promised to achieve illustrious victories, he does well to take shelter under the wings of an act of parliament, and to retreat from the contest into the more congenial haven of the Court of Queen's Bench.

We should not, however, omit to notice the origin of Episcopal appointments in the Established Church, which, when traced up to its historical origin, has nothing to recommend it but the force of an act of parliament, for it is wanting in every other qualification that could recommend it either to the ecclesiastic or the Christian. Mr. Venn has, indeed, himself touched upon this very delicate subject, and, after asking some questions which he is not able to answer, concludes with this lamentable confession (though he professes to be quite satisfied with it), that "there is not *demonstrative* evidence of the lawful ordination of the ministers of the church of England" (2nd Lecture, p. 91).

Thus, then, stands the case; and really the whole case ought to be known by those who wish to comprehend the history of ministry in the Establishment.

In the first year of queen Elizabeth's reign, an act of parliament was passed establishing the queen's supremacy in the church, and requiring all ecclesiastics to take an oath acknowledging her supremacy, on pain of forfeiture of all ecclesiastical preferment in case of refusal. The oath

The oath was refused by the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Durham, Winchester, Ely, Lincoln, Peterboro', Chichester, Bath and Wells, Exeter, St. David's, Lichfield, Chester, and Carlisle; and all these Prelates were in consequence *ipso facto* deprived. At that time the several dioceses of Salisbury, Oxford, Hereford, Bristol, Gloucester, Norwich, and Rochester, were vacant by the deaths of the diocesans; Dr. Goldwell, Bishop of St. Asaph, and Dr. Pates of Worcester, fled the kingdom; and the See of Canterbury was vacant by the death of Cardinal Pole; so that only Dr. Kitchin, Bishop of Llandaff, was found amongst all the Prelates who would consent to take the oath of supremacy. In the Church of England, therefore, as by law established, the Episcopal element was, as nearly as could be, extinct; one spark only was left; one only Bishop, a time-serving character of the day, who had changed with all the Ecclesiastical changes of his era, and who therefore felt little difficulty in filling up the complement of his baseness by another adjuration in a new religious scene.

In this state of things, the Queen issued her *Congé d'élire*, enjoining the election of Matthew Parker to the see of Canterbury; he was elected in August, and consecrated in December, 1559. The royal mandate for his election was issued a few days after the deposition of the fourteen Bishops. The Queen's commission for consecrating the Archbishop Elect, was directed to Kitchin, Bishop of Llandaff, Barlow,* Bishop Elect of Chichester, but not consecrated; Scorey, Bishop Elect of Hereford, but not consecrated; Miles Coverdale, the old Bishop of Exeter, deprived of his see in the Marian persecutions; Hodgkin, Suffragan of Bedford; and Bale, Bishop of Ossory, in Ireland. The Bishops of Llandaff and Ossory did not attend, so that the consecrators were not actually in possession of any see; and by virtue of Acts of Parliament passed in the reign of Queen Mary, and *not repealed*, stood deprived of their Episcopal functions which they had formerly held; for Scorey, the Elect of Hereford, had been Bishop of Chichester, but was deprived; and Barlow, the Elect of Chichester, had been Bishop of Bath and Wells, but was also deprived.

The "Suffragan" Bishop who appears in this curious scene, was a character brought into being by an Act of Parliament, the 26th of Henry VIII. By that Act, several towns in England, twenty-six in number, were appointed for Suffragan sees. These Suffragan Bishops were to be consecrated by the Archbishop and two other Bishops, but none of them were to have or to act "any thing properly Episcopal" without the consent and permission of the Bishop in whose diocese he was placed and constituted. This was in fact an attempt to revive the old order of the Chorespiscopi, well known in Ecclesiastical history.

Here, then, we find the Suffragan summoned to perform an *act strictly Episcopal* without the consent and permission of the Bishop of the Diocese to which he belonged, and consequently performing an illegal act. This Suffragan never afterwards exercised any Episcopal functions, for he seems to have been a Puritan, and to have disliked the Elizabethan Prelacy; and old Miles Coverdale, the deprived Bishop of Exeter, was a

* Barlow had been Prior of the Monastery of Bisham in the County of Berks. He was then preferred to the see of St. Asaph, and next to St. David's. In the reign of Edward VI. he was employed by the Protector Somerset as a *political* preacher, a service to which the Bishops were occasionally called, and he was rewarded by a translation to the see of Bath and Wells. He then repaid his Patron by making over to him *eighteen manours* in the county of Somerset.

decided Puritan and Dissenter, and refused to appear in canonical attire at the consecration of Parker. The consecration was according to the form of Edward VI.'s Book, whereas, as the law then stood, it ought to have been according to the statute of the 25th of Henry VIII., so that in this transaction there is seen an accumulation of uncanonical and illegal acts which could not be covered by the Queen's mandate; and it is obvious that the weakness of the consecration was subsequently acknowledged, otherwise the government would not some years afterwards have passed an act to cover all deficiencies, and authoritatively declare the consecration valid.

Weighing then these circumstances, we need not hesitate to assert, that the origin of ministry in the Church of England was uncanonical and illegal, and that it stands protected by an Act of Parliament alone, which can indeed command any thing, and which could with equal facility render legal John Wesley's consecration of his American Bishops.

There are, however, some other items to be gathered upon this matter. The Queen herself was at that time, as far as the law could discern, a Roman Catholic; she had been baptized and confirmed in the Church of Rome, and had conformed to the Church during all her sister's reign; she was neither suspended nor excommunicated, and by her own act had, but a short time before all this, been crowned by a Roman Catholic Prelate, (Dr. Oglethorp, Bishop of Carlisle) strictly according to the ritual of the Pontifical, with all the rites and ceremonies of the Romish Church—*nothing having been altered for her coronation*. Her mandates therefore were the mandates of a daughter of the Church of Rome at that time, her engagements were for the Church of Rome, her unction was Popish, her inauguration strictly canonical according to the Romish communion. Any mandates, therefore, that she might issue to set aside the canons were not only uncanonical, but heretical; and they that took part in the consecration of Parker knew full well that they were violating the canons of the Church. The vacant mitre had been first offered to Dr. Watton, Dean of Canterbury and York, but he declined accepting it, precisely because he so respected the then Established Church, that is, the Church of Rome, that he could not with a good conscience submit to the changes they were then introducing. Dr. Whitehead, formerly a chaplain of Queen Anne Boleyn, also refused the proposed see from *puritanical* scruples, so that it required some dexterity to find out the peculiar species of conscience which *could* assent to the anomalous views of her Majesty, or of her ministers. Thus, then, did they fabricate the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury—for Cranmer was consecrated according to the rites of Rome, and took the canonical oath of obedience to the Pope; and it is from Parker, consecrated by non-Bishops, that we derive the stream of ministry which now irrigates the realm of England with its triple clerisy.

Parker afterwards, I believe, consecrated the Bishops Elect who had consecrated him.

Mr. Venn's remarks on all this are to this effect: "It is a fact beyond all question that in this kingdom there has been a church with its Bishop from very early times; and it is difficult to suppose that these Bishops were not, through each successive generation, truly invested with their office. When and how, we may ask, could a failure have taken place in a due consecration of our Bishops? When Archbishop Parker was consecrated, there were four bishops present, who had been duly *ordained*, but they were not at that time in actual possession of any sees. This, it is true, was not in conformity with some of the Canons of the Church; but those Canons were only of *human* authority, as being good

and expedient to observe, and it was a *case of necessity*, in which a strict adherence to them might *most lawfully* be dispensed with. If it be objected, that after all, this is not *demonstrative* evidence of the lawful ordination of our ministers—WE AT ONCE ALLOW IT; and from the very nature of the case, such evidence is clearly impossible, and must have been so almost from the very first." (2d Lect. 90—91.)

The first sentence of this passage pleads for the Popish Bishops of "early times," as it is obvious that if there be any succession in the Anglican Church it *must* be traced for many centuries through the Romish Church. When, however, Mr. Venn comes to Parker's consecration, he is constrained to admit that it was *not* canonical; but then he proposes this excuse, that the canons were only *human*—"only human!"—as if there were any thing *divine* in that truly indecorous transaction! as if the Queen's mandate and all that was done thereon were something more sacred, more holy, more *divine* than the canons. And what, we might ask, *can* there be in the consecration of a Bishop other than "human," seeing that Mr. Venn has himself "allowed that Scripture gives no express directions respecting the consecration of Bishops?" (88). If that assertion be true, it follows of necessity that, Scripture failing us, the Canons must come in to supply the deficiency for those who believe in Prelacy; but when we come to see the origin of Mr. Venn's Church, we find that they set aside the Canons, because forsooth the Canons were "only human."

In case of this plea failing, Mr. Venn proposes as the last excuse, and assuredly the worst—"necessity;"—necessity is the tyrant's plea, and the robber's excuse; but what may have been this necessity? If the Queen wanted canonical prelates, she had them at hand; if she wanted uncanonical monsters for her new system, it might indeed be necessary for her to pursue the course she did; but neither morals nor religion, neither law nor gospel, laid this necessity upon her, and it is questionable whether even sound policy required the execution of such measures.

But in all this, Mr. Venn seems quite to forget that for an ecclesiastic to be in the succession there are two points required, a valid ordination and a lawful mission of jurisdiction: besides his orders, he must have received a commission to teach and preach and administer the sacraments, and do all things appertaining to his office from some one who had authority to give that commission. Now as Parker took not this authority from the Church but from the Queen, it is obvious that his commission to act as Bishop was not apostolical, was not in the succession; the succession that had hitherto been established took its jurisdiction from the Church, and never from the Laity, and Parker unquestionably was departing from the rule and practice of the succession, when he took the oath of supremacy at his consecration, and did not swear obedience to the Pope. If Parker was in the succession, then the fourteen deprived Bishops were not; "the Apostolical succession" can not possibly be such as to produce two opposite lines of ministry which never can coalesce; this would not be Apostolical succession, but Apostolical separation; now as Mr. Venn himself acknowledges the Romish Bishops, we, on these considerations, can not possibly acknowledge the Anglican Prelates; for they can plead no other origin than that of an Act of Parliament.

But the appointment of the prelates of the Establishment has still other difficulties to encounter, and those the most serious that we have yet examined, for we all know that the prelates are said to receive the Holy Ghost at their consecrations, and themselves to give the same ineffable gift in the ordinations of the priests. Now this, when we consider

the history of a prelate's elevation, and the facts that precede and follow it, is, after all, the most startling and the most odious of all the repulsive features of the Church of England, at least it has ever been so in my estimation; and if it were duly considered by those who are within the pale of the Establishment, methinks it has in it those qualities of ugliness that might scare away even the most devoted churchman, if only there were in their souls the smallest grace of life. We all of us know the history, the average history, of prelacy; we know how the churchman is elevated from a rich living to a minor dignity, say a deanery, or the mastership of a college of the universities, how, by the force of patronage, he is promoted to the bench, and, how, when named by the ministers, he is consecrated, and receives the Holy Ghost, *according to the Prayer-book*. And when there is a vacant mitre there is no small stir amongst the high clergy,—all sorts of intrigues,* and counterplotting of rival interests, are called to bear upon the appointment; and the prime minister has sometimes to struggle hard to execute his own wishes, and, after all, is sometimes baffled. There is the relative of a great nobleman,—the scion of a noble house, he has his claims,—then there is the brother, or nephew, or cousin of a cabinet minister, he has very strong claims,—there may be, also, the old tutor of the prime minister, having no claims but the affections of his pupil, and yet, *de facto*, they are the strongest claims of all; sometimes there is the will of the Sovereign, strongly expressed quite another way, and various other motives and interests arising from many quarters, each contributing to perplex the question, and to make “the appointment” a provocative of such animosities, and the cause of such deeds, as might drive away even infidels, disgusted with such a religion of the State. But it will be said, that this is not always the case, and that the prelates are sometimes appointed quietly, and that the appointments themselves are respectable. True, an appointment to the bench is sometimes harmoniously settled, but those very appointments have, either in their secret history or in the selection of the candidates, not unfrequently the worst elements that could be examined. Some of these harmonious and uncontested appointments have been witnessed within the last thirty years, and, unless it were invidious, we might say more on the subject, both as to the well-known cause of the harmony, and the merits of the favourites selected. But let these things pass; and let all stand that may be said about “learned men the ornament of their age” being elected to the bench, and let all this be set off in the most approved rhetoric of interested advocates, still this fact stands, that when the appointment is made, a lucky individual is elevated to a lofty pinnacle of human † ambition: he becomes a peer of the realm, he enters into a place where men will speak well of him, and worship him; he will be rich and powerful, he

* See Appendix, No. I.

† The clergy themselves so describe the Episcopal elevation, unconscious of the deep condemnation which they thus pass on their own order. In a sermon preached on the death of judge Foster, by the Rev. R. M'Ghee, I find the following sentence:—“When it pleases God to summon men from exalted stations to which every eye looks up, when men are precipitated from the highest positions—positions supposed to be the object of general ambition, to which they have been exalted through what the world considers *peculiar felicity of fortune*,—when the Bishop, upon whose shoulders the lawn was scarcely sullied from the fold, is called to exchange the lawn for a shroud—these are warnings” &c.

The allusion here is to the death of the Bishop of Meath.

See the Sermon published by Nisbet, London.

will be clothed literally "in purple and fine linen," and he will fare sumptuously every day; he will be a high consecrated grandee, and have every thing that this world can give him,—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” He will spend half of every year in the execution of his duties as a member of Parliament, and he will be one of the world's chief rulers and magistrates; and on the day when all this will be given to him, on the auspicious hour when the door will be thus thrown open to this gilded scene of pomp and power, the awful day of his consecration, the Bishops will assemble, they will invoke the Creator Spirit, they will call for the Holy Ghost to inspire their hearts, they will supplicate the “comforter,” the heavenly gift of the “most High God, which no tongue can express, to send down into their hearts the heavenly light, to strengthen their weakness, that neither *the Devil, the world, nor the flesh* may prevail against them.” They will then “lay their hands on the head of the Bishop kneeling before them upon his knees,” and the Archbishop will say, “receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of Father, &c., and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by the imposition of our hands.”

And all this MUST be done: it always is done; all that the government sends to be consecrated are consecrated; Whig and Tory, high churchman and low churchman, evangelical, and non-evangelical, they that believe in baptismal regeneration and they that do not, Calvinists and Arminians, and all persons of opposite sects or opinions, all these “receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the church of God,” and all in consequence become themselves donors of the same gift when they ordain the priests.

Of course, in our enquiry, if it were a question only of the Scriptures, we should touch on none of these items, for what are these abuses to Christians? they are not in their province, and it is out of place for them to pass sentence on transactions which are merely practises of the world playing at religion; but we have another, a mixed task before us; it is to meet Mr. Venn, who has undertaken so to present the ministry of his sect to our contemplation, as that it may command our respect, and claim our adhesion; we have, therefore, to examine *his* ministry, and here, then, on this subject, we are at the fountain head. When we examine the appointment and consecration of the prelates, we are at the origin and birth-place of every sort of ministry in Mr. Venn's church; from the mitre flow forth the two other streams of ministry—the priest and the deacon; and every thing that is done or can be done, legitimately, in the Establishment originates from the Bishop, the maker and author of all ministry there, the author and creator of every subordinate ministerial function. Who, then, makes the maker?—The cabinet ministers. Beyond this we can not trace the fountain,—this is the birth-place of the Episcopal element,—here it springs up into life,—and “the gifts which are given to men,” in the Establishment, come from the queen's ministers, and from no other quarter.

This indeed Mr. Venn himself asserts, if I comprehend his language aright; as, however, the passage on this subject in his 2nd Lecture is of all that he has written the most remarkable and I would add the most startling, it is but just to see it at full length.

“God hath set *some in the church*,* first Apostles, secondarily Prophets,

* The italics in this passage are faithfully copied from the original (2nd Lecture, p. 112).

(1 Cor. xii. 28). He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, &c. (Eph. iv. 11). Take heed therefore to all the flock over *which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*" (Acts xx. 28).

"Can therefore the *Lord* appoint ungodly men? Now it may be answered, that it is not said in these passages, or any where in Scripture, that God qualifies and *marks* out every pastor, but simply that they are "*made,*" "*set,*" and "*given,*" in some sense or other, by him. And in what way did God make, set, and give them (excepting those whom he himself *directly* appointed) in the Apostles' days? Why he authorised certain individuals to select and appoint them; in doing which they were to use their own discretion. That ministers, so appointed, may properly be said to be appointed by *God himself*, will appear at once, if we only consider that kings, and even the basest of them, are said to be made by the Lord, when they are raised to the throne by his providence (see Dan. iv. 17). Whether the Spirit of God chooses ministers, and marks them out by his own immediate act, or whether he empowers certain men to make the appointment according to their discretion, it may be said with equal truth, that they are *his* appointment when, therefore, it is said that the Lord "*sets*" ministers in his church, and that the ascended Saviour has "*given*" them, and that the Holy Ghost has "*made*" them overseers, nothing more is necessarily meant than that they are appointed through certain channels *by the authority of the Spirit of God and of Christ*. Now if the Lord was pleased to appoint to the Jewish priesthood, a highly spiritual office, some of the vilest of men, and that, too, through an arrangement which admitted of no selection,—if he was pleased to make a direct appointment of Judas to be one of the twelve, and to send him out to preach the Gospel with this sanction, '*He that receiveth you receiveth me*' is it any thing to be wondered at that he should suffer ministers to be appointed, with the authority of the Holy Ghost, through fallible men, who, being either deceived themselves or wickedly abasing their trust, may confer that authority upon such as are unqualified and unregenerate?"

1st, By this, therefore, we learn, that when we read in the Scriptures, as in 1 Cor. xii., Eph. iv., Acts xx., that God hath set or given in the Church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers, Pastors, that he neither *qualified* nor *marked them out* as such; but that he authorised and appointed certain individuals to select and appoint them.

2ndly, As these are the very passages of Scripture to which Mr. Venn refers, we must also understand that not even "*the Prophets*" were really qualified by God, but that they were selected and appointed by authorised individuals, who were "*to use their own discretion*" in selecting them. It will be observed that Mr. Venn does not shrink from this, as he even quotes the very word "*Prophets,*" in the passages from which he deduces his arguments.

3rdly, That as there are other offices in those passages set down, but omitted by Mr. Venn, we must of course include them also in the category, as that which is said of one must be true of the other; from whence also we learn that "*miracles,*" "*gifts of healing,*" "*diversities of tongues,*" and "*interpretation of tongues,*" (1 Cor. xii.) were held independently of any immediate qualification from God;—that certain individuals selected and appointed other individuals for these powers, in "*doing which they used their own discretion.*"

4thly, That when Paul said to the Elders of Ephesus that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers or Bishops over the whole flock, it did not really mean what he said, but only this was implied, that certain individuals, authorised by the Spirit of God and of Christ at first, had

selected and appointed them, and that in so doing they had used their own discretion.

5thly, That when we read that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; that the Spirit gives "knowledge and wisdom," and all the gifts; "for all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he wills," 1 Cor. xii.; and that where it is written on the same subject that "God hath set them," it means only that he has authorized "certain channels," and if in these *channels* the appointments are made, several hundred years after the first donation, it is to be understood that "the holy Spirit of God" does to all intents and purposes make the appointments.

6thly, That Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are therefore not to be considered immediately qualified or made by God, but only appointed in "certain channels," which were right and authentic at the first; and that consequently, when, in the ordination of Priests, and the consecration of Bishops, the Holy Spirit is solemnly given in set words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," it does not mean that there is any such gift bestowed, or that the Holy Ghost is then owned as the donor, and maker, and qualifier of ministry: no such thing; but that in a certain channel they are acting a scene, which meant something at first, but does not mean now that which the words of the ordination express.

7thly, That Bishops and Priests, now existing, are not made or qualified by God, but chosen by men at their own discretion; that they are only incidents or circumstances of general Providence, as when we read of tyrants and bad men in power, (Mr. Venn's own illustration,) or indeed any thing else that is *allowed* by God to be, such as earthquakes, locusts, plague, and famine.

8thly, As it is "the channel," and not the fountain head to which we are looking; and as "the channel" in the Establishment, is the Queen's Ministers, who "choose and select" the Bishops, "using their own discretion;" and as this "channel" is that of which Mr. Venn approves, we come to this conclusion,—that the Bishops being thus chosen and appointed, are chosen and appointed, though not actually qualified, by "the authority of the Spirit of God and of Christ."

9thly, The Spirit of God and of Christ do therefore, actually and constantly choose and appoint those whom they do not qualify or make.

How many more painful corollaries may we not deduce from this truly monstrous doctrine?

The illustration, however, which Mr. Venn gives of his views by referring to the Jewish Priesthood, is so strange, that I see no better way of answering it than by his own words; "it was an arrangement which admitted of no selection." The priesthood in the Mosaic economy was hereditary—it admitted, as Mr. Venn says, "of no selection." The son of the Priest was born a priest; Aaron's sons inherited the office and the robes of their father, and from generation to generation the priesthood continued in lineal descent, till the High Priest of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe God had spoken nothing concerning Priesthood, went into the Holy Place not made with hands, ever there to abide in the presence of God for the redeemed house. Now to argue from the carnal institution of the flesh to the birth of the Spirit, "from the will of flesh and of blood" to the election of grace, and to insist, because such things *must* have been so in the law, that they therefore ought to be so, and properly, according to God's ordinance, are so, in the grace of the Gospel, is absolutely to evert the very foundations of the kingdom of Christ, of which the chief doctrine is, "that flesh and blood reveals not the Son of God, the Christ," to man, "but the Father which is in heaven."

Mr. Venn's arguments have brought him to this conclusion, that we are not to wish for the living power of God, nor the qualifications of the Spirit in the Church, but to man's appointment; a deduction that indeed sets up the flesh for the Spirit, and turns that which was meant to be divine into that which was purely human. And if such tragical principles are pleaded for in the article of Christian Ministry, *a fortiori* every thing that is said and taught about the Spirit, as touching the laity in the Establishment, must be resolvable into the same interpretation; for if the Clergy, the baptizers, and thereby the authorised communicators of regeneration to all the laity, are themselves not actually qualified of God; and if in spite of all their praying for and "receiving" the gift of the Holy Ghost at their ordination, they receive it not, but only are the ends of a channel which eighteen hundred years ago did *at the other end* receive the Holy Ghost, then much more must the same things be true of the whole body of the Laity, an inferior class, and less sanctified and less holy than the clergy; and so it will come to pass that the regeneration of infants in baptism is no regeneration, but a form of words attesting *the authentic channel*; and indeed every thing in the Prayer Book asserted concerning the Holy Spirit, whether in prayer, precept, or doctrine, will have no real meaning in it; it will only mean that people are praying in the proper channel, but receiving and expecting nothing, for the channel has been long dry; and, as in the consecrations, when they say "receive the Holy Ghost" but give nothing, so when they thank God that it "has pleased him to regenerate the infant with the Holy Spirit," they do not mean what they say, but are only attesting to the channel down which the streams of life do not in reality flow.

In the same way every thing in the prayer-book will be a delusion, a deception, an imposture. "Let us beseech him to grant us his Holy Spirit."—"Send down upon Bishops and curates the healthful spirit of thy grace."—"Take not thy Holy Spirit from us."—"Endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit."—"The fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us evermore."—"We pray for the catholic church, that it may be guided and governed by thy Good Spirit."—"Grant that we, being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit."—"Send thy Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts the most excellent gift of charity." These and innumerable other passages to the same effect, we must henceforward interpret as Mr. Venn has interpreted the ordination of Bishops and priests; these are not prayers for the thing itself, but only acknowledgments of the channel. Christians of the Establishment must neither expect nor be said to possess the Holy Spirit, for if so, then must the same thing be true of the Bishops, priests, and deacons also, and then it will come to this other conclusion, that the queen's *congé d'élire* has authority over the Holy Spirit, and can make it appear when wanted or commanded, a deduction which Mr. Venn desires to avoid, both for the scandal of the thing, and to parry the arguments of his opponents, which, he knows full well, will overwhelm him if only he concedes the actual *qualification* and marking out for ministry by the Spirit in the church of God.

In travelling over the ground which Mr. Venn has selected, we find it necessary not to omit the deacon, a subject in itself the most trivial, but of some importance as to outward shew in the Establishment, seeing that, for form's sake, and in order to be in keeping with tradition and antiquity, it is ceremoniously upheld, though it is an office of such little

moment that if it was abolished to-morrow, the machinery of the Establishment would in no wise be impaired, nor would the Church perceive the loss. I have in another place examined the true meaning of the word Deacon, and shown that it simply means any servant of the Church called out into visible and ostensible service of any sort; that the translation of the word, so as to give it a technical and official meaning, is arbitrary and false, and that the translators have taken most unwarrantable liberties with the text in introducing the words "the office of a Deacon," in 1 Tim. iii., as no such words exist in the original, but have been invented to represent the prejudices of the translators. For proof of this, I must refer the reader to the publication named * below; in the mean time we have to examine the office of the Deacon as represented in the Establishment.

The Deacon is one of the three orders—the first of the three grades for which Mr. Venn contends. In his arguments about this office (1st Lect. p. 29), Mr. Venn is mainly occupied in answering the writer of "the tract on Ordination," but in all that he may have to say in answering the statements of that tract, I feel not concerned to follow him, because I think the writer of the tract has, in this particular question, not sufficiently examined the subject, and has fallen into error by following the popular belief, rather than by adhering closely to the Scriptures. If it is not a direct mistake, it is at least an arbitrary interpretation to trace "the Deacon's office" to the appointment of the seven table-servants recorded in Acts vi.; and therefore, as to this point, I assert that no one can prove that such were Deacons, or that any "Deacons" were any where, or on any occasion, appointed at all. There were many servants of the Church,—teachers, preachers, evangelists, friends and servants of the poor, men and women given to hospitality, messengers or persons commissioned with letters or collections to the Churches, and various other calls on service of a nature not now to be explained, all and each constituting service, and every person so in service was a servant or Deacon, and for those servants so in owned and acknowledged service Paul thought it advisable to give directions in his first Epistle to Timothy. Mr. Venn has, however, to defend the Deacon of his own Church, a non-descript ephemeral, unlike the Deacon of tradition, and still more unlike "the servant" of the Scriptures.

With Mr. Venn it is a perplexity whether the Deacon ought or ought not to preach; but he comes at last to the conclusion, as indeed he is in duty bound, that preaching and teaching are part of his functions. It is indeed amusing to see the inferences and conjectures with which he would prove the point, but the whole subject is such a mass of error, absurdity, and impertinence in the Church of England, and after all it is so like crushing a butterfly on a wheel to follow out these errors, that we can only here look at one or two points.

In the ordination of Deacons in the Prayer Book, the Deacon is asked if he is moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him "this office and ministration;"—the Deacon is directed to say that he is; *after which*, the Bishop gives him authority to exercise the ministration, the authority of the Holy Ghost being considered as quite secondary to that of the Bishop.

The Deacon is to help the Priest at the Holy Communion, to read the Scriptures *and the Homilies* in the Church (which last duty he never

* "Inquiry into the Scriptural doctrine of Christian Ministry, by R. M. Beverley."

performs), to teach children their Catechism, to baptize infants in the absence of the Priest, and to preach *if admitted to do so by the Bishop*, to seek out poor people, and to indicate their names and circumstances to the Curate. These are the duties of his office, and these duties the candidate, moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, says he will with God's help "gladly and willingly perform."

Now it is remarkable that the Prayer Book, as if to confute its own foolish ordinance, directs the sixth chapter of Acts to be read on this occasion, a chapter which is meant to state that the Deacon is thus by the Scripture required to do that which he can not do, serve tables, and by the Prayer Book to preach the homilies, which he never will do!

It would indeed be superfluous to ask Mr. Venn where he will find the Prayer Book's list of the Deacon's duties in the Scriptures? to which portion of the New Testament would he direct us for teaching the Catechism, reading the homilies, baptizing infants, and preaching the gospel *with the Bishop's permission*?

There is, however, a portion of the word which Mr. Venn has, with his usual courage, appropriated for his argument. In Rom. xii. 7, there occurs the word *διακονια*, which Mr. Venn says is to be understood as "comprehending the office of *assistant to the Elder*" (1st Lect. p. 31). In other words we should read it thus, "having the Deacon's office, let us wait on our Deacon's office;" and it is by such contrivances that the Establishment is supported, and the three orders proved!

In 1 Cor. xii. 26, Mr. Venn finds his Deacons in the word *αρωματα* "Helps," though indeed he would be somewhat puzzled to state the degree of help that this one-year's official affords to the "Priests" in their "administrations." Let us look round the Churches of the Establishment, and where can we see these "helps"? how many such helps have the Churches of Hereford? and would they be one whit the worse if such a phenomenon as a "Deacon" were never again to be seen? In the Establishment a Deacon means a young gentleman who, for form's sake, is waiting to be made a priest, the Priest's grade being in many cases the door of preferment; and assuredly, if the Deacon's office is a "help" in the Established Church, the Clergy are exceedingly anxious to renounce the office of "helping," as it is a most rare case indeed to find a Clergyman that has continued in Deacon's orders six months longer than Ecclesiastical law will allow him. In short, it is an unmeaning and frivolous name, without duties really attached to it, and yet much esteemed by the traditionists, as sustaining the figment of the three orders.

Mr. Venn acknowledges that Paul in "his enumeration of gifts and offices in his Epistle to the Ephesians, does *not* mention the Deacon—though WE KNOW that they then existed in the Ephesian Church—because he only enumerates the *more important* offices." (p. 31).

But mark this admission! With Mr. Venn it is incumbent to prove the three orders, the sum total of ministry in his Church; he would refer to Ephesians as teaching the question of ministry; he acknowledges there is "an enumeration" of the offices in that Epistle, and yet he can not find the Deacon in the list, though he *knows* there were Deacons at Ephesus! This is passing strange. Supposing Mr. Venn were to draw up a list of ministerial offices in the Establishment, and were to omit the Deacon altogether, what should we think of his memory or his orthodoxy? and how could it be taken as an excuse at Lambeth that he had merely omitted "some of the minor offices," and was so occupied with the more important ones that he had quite forgotten the Deacon, the first of the three steps to the mitre?

Spem gregis ah! silice in nudâ connixa reliquit.

"We have seen," says Mr. Venn, "that in several Churches, and *perhaps in all*, there was another order of men who were appointed to be the assistants of the Elders" (p. 33).

These words are quite sufficient to show the failure of the Deacon of the Establishment, for here Mr. Venn fully admits, that which is an undoubted fact, that the Ignatian Epistles, and all early* traditions speak of several Deacons in every Church;—in the Establishment there is never one Church to be found in this predicament, and many Churches never see a Deacon for a long period of years, it may be for a century or more; for if the incumbents come to the living as Priests, and employ Priest-Curates, a very common occurrence, there never can be a Deacon in ministrations at all in such circumstances; and it is highly probable that there are very many Churches in England which never have had one Deacon within their walls since the Reformation. Of so little real importance is this unmeaning "degree."

The force of this truth has been so much felt, that some clergymen have openly confessed that it, the deacon's office, is a mere name. Hence Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, not long ago proposed to change it altogether, and to make it efficient by consigning some real and efficient duties to authorized laymen, who thus might be called deacons or servants of the church.

If Mr. Venn were faithful to "history," in this section of his subject, he ought to tell us how much the priest was superior to the deacon; for it has been decreed by councils (councils, too, quoted by the Book of Homilies), that the deacon should never presume to sit in the presence of a priest; but, in this respect, the Church of England has deserted antiquity.

We may dismiss this subject by noticing a reprehensible passage in Mr. Venn's first lecture, where (p. 45), he has thus perverted the meaning of Scripture:—"1 Tim. iii. 10., i.e. Let them be examined as to their character and conduct, and ORDAINED DEACONS, if found irreproachable."

This is, indeed, a striking instance of the extremes into which a bad case can betray one who argues more as a special pleader than an advocate of the truth. If the three orders can only be kept afloat by such † expedients, would it not be better to let them "sink like lead in the mighty waters?"

The second grade of *Priesthood* in Mr. Venn's church offers to him very serious difficulties in another point of view, as he has assumed the position, of all others the most unsafe and unsound for a clergyman, that the priests of the Establishment are not really priests, but only elders. In other words, he formally rejects the *sacerdotal* office and abolishes the priesthood. "The word *Priest*," says he, "appears to be

* The council of Neo-Cæsarea decreed that there should be *only* seven Deacons in one city: this was restraining and curtailing the number, with a superstitious reference to Acts vi., whither "antiquity" has always betaken itself when hard pressed to find the origin of the Deacon.

We know, however, that in some cities they had more than seven Deacons.

† It may be noticed, for the explanation of this matter to the unlearned reader, that the words "*ordained deacons*" are a violent perversion of the text. In the common Bibles it is read, "let them use the office of a deacon;" this is bad enough, as the true meaning is that given in the margin—*let them serve*. Mr. Venn, however, advances boldly in the science of mis-translation; just as we find in the Italian catechisms, "See that thou keep holy *the Festivals of the church*," as a synonyme for "*the Sabbath day*."

formed from, or rather to be a corruption of, the word *Presbyter*, which is, in fact, nothing more than the Greek word *πρεσβυτερος*, translated *elder* in our Bible. The word *elder* or *presbyter* is never, in Scripture, applied to the sons of Aaron, they are universally called *sepeis* (this is *priests* proper). It is to be regretted that a different word has not been applied in English to the sons of Aaron, in as much as it has given rise to some confusion; and I find that the Plymouth Brethren have, in almost all their tracts, built, what they consider to be one of their strongest arguments upon this very ambiguity" (1st Lecture, p. 12).

Let this be clearly understood. In the Scriptures, that is, in all the Old Testament, the sacrificing mediator between God and man is called the Priest; in the New Testament, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same word is used, meaning a *sacrificing mediator*, and as the result of this office, and, indeed, as a definition of it, we may consider the priest as the person who by office draws near unto God (Ex. xix. 22); that is, one who draws nearer unto God than the people. The English reader must understand that the word in debate is *Hiereus*, and that, in the Bible, it is translated *Priest*.

The blood and righteousness of Christ, and the union with him as the great High-priest, enable believers, justified by faith, to draw near unto God and to enter into the holiest place of all with full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22). Hence they also become *Priests*, and are so called in the New Testament (1 Pet. ii. 5).

There is no distinction between *Priest* and *people* in the Gospel. Faith and union with Christ makes all of them, who are sanctified by the faith that is in Christ Jesus, perfectly equal in their access unto God; they "have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph. iii. 12). Christ, the Son of God, is alone and without help, in heaven or on earth, the only proper priest, for he only is the accepted mediator, the only one who has offered an eternal sacrifice, valid for reconciliation with God, and so valid that whoever knows its value must be perfectly and absolutely and unreservedly reconciled to God; and, being so reconciled, the saints are, by virtue of access and reconciliation, which has removed all barriers, continually in priestly place and privilege before God,—They "have access by faith into this grace wherein they stand" (Rom. v. 2). So that the whole body of the church is a kingdom of *Priests*, every man and woman in it standing complete before God in the righteousness which is by faith is a *Priest*; and no other priesthood can be formed upon earth (according to the revelation of the Gospel), but the body of justified believers, who alone are, by privilege, in priestly place; though the Son of God is the only proper *Priest* in true sacerdotal function and office.

Hence priestly office or function is abolished on the earth by the Gospel, though the privileges and standing resulting from it are imparted to all believers.

Now I suppose it to be known to all, that the whole strength of Popery consists in setting up again the priestly functions and office, so that they have again, according to their pretensions, priests proper, sacrificing mediators in their church, just as they had under the law of Moses. The *Hiereus*, or *Priest* of the Levitical institutions, is avowedly established in the Papal Church, though they also call their *Priest*, "*Presbyter*," or *Elder*. The Roman Catholics sometimes call their *Priest Sacerdos** or *Hiereus*; that is, sacrificing mediator; and some-

* *Sacerdos* is a Latin word, having exactly the same meaning as the Greek word *Hiereus*.

times Presbyter or Elder. The terms are with them interchangeable, and are considered to mean the same thing.

Hence it came to pass, through the vast influence of ecclesiastical language in our country, and indeed in others, that Presbyter, of which the proper meaning is Elder, was considered the same as Sacerdos or Priest; and indeed the word Priest is formed from Presbyter—the formation of which is obvious,—Presbyter, Prester, Priest.

It now remains to be ascertained, whether Mr. Venn is justified as a clergyman in rejecting the sacerdotal meaning of the word Priest, and whether he can keep his ground in asserting, that the Priests of his Church are not Priests but only Elders.

In the first place, the use of the English language is so decidedly against him, that it is intolerable, after laying down such a canon concerning the meaning of the word as we see he has done, to continue using "Priest" and "Priesthood" in a private meaning of arbitrary origin. If Mr. Venn had been secure on this point, (as it seems to me plain that he is not,) he ought ever afterwards in his lectures, to have used the words Elder, and Elder's office, or Presbyter, and Presbyter's office; but this Mr. Venn declines, as he still continues speaking of the "Priest" and "the Priesthood," to the no small confusion of his readers; for confusion it is, throughout his Lectures, notwithstanding his distinction about the Aaronic priesthood in the outset. The confusion is obvious; for if a person were to compose a long treatise on horses, and in the outset tell his readers that he wished them to understand the word "horse" to mean "a cow," except in those cases where he distinctly added the epithet *solid-hoofed*, it would not be long before the readers would become sadly perplexed with this strange abuse of terms; and as they advanced in the mazes of the learned disquisition, they would at last be quite unable to distinguish the cow from the horse, and all their ideas of the animal kingdom would be inverted and disturbed.

In the next place, when we consider what the Prayer Book is; its origin and history; how immediately it emanated from the Roman Catholic Church; how it is in all places an imitation of the Missal, Breviary, or Pontifical; and in many, a close translation of them, and particularly in the Communion Service, where the Priest is most wanted and the priestly functions most called into play,—when we consider that the Deacon, Priest, and Bishop are avowedly modifications only of the Diaconus, Presbyter, and Episcopus of the Romish Church, and that some essential points in priestly consecrations of the Bishop, are taken from the Pontifical of Rome,—when we see the Anglican Bishop conferring the Holy Ghost, "for the work and office of a Priest,"—when we hear "the Priesthood" commonly and familiarly spoken of in the Prayer Book and Ecclesiastical law,—it does indeed seem a most bold, a most hazardous gloss to assert, that there is after all no Priest, and no Priesthood, according to Sacerdotal meaning, in the Church of England; and that these words and offices mean something quite different.

Again; as the Church of England had the deliberate framing of its own formularies and ceremonies, and did most cautiously consider the parts and portions of Popery which it might be expedient to reject or to retain; and as nevertheless it has studiously retained the word Priest in the very places where we should naturally expect to find some other word substituted, if the idea of Priesthood were to be rejected; how can we come to any other conclusion, than that Priests and the Priestly office are essential parts of the Established Church?

In the ordination of Priests, the Bishop says, "Good people, these are

they whom we purpose, God willing, to receive this day into the holy office of Priesthood;” and throughout the whole ceremony the same language is sustained, and the ‘work,’ ‘office,’ and ‘function’ of a Priest are named without reserve in the prayers and addresses. Is it not then describing the Prayer Book as a volume of deception, if, after this, we are called upon to believe that there is no office of Priesthood at all, according to its institutions? They who compiled the Prayer Book knew well what they were about; they were masters of language also. They had “the Elder” in the Bible, and never there translated it “Priest;” how then can we persuade ourselves that they misunderstood the term when they were arranging the Prayer Book? In the communion* service, they allow themselves the use of several words to express the functionary of the Sacrament,—Curate, Minister, Priest; but “Elder” they never introduce, though the word Elder is allowed to stand in portions of the Scripture inserted in the formularies; as in the portion for the Epistle in the consecration of Bishops. It can not therefore be said that they did not know the difference between the words: and with this evidence before us, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion, than that they retained “the Priest,” and “the office of Priesthood,” simply because they did *not* reject the sacerdotal theory.

Again; the orders of the Church at Rome are valid in the Church of England: a Popish Priest, after proving his orders, abjuring Popery, and taking the requisite oaths, can immediately, and without any further difficulty, administer the sacraments, and officiate in all priestly, or as Mr. Venn would say, *presbyterian* functions, in the Establishment. Is not this plainly acknowledging the true sacerdotal caste of Priests? Mr. Venn must know that the difference is not slight in distinguishing between a Priest and an Elder; it is in fact the difference between admitting or rejecting a principle from which emanate the most important consequences. It is the question of owning or disowning the Levitical theory. Now if the Church of England unhesitatingly admits a Popish Priest within its pale, and is satisfied with his Romish ordination, and if in that ordination priesthood proper is broadly and largely asserted, and the whole Levitical theory most plainly established, so that no one was ever yet found to deny it, is it not again and again plain that the Levitical theory is *not* rejected by the Establishment?

Again; the very dress of the Anglican clergy is a proof of priesthood. The white surplice is known by all to be the sacerdotal attire;† it has always been so considered; and when worn by ordained or consecrated persons has, in all ages, been taken as the garment of priesthood. This is not a trifle; in the church of England, indeed, it has been the most serious, the most tragical, the most sanguinary subject that could

* The Publishers of the Greek Edition of the Prayer Book, printed at Cambridge by the University printer, in 1665, gives the word *ιερευς* as the proper translation of “the Priest,” wherever the word occurs. This shews that the learned Divines of that University took the Prayer Book to mean what it says.

† “Aaron shall put on the holy linen coat” (Lev. xvi. 4). It was every where the dress of priesthood. Apuleius speaks of Priests “shining in the pure whiteness of the linen robe,—*lintea vestis candore puro luminosi.*” Juvenal has a phrase expressive of priests,—“*liniger grex,*” or “the linen-bearing herd.” Lucian, Seneca, and others, use the same expressions when speaking of priests. The priests of Isis were dressed in white surplices, so were the Druids in their great ceremonies, and it is from the fanes of Isis and Serapis that the surplice has come, through Rome, into the Established church.

well be imagined. The rejecting the surplice by the Puritans, and on the express ground that it was a token of the Romish sacerdoty, is the origin of all dissent in England, and thousands of saints have perished in prison, or have been ruined by the cruel Prelates of the Establishment, because they would not submit to wear that symbolical attire of priesthood. This is a well known fact in history; and history has scarcely a more disgraceful or more melancholy page in all her dark volumes, than where she records the scourge of the surplice.

Now, for the very reason that the Puritans rejected this superstitious robe, did the Bishops and Priests insist on its being worn. The two parties perfectly well understood what they were about; the ostensible matter in debate between them was a few yards of white linen, the real question was the rejection or confirmation of the priestly theory; for this did the Elizabethan Bishops rage, and against this did the godly Puritans witness with their property and their lives. The conflict ended, after more than a century of fierce persecution, in the toleration of dissent by law, and the quiet establishment of the surplice and priesthood amongst all the clergy of the church of England. The controversy on this subject having long ago died away, the clergy now find themselves robed in linen they know not why,—it is, with them, a venerable custom of antiquity, or till lately has only been so esteemed; but the Priests of the Oxford sect, who understand full well the importance of these things, have once more asserted the holiness of the surplice, for they understand that white linen is the proper costume of Priests. Hence we hear of their preaching in their surplices, and rejecting with disdain the black gown, which does not allow them to appear in the pulpit in their sacerdotal attire and character.

Thus, then, even by this trivial badge, is the Priesthood established; and when we see a clergyman standing at the altar in his white linen garments, we are able to describe him in the very words with which a heathen poet portrayed the priests of the Pagan era,

. . . . ante aras stat veste Sacerdos
Effulgens niveâ.—*Silius Italicus*, iii. 690.

“The priest stands before the altar, shining in a snow-white robe.”

Again, to deny Sacerdoty or Priesthood proper, is wholly to separate the Establishment from antiquity. This is the danger of Mr. Venn's *dissenting* mode of argument. It is not the argument of a clergyman, but of a dissenter; for the Prayer-book, in the preface to the ordination services, takes up the support of antiquity, and appeals to tradition,—“It is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and *ancient authors*, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church,—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” Now, “ancient authors,” thus invoked, are all against Mr. Venn. Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, and Augustin, speak of the Sacerdos in the true Levitical meaning, as being the minister in the church. This must be well known by all who know any thing of the Fathers. The famous treatise of Chrysostom “on the Priesthood,” is not on the “elder's office,” but the true Sacerdoty — *ιεροσύνη*; the Priest is *hiereus*, wherever he is mentioned in that treatise; and Cyprian continually used the term Sacerdos in speaking of the clergy. The passages from Cyprian* which

* Take a few instances.—“*Sacerdotibus labor major incumbit in asserendâ et procurandâ Dei majestate.*”—“*Nullus Dei Sacerdos sic infirmus est, sic jacens et abjectus, quod non contra Dei hostes divinitus erigatur. . . . cum consider-*

might be adduced, would indeed be numerous. Now, as he also occasionally speaks of the prebyteri or elders, and makes them synonymous with the Sacerdotes or Priests, it is clear that *he* did not confound the matter by using one word with two meanings, but that he supposed the elders were Priests, and, indeed, it is plain, in all his writings, that he held true and real Levitical Sacerdody to be a constituent part of the clerical character.

Let it then be remembered, that the Prayer Book not only refers to "ancient authors," but that the Book of Homilies frequently quotes the very Fathers here named, with terms and epithets expressive of the highest reverence, appealing to them as "holy and godly doctors," and invoking their aid to establish the views of the Church of England. Now, as it is certain that every one of the Fathers, from Tertullian at least, that is, from A. D. 200, and downwards, to the end of the Patristic school, did always teach that sacerdody, in its true sense of Levitical intercession, is the very life of clerical consecration; and as we find the Church of England* continually appealing to the Fathers, it is wholly impossible to deny that sacerdody or priesthood is a principle of the Establishment, arguing the point with reference to the fathers only, though in every other way we see it to be quite certain, that the Clergy of the Establishment are true canonical priests, in pretension at least, though the Church of Rome knows them only as schismatics and Dissenters.

In fact, to reject priesthood is to become that which the Oxford divines call an "Ultra-Protestant." It is the renunciation of tradition, the rejection of antiquity, and the assuming of a new position wholly unknown to all the fathers of the Church, and the fathers of the Church of England. In this matter, Mr. Venn would find arrayed against him an awful list of names, Archbishops Cranmer, Parker, Usher, Sharpe, Laud, Potter, King, Bramhall, Wake, Stillingfleet, and Lawrence: Bishops Ridley, Bilson, Hall, Morton, White, Mountague, Patrick, Taylor, Cosin, Sparrow, Wilson, Beverige, Andrews, Horsley, and others of the mitre; Hammond, Thorndike, Johnson, Bingham, Mead Dodwell, and Leslie, amongst the Priests, besides the whole body of the Oxford Tract Divines, and all their numerous and active disciples, swarming and increasing over the whole land, and continually insisting upon these very doctrines which Mr. Venn finds himself obliged to gainsay.

Again, if the clergy are not Priests they have neither altar nor sacrifice, and they come not nearer to God than the people, neither do they officially intercede for them nor forgive them their sins. Now all these things *are* the prerogatives (real or pretended) of the clergy. They have altars; they speak of their sacrament of the altar as a sacrifice; they per-

andum sit nobis quid proferre et scribere *Sacerdotes* Dei oporteat."—"Existimat *Sacerdotes* non Dei sententiâ ordinari" (Ep. liv.).

This, and other instances, in one Epistle!

* The Canons of the Church of England imitate the Homilies in their reverence for the fathers: e. g. "Forasmuch as *the ancient fathers of the Church*, led by example of the Apostles, appointed prayers and fasts to be used at the solemn ordering of ministers.....we following the holy and religious example do decree, &c. Canon xxxi. The office of Deacon being a step or degree to the ministry, according to the judgment of the ancient fathers and the practices of the primitive Church—we ordain. xxxii. [This Canon, be it remembered, traces the Deacon's office to tradition, and not to the Scriptures.] It hath been long since provided by many decrees of the ancient fathers that none should be admitted Deacon or Priest, who had not some certain place for his functions." xxxiii.

form priestly functions, by offering an oblation in that sacrament; they come nearer to God than the people do, they intercede for them, pray for them, pronounce their sins forgiven, and bless them. These things are done still more strongly and intelligibly in the church of Rome, but still they are done in the church of England, and are pleaded for and upheld by some of the most venerable names that the church of England can enumerate, as may be seen in the *Catena Patrum* published in the fourth volume of the *Oxford Tracts*.

Take a specimen from the *Catena*. Bishop Overall says, "the Eucharist by way of analogy may be called a sacrifice by many of these ways, yet the true and real nature of it in the offertory, is to acknowledge God's majesty and our misery, to appease his wrath towards us, and to make Christ's bloody sacrifice effectual unto us. The people may offer it up all the improper ways, *none but the priest can offer it as a proper sacrifice.*" Bishop Andrews says, "1. The Eucharist ever was, and by us is considered both as a sacrament and a sacrifice. 2. A sacrifice is proper and applicable only to divine worship. 3. The sacrifice of Christ's death did succeed to the sacrifices of the Old Testament. If we agree about the matter of sacrifice, there will be no difference about the altar."

Mr. Venn has, indeed, on another occasion, denied the altar, but the proof of its existence and authenticity is palpable, and as that proof has already been adduced in the controversy on the consecration of churches, it need not here be repeated, more especially as the altar* *must* succeed as a corollary to the priesthood, of which sufficient evidence has now been given.

As the priesthood is the most important, so may it be taken as the last point in the question of ministry which we find it necessary to discuss in opposing the Prelatic theory for which Mr. Venn contends. In human priesthood will be found the master principle of the apostasy; so that where priesthood is established even in the lowest degree, even as low as Mr. Venn would produce it after having strained it through the finest sieve of the low-church party, still it *is* the apostasy, and in it and with it the distinctive life of the Christian kingdom can not co-exist. Here we are at issue with Mr. Venn, and with all sorts and grades of priests; we are at issue first of all with the Bishop of Rome and all his clergy, then with the Archbishop of Canterbury and all his clergy, and after that with all other mimic forms of priesthood in other inferior sections of the apostasy. It is a plain and intelligible question, whether we are to admit the return of Judaism and beggarly elements,—whether abolished Jewish rudiments are again to supersede and displace the finished teaching of the Gospel,—and whether Christ's freemen are again to submit themselves to the yoke of the Mosaic bondage.

The whole kingdom of Christ is a sacerdotal kingdom; it is a population of royal priests (*βασιλευσιν ιερατευμα*), 1 Pet. ii. 9; and every one born into this kingdom, not by the will of man and of the flesh, but by the will of God, is by the necessities of his regeneration a priest, and *must*, as a regenerate child of God, abide forthwith in Aaronic privilege and station, for that is the place of grace and strength appointed for the children by God himself. Heb. x. 19, iv. 16.

To see this and understand it, and abide by it, is no small part of the life of faith; for it is only a clear acceptance of the gospel, an unclouded perception of the absolute forgiveness of sins and of the love of God in Christ Jesus, that can prevent us, if at all awakened to a sense of sin, from turning away from God's salvation to seeking a salvation such

* See the Appendix, No. 2.

as man has invented. It is because professing Christians do not believe in their hearts "the new covenant," that God will *remember no more* the transgressions of those whom he pardons (Heb. viii. 12), that they turn to priests,* and altars, and oblations, and human expiations for help. It is for this reason that priests, sincerely desiring to aid those whom they are appointed to help, endeavour by every means, according to the light that is in them, to save the poor souls that are under their rule; but it is not by teaching them the grace of the gospel, for if that were done clearly, the official priest must immediately disappear, and the distinction between clergy and people be unreservedly disowned. Unbelieving man calls in the aid of a human priest to make up for the deficiency of his faith; and whether that priest exercises his functions in the full-blown grandeur of Papal sacerdocy, the faldstools of Puseyism, or the surplice of an Evangelical Clergyman, still the intercessor, the mediator, the superior friend of God is there; the freedom of access and "boldness with confidence" are unknown; the unity of the body, one in name and privilege, is forgotten; and the house of God becomes divided into a frightful schism of clergymen and laymen, separated from one another by an impertinent wall of Jewish rubbish.

Now ministry seen in its true light, which is indeed nothing but the exercise of the gifts which the Holy Spirit divides to every christian severally as he chooses, is in principle and practice as different from Priesthood as possible. True ministry is the immediate result of the grace of God, and owns for its maker no man, no succession of men, no college, no ordination, no body corporate, no clergyman, no priest. All ordinations of all sorts by man, are to true ministry acts of usurpation that disturb the whole order of the Church, and evert the foundations of the house. Priesthood, or clerisy (for, turn and mould the words as you will, they are still the same) represent man's authority, and man's ideas and contrivances of government, and are consequently in distinct opposition to the government of the Holy Ghost in the Church. Hence we ever find that Priesthood does always suppress the power of the Spirit, and has a constant tendency to deny it. Hence it is that we find Mr. Venn denying that the Bishops do really give the Holy Ghost, and pleading for the channel-doctrine, which we have already examined; and hence it is that the Prayer Book, the imitator of the Missal and the Pontifical, has turned the whole doctrine of the Spirit into words and ceremonies, suppressing the power thereof. Hence they pretend to give the Holy Ghost and to regenerate children in Baptism, and yet they have no evidence of the Spirit to show, though of all things in the rational world the operations of the Spirit are most conspicuous and striking, and effect the most marked change. Hence also in their priestly ordinations, they pretend to give the Spirit and to demand it, when it is incontestably notorious that they who say they are moved by the Holy Ghost are for the most part telling falsehoods, and that they who assume to impart this mighty gift have nothing to give.

These things are done indeed for decency's sake, and to keep up a shew of using the language of the New Testament, though in my judg-

* The Tractators of Oxford see plainly the inseparable connexion between priests and the non-acceptance of justification by faith; hence one of that school thus states the case:—"If it be true, as Calvin taught, that *justification and regeneration are by grace, through faith, irrespective of baptism, priesthood, and the church*,—if this be true, what is the church, what is the PRIESTHOOD, what the sacraments? . . . if this be true, the Priesthood, which alone is authorized to dispense the Gospel, and to minister its sacred mysteries, as God's holy stewardship, is also gone."—*Nehushtan*, p. 36. Rivington.

ment it would be far better wholly to return to Jewish consecrations, to relinquish these formularies nigh akin to blasphemy, and broadly and plainly with washings, anointings, lustrations, and fumigations, wholly to resume Aaronic types and ceremonies, in which nothing was said of spiritual gift.

And here let it be remembered, that there have been two arrangements in the house and worship of God: the first, under the Mosaic Economy, of which the principle was righteousness in the flesh, had a distinct official human priesthood; the second, under the grace of God in the gospel, of which the principle is righteousness by faith, has ministry or service, the direct gift and endowment of the Spirit, by which, certain of the saints, (all of whom are priests in privilege and station,) are called into more immediate actings of service unto Christ and his members, so that if they minister unto Christ or his church in any visible service, they thereby become servants, deacons,* or ministers; the grace and gift of God, through Christ the head of the whole house, calling them into and endowing them for service. Every true Christian has indeed the spirit of Priesthood, and in that spirit is also redeemed into the service of God, for being made free from sin he becomes God's servant (Rom. vi. 22), and he presents his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is his reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1); but over and above this, beyond the general gift of the Spirit, some of the saints, nay, if God will, it may be *all*, are by further spiritual endowment raised up into more distinct service; and whatever may be the form of that ministry (for "showing mercy" is a true part of real ministry, Rom. xii. 8), they do in that form become the known, and visible, and owned ministers and deacons of Jesus Christ. Thus even the office of overseer or Bishop is called deaconry in the Scriptures (compare Acts ii. 17 and 20, in the Greek); and Paul tells Timothy, that good servant of the Lord, whom the traditionists have metamorphosed into a Prelate, that he is a Deacon (see Greek 1 Tim. iv. 6); for the special gift which he had received, had helped him, and strengthened and endowed him into visible ministry, of which we are certain that "enduring hardships" was a pre-eminent prerogative, duty, and privilege; for in this line of his duty Paul told him he would give "full proof of his ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 5).

Now human priesthood had no gift, unless it be asserted that all the house of Aaron and all his descendants "received the Holy Ghost for the work and office of a priest," according to the language of the Prayer Book. They received indeed the holy anointing oil, the type of the true chrism, afterwards to be poured out in reality on all believers, making them thereby Christians or anointed-ones; but the Spirit they received not by virtue of their office and unction. It was a service of sacrifice and incense, expiation, and intercession. It was the continual repetition of an incomplete work, which could not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to their conscience; but afterwards, when the "one sacrifice" of the Son of God swallowed up all Aaronic expiations in its supreme excellence, then the doors of grace flew open as the King of Glory passed through the Heavens, and then came down the divine unction of priesthood to all God's children, and of ministry to those whom the Lord the giver of life selected,—“For when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men;—he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work

* Deacons (*διακονοι*) in the true meaning of the word according to the Scriptures.

of the ministry, for the edifying of the body in love." Eph. iv. "For there are diversities of gifts, but it is the same Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but it is the same Lord; there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all; for 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 gift of healing by the same Spirit, &c., &c.; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will." 1 Cor. xii.

Here, then, surely we can at least discern the difference between priesthood and ministry, and here we are able to comprehend the monstrous things that appear in the ordination of Priests in the Romish and Anglican communions. In the Pontifical and Prayer Book, they have mingled the two dispensations together, and have endeavoured to make an amalgam of Christ and Moses. Returning to Judaism they have restored the human Priest, and made him a distinct mediator and intercessor consecrated for access to God, and for that privilege set apart from the saints: this is in fact ruining the house, and casting down the foundations; but then, having some faint memory through tradition of the origination of ministry in the day of the Son of God, and not having wholly laid aside the language of Scripture, they have brought into their unlawful human priesthood the exceeding impertinence of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and instead of simple oil which they might pour upon their priests in ignorant silence, they have added words to their ritual which are a solemn perpetration of a ceremonious falsehood. "Take thou the Holy Ghost for the work and office of a priest"—and behold they give nothing! Take thou that which is a glorious part of a new creation, more wonderful and brilliant to spiritual discernment than the elaboration of a new star in the abyss of space, and yet abide as thou art, carnal, dark, unsanctified (it may be, and often is), an earth worm of preferment, a slave of avarice, a drudge of mammon. Take thou this gift of the Apostolical succession which made the Apostles for love of their Lord endure hunger and thirst, and buffetings, and be without certain dwellings, and labour working with their own hands, which made them the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things (1 Cor. iv.); but in this gift thus bestowed by our hands receive the abundance of all things, and buffet others as a magistrate and strong one of this world, and live daintily in exquisite dwellings, and in perfect ease, work not thou at all; and receive homage and respect from all, being in the very heart of the reverence of society, and thus perpetuate the succession of the Apostles. Take thou this gift of the Holy Ghost, and in it be an Evangelist, or it may be a Teacher or a Pastor of the saints, and yet remain as thou now art—entirely ignorant of the gospel, distinguishing not at all between saint and sinner, and having nothing wherewith to feed and guide the sheep:—take all this, and receive nothing; thou askest for bread, we give thee a stone—thou seekest a fish, and we give thee a serpent!

These are the things virtually enacted in all dioceses every year in this country; and thus it is, by applying the *language* of ministry to the reality of a human priesthood, they are doing deeds continually which ought to shock the soul of every pious Christian. It is the perception of this deep impropriety, as well as the exigencies of controversy, which has made Mr. Venn endeavour to get rid of priesthood altogether, and to establish ministry on that, which, after all, is, if possible, still worse,—the channel theory; that is, of acting a scene not now really true,

but representing something that *was* true eighteen hundred years ago, at the other end of the channel. All this, however, only makes manifest the hopeless perplexities of clergymen of the Anglican communion, who, called upon to defend their priesthood by the truths of the New Covenant, know not whether they shall take their stand on the Scriptures or tradition, and find themselves, on examination, so embarrassed with the irreconcilable language of the two, that they are constrained by turns to contradict the Scriptures and to reject tradition. In this dilemma there has arisen also, as was inevitable, the strange phenomenon of two parties amongst the clergy, wholly differing from one another in their views of ministry; not but that there always* have been these two parties from the very first, though it is owing mainly to the revival of the Patristic school at Oxford that the glaring difference of the two parties has been again made more manifest. I say it is the revival of the *Patristic* school, for it is owing to the predilection for the Fathers that we see now the great schism in the Establishment. The church of England commenced under the auspices of Cranmer and the influence of his age, as a disciple of the Fathers; this is undeniable by any one who may be acquainted with the Book of Homilies. The reverence for the Fathers, however, gradually declined, and the Calvinistic tendencies largely prevailed, till Archbishop Laud, in the reign of Charles I., again set up the Patristic standard. All his adherents and Bishops were advocates of Patristic doctrines, and consequently repressed the Scriptures. *Tradition*, which is the same as Patristic dogma, then assumed the ascendancy wherever the influence of the court extended. The ruin of the monarchy and the Established church on the death of Charles, drove away all the doctors of tradition into holes and hiding places. The restoration of monarchy partly restored their influence, but the traditionists wanted such a leader as Laud and such a monarch as the first Charles to carry out their gloomy schemes of sacerdotal dominion. In Queen Anne's reign, the church of England was certainly for the most part, enthusiastically Jacobite, and the clergy were generally attached to the memory of Laud, and adored the "blessed martyr king." Politics, however, marred the seriousness of their superstition; and the low estate of their party may be seen in the fact, that a character so worthless and mean as Sacheverell should, for a time, have been either their puppet or their fudge-man. The accession of the first George to the throne secured the ascendancy of Whig politics, and, as a consequence, the depression of the Laudean or high-church spirit. The church of England then lapsed into a state apparently forgetful of its former animosities; the high dignitaries "cared for none of those things;" they were politicians, and they made large fortunes; they sought preferment, and they preached morality for gentlemen; and the inferior clergy, in their less ambitious sphere, followed the squires in the chase and the carouse, and sunk down very low indeed, not only as theologians, but as moralists. The sounding of the trumpet of Methodism awoke the whole body of the clergy from their disgraceful slumber, and there came forth that well known division of the Anglican priesthood, intitled "Evangelical" and "Orthodox." The latter part of

* In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Cartwright, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, taught, amongst other things, in his divinity lectures, that "in ordaining of the ministers the pronouncing those words *receive thou the Holy Ghost* is both ridiculous and wicked."—*Neale's Puritans*, i. 213.

the reign of George III. saw this division most clearly *established*. From about the year 1790 to the year 1830, a period of forty years, more or less, the clergy were bitterly, heartily, and sincerely at warfare amongst themselves. From the year 10, of this century, to the famous era of the Reform Bill, this antipathy was, perhaps, most conspicuous. The *odium theologicum* of the two parties could scarcely be exceeded; the Evangelicals denied that their opponents were Christians, or that they preached or believed the Gospel, nay, they boldly declared that they denied it and opposed it; and the Orthodox asserted that their opponents were dissenters, and that they denied and opposed the doctrines of the Prayer-book. The Bishops hunted down the Evangelical clergy wherever they could find them, and drove them out of their dioceses without measure and without mercy; the Evangelicals used, in common language, thought, and action to make it manifest that they considered their opponents "unconverted," and often have I heard them speak of the dignitaries as if they were heathens; yea, and sometimes they would pray for their "conversion" and "change of heart," as if they were Turks or infidels, though, very possibly, they had from these very persons received the gift of priesthood, with the accompanying pretensions in their clerical ordination!

The alarm of the Reform Bill in 1831 sounded dreadful in the ears of all possessors of ancient immunities; but the Established Clergy most of all quailed under the sound. As Reform made its progress under the new administration, it seemed something more than a threat,—it was the commencement of action against the Established Church, when the Government proposed to extinguish * ten Bishopricks in Ireland. The fear excited by that measure caused the publication of the Oxford Tracts, and the Oxford Tracts have at once revived, and in greater force and seriousness than ever before was known, the patristic dogma amongst the Anglican clergy. Hence, and of necessity, the ancient schism between the Evangelicals and the Orthodox, has been swallowed up in the more important discoveries of the Tractators. The old, somnolent, and decorous party of the Orthodox, which was opposed to spiritual religion, but had no forms of external devotion, and no ascetic ornament to attract the imaginative, or to ensnare the superstitious, which disliked additions as much as it abominated omissions in ritual observances; which cared not for the Fathers, but cleaved close to law, and to Acts of Parliament, has well nigh disappeared, and in its place we see the busy school of the Tractators, well furnished with patristic lore, diligent admirers of antiquity, and students of counsels; bringing forth enthusiastically every thing that can in any way aggrandize the sacerdotal caste, beautifying churches, asserting their holiness, studying the mysticism of their architecture, depressing the pulpit (as an

* The Rev. Arthur Perceval, a chief promoter of the Oxford Tracts, has traced the union of the Tractators to the alarm caused by that event. He says they met in consequence, to concert measures in July, 1833, and that the publication of the Oxford Tracts was the result. "This monstrous act," says he, "had the effect of awakening some who till then had slumbered in the secure and easy confidence that the Church had nothing to fear from the State, into whatever hands the management of the latter might fall; and it set those whose attention had long been partially alive to the difficulties and dangers of the time, upon considering whether some combined efforts might not or could not be made, with the hope, if possible, even at that late hour, to arrest the fatal measures, or at any rate, to offer resistance to further outrage upon the Church, on either side of the channel."

instrument of Puritanical oratory), exalting the altar (as the true platform of priestly functions), augmenting the ceremonies, the pomp, and the glare of ritual services, and casting backward with scorn and horror every item of *Evangelical* doctrine, as "ultra-protestant," and opposed to "antiquity." This school has found out a secret effectually to weaken "the Evangelical" party, which is already weakened beyond what any one could have ventured to predict, in so short a time. This phenomenon is somewhat to be explained by the decay of piety, and increase of worldliness in the party, (so that Puseyism has now more to shew for *devotees* by far, than can be found amongst the other section;) but it is also to be traced to the strong influence of sacerdotal views boldly stated, which ever must exercise a powerfully attractive force on persons who suppose themselves to be consecrated, even in the lowest degree, into a clerical body.

Still, however, the Evangelical party, though crippled and diminished, is not destroyed; and continuing to exist in such new circumstances, it now finds itself farther than ever from agreement with those whom we must consider as representing the high Church party. The Record newspaper, the avowed organ of the Evangelicals, is continually denouncing the Clergy of the Oxford school as Papists, and avowed enemies of the Protestant Reformed religion as by law established. The Tractators, in their turn, consider the Evangelicals, in the fullest and most serious sense of the word, *heretics*; and thus we have two sections of the Clergy differing in essential points of doctrine, and in many and important points of practice.

Now, for brevity's sake, we may lay it down, that whatever tends to elevate the sacerdotal order in doctrine or practice is *patristic*—is traditional; the assertion of priesthood and its offices is therefore directly or indirectly, the general object of all the Oxford Tracts; and all their views of the sacraments will be found to bear upon this question; nay, all their ideas of devotion, in every way, are intimately connected with it; so that piety, with them, cannot exist without priesthood, nor communion with God apart from the Levitical order. What has the Evangelical party to oppose to this? Absolutely nothing; so embarrassed are they with the Prayer Book, the Canons, and their own ordination. Mr. Venn, who appears to be of an eclectic class amongst the Clergy,—dubiously Evangelical, and timidly Puseyistic,—has tried his hand in adjusting matters, and has endeavoured to construct a *via media* by accumulating all sorts of excuses, concessions, and expedients. But there can be no *via media*; it is either the Levitical elements of sacerdotaly, or it is not—it is either canonical clerisy, or it is not—it is either patristic priesthood, or it is not; if we deny the Priesthood, we cease to be churchmen; if we assert it, we leave the Scriptures and fall back on tradition; but Mr. Venn dares not in *this* controversy take this position; hence all his ambiguities, difficulties, and contradictions, and that chiefly because he has undertaken the hopeless task of convincing christians, who will hear nothing as authority but the word of God, and who, as he knows, treat ecclesiastical history chiefly as affording evidence of the apostasy of Christendom.

And truly it is instructive to discover, at this time of day, that the clergy of the Establishment are not yet agreed about their own ministry. They have not yet authoritatively determined whether they are priests, or they are not. The greater part accept the Prayer Book in the plain meaning of the words, and doubt not their priesthood; but many deny it, and protest against the ideas of Levitical sacerdotaly, unquestionably inherited from the Papal Church. Hence we find the Bishop of Lincoln

thus expressing his opinion on the subject:—"The distinction of the Clergy from the Laity, and of orders among the clergy, arose out of the necessities of that frail compound, spiritual and sensual—*human nature*; not out of any designed imitations of the Mosaic institutions. After it had been once established, we might naturally expect to find the language of the Old Testament respecting the Jewish Priesthood applied to the Christian; at first, only in the way of analogy, but subsequently, perhaps, *to promote the interested views of ambitious men.*" (Preface to Tertullian, xviii.) This is indeed a hard blow at the fathers,* seeing that Jerome, Chrysostom, and other great ones of the patristic chair continually "apply the language of the Old Testament respecting the Jewish Priesthood to the christian," but it is possible that Dr. Kaye may have taken another view of the subject since the year 1826, when these sentiments were published.

On the other hand, hear Bishop Horsley:—"In the language of our modern sectaries, every one is a High Churchman, who is not unwilling to recognise *the spiritual authority of the Priesthood*; every one who, denying what we ourselves disclaim, any thing of a divine right in temporalities, acknowledges however *in the sacred character* somewhat *more divine* than may belong to the mere hired servants of the state, or the laity; and regards the service, which we are thought to perform for our pay, as something more than a part to be gravely played in the drama of human politics. My reverend Brethren, we must be content to be High Churchmen according to the usages of the word, or **WE CANNOT AT ALL BE CHURCHMEN** Much charitable allowance is to be made for the errors of the laity, upon points to which it is hardly to be expected they should turn their attention. . . . but for those who have been nurtured in the bosom of the Church, and have gained admission to the Ministry, if, from a mean compliance with the humour of the age, or ambitious for the fame of liberality of sentiment, they affect to join in *the disavowal of the authority which they share*, or are silent when the validity of their divine commission is called in question—for any (I hope there are few) who hide this weakness of faith, *this poverty of religious principle*, under the attire of gown and cassock, they are, in my estimation, little better than *infidels in masquerade.*"

This, again, falls hard upon those who disavow the priesthood; and

* Take as an example the doctrine of Jerome:—"And that we may know the apostolic traditions to have been drawn from the Old Testament, that which Aaron and his sons and the Levites were in the Temple, the same lot the Bishops, the Presbyters, and the Deacons, claim to themselves in the Church." As these few words contain the master principle of the apostacy, they should be seen in the original:—"Et ut sciamus traditiones apostolicas sumptas de Veteri Testamento, quod Aaron et filii ejus atque Levitæ in templo fuerunt, hoc sibi et Presbyteri et Diaconi vindicent in Ecclesia." Epis. Evagrius.

This sentiment continually occurs in the Canon law: indeed the term "Levite" is very commonly used in the decretals as synonymous with "Deacon;" and in the Pontifical the Bishop tells the Deacon that he is entering into the Levitical order. Many, very many of the Anglican Doctors have asserted the same thing, and their testimony to this point will be found in the fourth vol. of the Oxford Tracts. In their other volumes, however, we find this incidentally stated; take the following: Tract, No. 65, p. 16,—*The blessing of Levi*, Deut. xxxiii. 11. "Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands. Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not up again." This is a prophetic declaration of the *dreadful punishment of such as shall oppose the (Christian) Priesthood.* This is from Bishop Wilson.

thus, having arrayed Bishop against Bishop, we will proceed to another view of the subject.

On a retrospect of the ground we have now passed over, it might be satisfactorily evinced, to every candid mind, that Mr. Venn has failed in establishing his case; for if he has not succeeded in proving, from the Scriptures, the ministry of his own sect, he has manifestly missed his object, which was, not so much to convince us of error by Scriptural proof, as to leave us without excuse for our separation from the Establishment. He has argued the case as an Anglican priest, and has demanded adhesion to the Anglican communion. His arguments for this object have been examined and found wanting, so that we might, indeed, here close the controversy, and leave untouched his animadversions on the ministry of the word of God; but as the question will be more firmly settled by affirmative as well as by negative proof, we may add a few words on Mr. Venn's remarks on the Scripture statement of Christian ministry.

It is, however, but briefly that we shall do this, and only to shew, by one or two instances, the unsoundness of Mr. Venn's comments on this part of the question. Mr. Venn selects the case of the household of Stephanas.—“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” (1 Cor. xvi. 15).

There are two points at which Mr. Venn labours in this passage; 1st., to make out that “ministry” here means only any service of any sort, but not Mr. Venn's ministry, i. e., teaching and administering the sacraments. And, 2ndly., that the ambiguous and evasive word *addict*, obviously selected by the translators to conceal an inconvenient fact, is the true and proper translation. (1st Lecture, p. 48.)

In this particular question, then, let it be remembered, that “ministry” in Scripture language indicating any service of the saints, and including in the ample range of its meaning, teaching, gifts of healing, prophecy, government, help, exhortation, shewing mercy, hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, &c., &c., &c.; and seeing that in the passage before us, they of the house of Stephanas are said to have appointed themselves to “the ministry,” it is, of course, open to conjecture, or at any rate must be left in uncertainty, in what particular way they had given themselves to the ministry of the church. I would not assert positively that it was “teaching,” that gift which Mr. Venn is so eager to appropriate to his “priests,” but I must strongly object to Mr. Venn's denying that it was teaching, merely because he does not wish it to be so. The household of Stephanas (some manuscripts add, “the household of Fortunatus” also), may have been numerous; the expression is indefinite, and we can not now pretend to conjecture even the relationship they bore to Stephanas; they may have been his sons or brothers, or his slaves or servants; but whoever they were, and whatever may have been their number, they had appointed themselves to the ministry. Paul tells us they had done so; he desires the Corinthians to submit themselves to them and to all such, and he esteems them as persons who helped with him and laboured with him.” (1 Cor. xvi. 16.)

When, then, I find Paul making these plain statements, and giving these intelligible directions, I can not but see a strong probability, at least, that teaching and exhorting were portions of their ministry, particularly as Paul says they helped with him, and laboured with him. Submission is a duty so palpably relative to teaching, leading, guiding, exhorting, that it is, of all conjectures, that which would recommend itself to a candid mind, to suppose that there were teachers in this house;

and, indeed, it is only the determined spirit of system that could lead any one to reject the supposition.

For the second point, Mr. Venn endeavours to establish the questionable word "addict," as we read it in our Bibles. The original is *ταροω*, and as the translators have in other places rendered it by the word *ordain* (Rom. xiii. 1, Acts xiii. 48), they might safely* here have given us this meaning. But if this had not suited their tastes, why not favor us with the true meaning,—“appointed themselves?” The reason is obvious; they had ecclesiastical motives and *commands* to attend to in their translation, and wherever it is a question of ministry they have at least been wary in their renderings of the original. Supposing the true meaning had stood, and we had read it thus,—“the house of Stephanas appointed themselves to the ministry,”—a feeling would have been excited in the minds of many, that the saints might *appoint themselves to the ministry*, and thus the doctrine and practice of the Established Church would have been undermined. By the ambiguous rendering “addict,” which it is not very easy clearly to grasp, but which has a sort of distant relation, as a consequence, to appointment, it is left uncertain whether they had not already been ordained into the office of priesthood, and were not after all only good parish priests executing their functions; and this gloss Mr. Venn ultimately embraces in case he should be driven out of his other ingenious interpretations. “The expression would not necessarily mean that they invested themselves with *the office*, but MIGHT signify that they gave themselves up to *the office* to which they had been already appointed” (p. 49).

Observe, however, the carefulness of this sentence; Mr. Venn assumes “the office” as an established matter of fact, taking it for granted that there was an office of teachers to which the saints must be regularly and canonically appointed. “It does not necessarily mean,” says he, “that they *invested themselves with the office* ;” when the very point to be proved, is, whether there existed any such office at all. Mr. Venn can, as a Clergyman, talk properly enough of the “work and *office of a priest*,” for it is in the Prayer-Book; but there is nothing of this sort in the New Testament.

With similar thoughtfulness (p. 48.), Mr. Venn thus represents the deduction of his opponents on the passage before us:—“From this it is argued that a man might *ordain himself* to the ministry.” No one ever did so “argue;” the argument is this, that ordination by any person, and in any way, and under any circumstances, is an imposture, or, at the very best, a pitiable delusion; a sound-minded Christian would as little think of ordaining himself as of tattooing himself; but a rightly-instructed Christian, having received a gift according to the grace given him, would feel no scruple in appointing himself to the service of the saints, whether it might be by teaching, or any other work of faith or labour of love. Or, to put the matter still more accurately, he would require no appointment, nor seek it, nor, if offered, receive it; but, having the gift, he would exercise it according to the grace of God, considering the gift and the help of the Spirit to be the appointment and the true warrant for his ministry.

* Calvin thus translates the passage: “Hortor autem vos, Fratres, nòstis domum Stephanæ, primitias esse Achaia, atque ut se in ministerium sanctorum ordinaverint.”

Vulgate “in ministerium Sanctorum ordinaverunt seipsos?”

The distribution of the various gifts of ministry, recorded in Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xii., and Eph. iv., Mr. Venn has been obliged to touch, as he knows that in those chapters chiefly there is direct teaching on the subject-matter of his lectures, and that from those chapters, mainly, the Christians whom he opposes have derived evidence sufficient to convince them that all the forms of existing ministry by man's appointment are but variations of the great apostasy. We will now close the reply by going over Mr. Venn's representation of the gifts.

"The principle that the Apostle lays down, viz., that it is a shame for women to speak in the church, forbids them to speak *at all* in public, except when under the influence of inspiration (see 1 Cor. xi. 5): but the utmost that can be inferred from such a principle is, that *men may speak* in public, but *in what way is not determined* (Mr. Venn's italics). Now we may, PERHAPS, conclude from the direction given to the women to ask their husbands *at home* whatever they wished to learn, that men might *ask questions*, which is a totally different thing from preaching and teaching." (1st Lecture, p. 54).

It requires not much sagacity to see that Mr. Venn has here stumbled on something which requires very dexterous handling; for he concedes that according to this portion of Scripture, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, the men, that is, the male part of the congregation, might speak in their assemblies of worship, only, says he, it is not determined *in what way* they were to speak: he then, by a most adventurous conjecture, concludes with a "perhaps" that it merely means that men might "ask questions;" and the next step is, according to custom, immediately to argue upon the conjecture as a proved fact, concluding triumphantly that this was "a totally different thing from preaching and teaching."

Here, however, we must go a little more slowly than Mr. Venn. He concedes that the men might, in some undetermined way, speak in the public meetings; well, then, in the same chapter, Paul says to the Corinthians, "every one of you hath a doctrine" (v. 26.); put these two things together, and the conclusion is so plain that it will be no easy task to perplex it. If the men might speak, and if they commonly brought forth "doctrine" in their meetings, they spoke, or might speak with doctrine; and if they spoke with doctrine, they preached or taught; and if they spoke doctrine, they required no ordained priests for this work, as it was a spiritual gift to any that received it. Here there is no ambiguity, the matter is plain and perspicuous to any one, and a volume of "conjectures" would not be able to smother the fact.

Mr. Venn argues, that the women were commanded to ask questions of their husbands *at home* (v. 35); and as it is *not determined* how the men spoke in public, THEREFORE we may conclude that the men asked questions only in public meetings! This conclusion can scarcely be perused without a smile.

Let us, however, follow Mr. Venn in his picture of public worship, for it is unique.

1st, "The male part of the congregation used to ask questions" (1st Lect. p. 54).

2d, The men used to pray when they liked (p. 54); whether from the Prayer Book or not, Mr. Venn does not inform us.

3d, The Prophets prophesied (p. 55).

4th, "Individuals" used "to sing psalms for the edification of the rest" (p. 58).

5th, The teachers or clergymen used to preach sermons (p. 58); and Mr. Venn assures us, that they used to come "prepared for teaching" (p. 59), by which, if I understand the expression aright, they either wrote down their sermons, or got them off by heart.

5th, Some of the Christians who had the gift of tongues had to come "prepared to exercise their gift" (p. 59). This looks very much like getting off a lesson in Greek, Latin, or Syriac, or whatever the tongue might be. I know not what else this "preparation" can mean.

7th, The interpreters were "ready to act as interpreters;" and those who sang psalms were likewise prepared for their functions; but in what way is not stated, only that we see "preparation" to have been a great part of the whole system.

In this curious picture of public worship, Mr. Venn seems to forget two things which he ought not as a Clergyman ever to have divulged, 1st, that there were many teachers or priests in one church, and that, according to him, they used to preach several sermons in one meeting; 2dly, that the whole order of worship was wholly unlike any thing in the Establishment; nay, so unlike is Mr. Venn's picture to the reality of the ceremonies performed in his own Church, so utterly dissimilar in every respect, that one would think even Mr. Venn must see the hardship of expecting us to give in our adhesion to *his* mode of worship, which he himself has thus carefully proved to us that it bears no sort of resemblance to the original pattern.

What would Mr. Venn say if half-a-dozen "men" or more, one after another, rose up in St. Peter's Church to "ask questions" of the elder after he had preached his *prepared* sermon? Or if, here and there, several "men," one after another, rose up to pray as they listed? and then, when they had done, others started up to "sing psalms?" This was the Apostolical practice Mr. Venn assures us, and that by the command of the Apostle; and yet, I suspect, that if the "men" thus indulged themselves in "Apostolical" practices, in St. Peter's Church, they would be marched off to the Magistrate's office, and heavily fined for "disturbing the congregation."

Mr. Venn indeed seems to have had some little foresight of these consequences, and therefore he states on his own authority, without attempting to prove it from Scripture, that though "the men" "might pray and ask questions in public," yet, that they "had not a right on every occasion to exercise such a privilege, without the sanction of their Shepherds, Overseers, and Rulers." Let, however, this canon stand for argument's sake, the case will not be at all mended, for as we see that these things were commonly and constantly done in the Corinthian Church, and are never done in the Church of England, it can not but follow, that the Corinthian "Shepherds, Overseers, and Rulers," had very different views from the "Shepherds, Overseers, and Rulers," of the Church of England; which, indeed, without this proof, few persons would care to deny.

Amongst the concessions freely made by Mr. Venn, none is more surprising than his yielding the duty of preaching the gospel "to those without." This, he says, is "not only a privilege, but a duty of every Christian" (1st Lect. p. 52). His reasons for coming to these conclusions are sound and scriptural, and seem to be taken, without reserve, from the tracts of his opponents: but in making this concession he will have to contend with clerical law and canonical decisions, which are wholly against him; he will have to face his own Prayer Book which allows no such latitude, and to fight it out with the whole *vespiary* of the Oxford Tractators, who, by the Fathers, the Bishops, the Priests, and the Doctors, will here convict him of downright heresy, and cry him down as a Dissenter.

In the ceremony of Ordination of Deacons, "the Bishop gives to the candidates the New Testament, saying,

"Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and

to preach the same, if thou be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself." So that not even the Deacons may preach the Gospel, unless they are licensed by the Bishop *after* their ordination.

Here then, indeed, comes in the grand question for a Clergyman to solve, and for which Mr. Venn would find it no easy matter to find a solution, after this his most unclerical admission,—“how shall they preach unless they be *sent*?” This is the question which Paul puts, Rom. x. 15, and bearing directly and exclusively on *preaching the Gospel*, and that too to them that are without, that is, to all who have not yet believed with the heart unto righteousness (read from ver. 6 to end of 15). We find no difficulty in answering the question, by referring to the gift of “Evangelist,” Eph. iv. 11, given by the Spirit, in sovereign distribution of grace, according as it pleaseth him to divide to every man severally as he will (1 Cor. xii. 11). Mr. Venn, however, has laboured to undermine the doctrine of gifts, that in its place he may establish his three orders, and therefore he must give a clear account to the Clergy of the principle on which he now concedes the duty of the Evangelist to all believers, particularly as “the Evangelist” stands in a conspicuous place in the Scriptural list, having precedence before “the pastors and teachers.” Eph. iv. 11.

Those well known words, “How shall they preach unless they be sent?” have times innumerable been applied by Priests to their own sacerdotal caste; it is one of the saws of the Clergy, one of their favorite perversions of Scripture; few texts have been more in use for denouncing “sectaries,” and for condemning “conventicles.” It is one of their most approved scarecrows; indeed I know none that has been more of use to them in guarding their enclosure from the intrusion of Dissenters, unless it be Heb. v. 4. So that now we require of Mr. Venn to inform us how all Christians may, nay “ought” to preach the Gospel to all that are without, and how this can stand with the prerogative of the “sent” class, the Apostolical order, and the three grades?

Hear now the Oxford Tractators; *they* know what they say, and they tell us that the sacerdotal ministrations of the altar is inseparably connected with preaching the Gospel.—“It is observable that in Scripture all the words denoting a minister of the Gospel throw us back on the commission; such for instance as the word *Apostle*, or “the sent,” which title is repeated with a remarkable frequency and emphasis, and united, in one instance, with the awful and high expression ‘as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.’ And the word *preaching*, as now used, has a meaning attached to it derived from modern notions, which we shall not find in Scripture. A preacher indeed properly conveys the same idea as *Apostle*, and really signifies the same thing—a herald; for of course all the office of a herald depends on him that sent him, and not so much on himself, or his mode of delivering his message. All other words in like manner adopted in the church, speak the same; they all designate him as one ministering or serving at GOD’S ALTAR, not as one whose first object it is to be useful to men, such for instance are the appellations of *diaconus*, *sacerdos*; it is curious that our word ‘minister,’ implying also the same (that is, deacon and priest), comes to be commonly used in the other sense, being applied, like that of preacher, to self-created teachers. Thus do men’s opinions invest sacred appellations with new meanings, according to the change in their own views.” (Tracts for the Times, No. 87, p. 74.)

These priests, therefore, tell us consistently, that preaching the Gospel is for Bishops, priests, and deacons only, and that ministers or servants of the Gospel, that is, those who serve God in preaching the Gospel, are only those and can be only those who minister at God’s altar;

in other words they are of the Levitical caste. Not so Mr. Venn; for the writings of his opponents have convinced him of the necessity of asserting the contrary. I am not, however, ignorant of the answer that might, and probably would be made, as the last possible hope of escaping from the horns of this dilemma; and it is this, that the duty of preaching the Gospel to "them that are without" would not interfere with any clerical prerogatives in the kingdom of Great Britain, and, indeed, no where in Episcopal Christendom; for as the sprinkling of infants with water is duly and canonically administered wherever there is the succession of Bishops (no matter whether they be Popish or Anglican or of the Greek church), and as all persons so sprinkled are truly and substantially "the elect people of God," the duty of preaching the Gospel is not to be taken up by "every Christian" in these regions, but only amongst Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics.

That Mr. Venn has some such answer as this in reserve, I conjecture from his remarks on the preaching of dissenting* ministers, and also from these ominous words in another place, "the ministers of the church of England claim authority over ALL Christians in England; and the Bishop of every diocese claims the chief spiritual power throughout the diocese: this is a Scriptural position." (2nd Lecture, p. 131.)

Here, then, of course, we have to ask Mr. Venn to explain his idea of a Christian. Is an unconverted unbelieving person, duly sprinkled in his infancy by a canonical priest, but living in sin, and careless of God, and ignorant of Christ, a Christian? It would be important to receive a circumstantial answer to this question, which, at the same time, would be an explanation of Mr. Venn's views about baptismal regeneration, though I do not anticipate that Mr. Venn will care to give such an explanation. Other questions also we should ask.

1. Is the baptism of Dissenters valid? Are holy men who have been baptized amongst the Dissenters, Christians?

2. Do persons become Christians without faith?

3. Are conversion, a change of heart, and regeneration (manifested by a belief of the heart unto righteousness), requisite to our being truly Christians?

4. Are children in canonical baptism born again of the Spirit? do they in their baptism become members of Christ and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?

Till Mr. Venn answers these questions circumstantially, we must, in some uncertainty, argue with him the point before us. This, however, is certain; the Dissenters, uncanonically baptized, are either Christians or they are not. If they *are* Christians, then the clerical ordination of Mr. Venn's sect, and the imprescriptible validity of its sacraments, are invalidated, and persons may become christians without the clergy of

* "The blessing God gives to the ministry of the dissenting ministers is no sure sign that he approves of and honors their *irregularity*." (2nd Lecture, p. 115.)

† It is doubtful whether Mr. Venn had foreseen this dilemma, or had sufficiently considered the delicate question of the Christianity of the Dissenters, whose Christianity he seems tacitly to allow, though with much contradiction; for when he says (1st Lecture, p. 52) that it is the duty of every Christian "to preach and teach Christ to those *without the church*, i. e. Jews, heathens, &c.," he apparently allows the Dissenters to be within the church, unless, indeed, they are implicated in the convolutions of *et cætera*, for Mr. Venn's *et cæteras* have sometimes a pregnant meaning in them, which an inexperienced examiner of his words would little suspect. In Lecture I. p. 65, Mr. Venn says, "I do not enter into the question whether or no the blessings of Christ in his ordinance of baptism will

the Church of England. Moreover, as "the sacrament of baptism" is administered by the dissenting ministers, then the sacrament is duly administered by them, and the end of the sacrament answered, which, according to the Prayer Book, is this, to make those christians who were not so before. But if Dissenters uncanonically baptized are *not* christians, then it becomes a duty for every christian, according to Mr. Venn's own canon, to preach the gospel to them, as to persons "without."

Which of these alternatives will Mr. Venn select? Truly it matters not; neither, indeed, if he could altogether surmount this difficulty, would the case be mended; for still, by his own concession, as it is the duty of every christian to preach the gospel to them that are without, i. e. Jews, heathen, &c., it would be right for unordained Christians to go and preach it to the heathen; it would be right for unordained Christians, passing by the Bishop of Calcutta and his Clergy, to preach the gospel to the Hindoos and Mahometans; it would be right for laymen to preach it to the Hottentots and Caffres in our South African colony; it would be right for laymen to preach it to the Jews in Houndsditch and Old Jewry! And what could the Bishops of Calcutta and of the Cape of Good Hope and of London say to all this? I need not say, that all true clergymen would cry out against such a latitude as eminently and dangerously sectarian.

Seeing, therefore, that Mr. Venn has conceded that—

1st, Any man might pray in the public meetings for worship (1st Lect. p. 52);

2nd, That it is "not only the privilege, but the duty of every Christian, to take every possible opportunity of teaching and preaching Christ to those without" (1st Lect. p. 52);

We come to this conclusion, that he has been constrained to give up two points, which, when granted, evert the order of the Church of England, and by consequence decide the verdict in favor of his opponents; the point at issue between us being this, whether the ministry and order of the Church of England is such as that Mr. Venn may on good grounds demand our adhesion to his communion.

Baptism.—In the Section on Baptism (1st Lect. p. 62), Mr. Venn avoids the question, whether "the blessing of Christ in his ordinance of baptism will or *can* be conveyed in any other channel than that which he has himself appointed," i. e., the succession of Prelates: he, however, lays it down that it ought to be confined to "the Shepherds of the flock" to administer the ordinance, for without this rule there would "be no security whatever against improper admissions; and moreover, it must soon become uncertain what are the limits of the fold itself." Here, again, by shrinking from Puseyism, Mr. Venn falls back on other ground and reasons, which mean nothing. What, we may justly ask, mean "these improper admissions?" Do not the "Shepherds of the flock," i. e., the Parish Priests, baptize the whole parish? do they not baptize illegitimate children, children of harlots, drunkards, infidels, and all sorts of evil cha-

or *can* be conveyed through any other channel than that which he himself has appointed" (i. e. the Episcopal succession). Yet this is the very question into which Mr. Venn should have entered, defining also clearly what he means by "the blessings of Christ" in the ordinance of baptism. It is a suspicious circumstance, when a special advocate dares not touch the main principle of one of the chief points in dispute.

racters? do they ever think of refusing baptism to any? and how indeed could they? for let a Parishioner be a notorious infidel, and a man of the worst character, and his wife like himself, yet, according to the Prayer Book they would be both Christians, for they had been born again in Baptism, and made members of Christ, heirs of God, and "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven? Their children, therefore, are "holy," and are entitled to baptism even on stricter views of this question than Mr. Venn's Church acknowledges. But, in fact, baptism is a parish ceremony; it is a sprinkling of the multitude, a rhapsody of the mob; it takes in every one born into the parish, if only their parents choose it; and it is on this rite that Mr. Venn claims "ALL Christians in England" as belonging to the fold of the Establishment.

Again then, we may ask what may, what *can*, mean these "improper admissions?" for there can be no question of impropriety when the whole world is to be admitted.

Again: who can define "the limits of the fold itself?" What are these limits? The Church of England claims every baptized person in the whole realm; there is no line between the Church and the world in the Establishment: the world is the Church there, and the Church the world. How can it stretch its limits beyond this? and if a Clergyman sees every person in his parish brought into the fold of the Establishment by baptism, what more can he want? He that has all can scarcely desire more.

Mr. Venn touches lightly on lay-baptism:—he says it was in *certain circumstances* permitted in the Church at an *early period*; but the Church of England "declares that it is not lawful for any one to administer it, unless he be duly called."

I care not here to enter into the question of lay-baptism in ecclesiastical history, though Mr. Venn has indeed sadly understated the fact, seeing that not only the Church at an early period, but in all periods, *constantly* permitted it where the case was urgent; or to use the words of Hooker in his Ecclesiastical polity, "If baptism be seriously administered in the same element and with the same form of words which Christ's institution teacheth, there is *no other defect in the world* can make it frustrate, or deprive it of the nature of a sacrament." But in the assertion that the Church of England declares baptism to be *unlawful* unless administered by one "duly called," i.e., especially ordained, Mr. Venn is singularly unfortunate, seeing that the Courts Christian of this country have lately decided the contrary, and that Her Majesty's Council, in an elaborate* and most masterly judgment, has confirmed the decision. This decision, too, be it observed, has all turned on Ecclesiastical Law, and the interpretation of the Rubrics of the Prayer Book; so that by Ecclesiastical law, referred on appeal to the Queen as head of the Church, it is virtually decided, that "baptism, administered by persons not canonically ordained, is valid and has the nature of a sacrament." This is law, and to this law Mr. Venn must submit: or if he should be disposed practically to dispute its force, he will find himself mulcted with heavy penalties, and will also be "suspended for three months from all discharge and function of his clerical offices;" and if he should still resist, he will then be deposed from his clerical functions, cure of souls, and preferment; having in addition to pay more costs to the ecclesi-

* See judgment of Escott v. Mastin, July, 1842. The plaintiff, the Rev. T. S. Escott, Vicar of Gedney, was nonsuited with costs, and was suspended from his clerical functions for three months. Appendix, No. 3.

astical courts, than even a Clergyman of the deepest Oxford tinge would care to sustain.

We now turn to the Scriptures: and here indeed we have two pages of strange dialectics (1st Lect. p. 66, 67). In all the cases which Mr. Venn argues, the case is thus stated by him:—The New Testament does *not* tell us that those who baptized were *not* ordained, **THEREFORE** they were ordained. “The case of the multitudes baptized by St. Paul’s companions is referred to. But it must be proved—and there is not a shadow of proof to bring forward—that such of St. Paul’s companions as baptized the converts were **NOT** ordained.” So says Mr. Venn, and by this line of logic does he prove his position, “that it is not lawful for any unordained person to take upon him the office of administering the sacrament of Baptism.”

Let us illustrate this argument thus:—Suppose **A** asserts that he can prove from Scripture that the moon is made of chalk. **B** denies this; and on this point they are at issue. **B** brings forward all the texts of Scripture in which the moon is mentioned, and **shews** that there is not in any one of them any intimation that the moon is made of chalk. **A** replies, that in all these texts there is “not a shadow of proof” to shew that the moon is **NOT** made of chalk, and **THEREFORE** it is clearly proved that it is. **Q. E. D.**

This is precisely Mr. Venn’s line of argument on the question of lay-baptism as stated in the New Testament. Take another instance:—“The case of Cornelius,” says Mr. Venn, “is appealed to, whom Peter commanded to be baptized. Acts x. 48. But there were six brethren from Joppa, who accompanied Peter, and why **MIGHT NOT** one or more of these have been Evangelists or Elders? It is a mere assumption to say that these were all laymen. Again! it can not be shewn that Philip was **NOT** at that time either an Elder or an Evangelist.” True; neither can it be shewn that Philip was not an Archdeacon, for tradition says he was a Deacon, and after this it would be but an easy transition to make him an Archdeacon: and thus too in the case of certain brethren who accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius, and who perhaps baptized the household, it can **NOT** be shewn that they were *not* Bishops, or any thing else you choose; but if this is all that Mr. Venn has to shew for his clerical prerogative of baptizing, he will convince very few even in the Establishment.

I must, however, make one remark on the word * Evangelist: Mr. Venn seems to use it as synonymous with his Elder or Priest, but certainly with a restriction of the true meaning that can not be defended by any sound criticism. *He that preaches the Gospel is an Evangelist*; and as Mr. Venn has conceded the point, that it is the duty of all Christians to “take every possible opportunity of preaching the Gospel to them that are without,” he has in fact placed *all* believers in the exercise of this grand duty on an equality with the Apostles, for the commission to them was, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gos-

* In Lect. II. p. 75, Mr. Venn states that the following offices have never been withdrawn from the Church: “Apostles (i.e., chief Governors, or Bishops), *Evangelists* (or Missionaries), and the Pastors and Teachers (i.e., Elders and Priests).” It matters not who these Evangelists or Missionaries may be, a point which Mr. Venn has no where resolved, for though he seems to give them a place above his Priests, yet this is certain, that every one who preaches the gospel with Evangelistic gift is an Evangelist, and whosoever has this gift ought to use it, as Mr. Venn himself declares.

pel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark. xvi. 15.

He that has received the gift of an Evangelist, and is by the Head of the Church empowered to preach the Gospel, shares in the exercise of this gift with the very Apostles themselves; not that an Evangelist is in the high sense of the word an Apostle, but as preaching the Gospel was a prime duty and chief work of the Apostles, so he that preaches the Gospel with power unto the souls of men does indeed take part in the work in which the Apostles themselves were engaged; and it is for this reason that Paul calls all such his fellow-labourers, fellow-workers, and fellow-soldiers. The duty of preaching the Gospel, or labouring as an Evangelist, which thus stands so high in the New Testament, and which Mr. Venn concedes to unordained or lay Christians, will indeed afford an incidental proof, that the right of "administering the sacrament of baptism," can claim only a secondary place; for as we find all believers made equal with the Apostles, so far forth as "preaching the Gospel" reaches, and as we find Peter leaving the act of baptism to be performed by others in the house of Cornelius, and Paul declaring that God did not send him to baptize *but to preach the Gospel*, so that he says he baptized but very few, (1 Cor. i. 14—17,) it follows plainly, that preaching the Gospel is held in the higher place by far, and by consequence, that baptizing can not be fenced off from the Evangelists as if it were too holy and sacred a rite for them to perform.

Indeed, all the language about "the sacrament of baptism," and all things that the Church of Rome teaches concerning it, and the Church of England too, copying its mother and mistress, we unhesitatingly reject. We deny the word *sacrament*; and every dogma, rite, and precept of the Church of England on this subject, we utterly repudiate and put away from us, as we find that the Church of England is here wholly on the ground of tradition, and widely distant from the Scriptures.

Mr. Venn, however, has apparently made an oversight in stating that it "can not be shewn that Philip was *not* an Evangelist;" he might have said plainly that he was one, for he is so called in Acts xxi. 8; and the very chapter which records the fact of his baptizing the Eunuch, tells us that he went into Samaria "preaching Christ," "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God." Surely, then, he was an Evangelist; why then does Mr. Venn hesitate to assert it? Is it because Philip in Acts xxi. is called "one of the seven," i.e., one of those appointed at Jerusalem to serve tables? Acts vi. 5. Philip would thus be in the language of the traditionists "a Deacon," but even then he might canonically baptize; for the Prayer Book tells us that "a Deacon may baptize *infants* in the absence of the Priest, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop."—*Ordering of Deacons*.

We do not, however, find in the New Testament that Philip, or any Deacon, or any Priest, or any Bishop, or any Apostle, "baptized infants." If such a fact is anywhere recorded, Mr. Venn will doubtless be glad to point it out.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.—As we are come to this last, though most important point of clerical assumption, "the administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," we are astonished to find the nothingness of argument with which Mr. Venn defends his position,—(1st Lect. p. 67,) that "it is not lawful for any unordained person to take upon him the office of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the congregation." In the following words Mr. Venn thus establishes his canon, and they are words which demand much attention.

"It is not, *perhaps*, so obvious, that the Lord's Supper should never

be administered except by the Pastors of the flock, as that baptism ought not; and, moreover, there is not, *perhaps*, so *distinct a commission* given to the Rulers of the Church to administer the one, as there was to administer the other. Nevertheless, the most sacred nature of the ordinance SEEMS TO REQUIRE that it should only be administered under solemn circumstances, and under due regulations; whilst in all public assemblies, whether for the celebrating of the Lord's Supper, or for any other purpose, the Pastors, *by their very office*, would of *necessity* have a right of presiding." These words well weighed would convince even a Clergyman, that if the clerical prerogative of "administering the Sacrament of the altar" can be defended by no stronger arguments than these, it must be given up altogether. Mr. Venn, however, who has been considering the subject for four years, and reading diligently to fortify himself for the controversy, can find nothing better than this plea for his clerical function of the Eucharistic Sacrament; and we, seeing him thus in straits on a point incomparably the most important of all for a Clergyman to establish—we, perceiving that when he comes to the Altar for his sacerdotal character (that place, where, if any where, he is to find and vindicate "his work and office of a Priest"), he finds nothing that is usually said to exist there, and that he can only discover the duty of a chairman at a feast, and that only by conjecture (as we require proof that there was any chairman or president);—perceiving this dilemma, we comprehend full well, that here, as in fifty other instances, Mr. Venn has lost his case.

It is indeed unnecessary to examine the argument which Mr. Venn has put forth; nevertheless we may observe, 1st, that it is here conceded that there is no direct commission for clergymen to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 2nd, That the commission for their administering baptism is clearer—that commission we have already examined, and, as we have seen that there is no clerical commission to baptize, *a fortiori*, it follows that there is none to administer the Lord's Supper. 3rd, Though the Lord's Supper may "seem to require" "solemn circumstances, and due regulations," yet clergymen are not the only solemn circumstances and due regulations in the world. The word of God is more solemn than clergymen, and "due regulations" are not of necessity priestly ceremonies and characters. The "solemn circumstances and due regulations" are all set down for us in the Scriptures touching this matter, and there is not one syllable in the New Testament directly or indirectly recommending any thing the least resembling "the administration of the Holy Communion" in the Prayer-Book. 4th, The presidency of pastors, which is all that Mr. Venn has to suggest, reaches not the question at all. It is not the chairman's duties, but the priestly functions which the argument requires; the altar, the surplice, the rails, the kneeling, the consecration, the oblation, the priest first helping himself, the consecrated building, and all the *et-ceteras* indispensable in the Establishment for producing that eviscerated representation of the Mass, which they call the "Holy Communion."

We have now gathered materials sufficient to draw our conclusions and to re-assert the truth, which has, however, scarcely been disturbed by Mr. Venn's Lectures on Ministry. Enough has been said to make it manifest, that the whole controversy resolves itself into the question of the living abiding power of the Holy Spirit in the Church; and that if this maxim of the Scriptures stands true, that "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all,"—a maxim introduced for the express object of teaching the true doctrine of ministry (1 Cor. xii. 6); if it be true that ministry is only a gift of the

Spirit, who divides to every man severally as he will (v. 11), and that there are distinct gifts, such as that of the Evangelist, the Teacher of the church, the Pastor, &c.,—gifts which may or may not be united in one and the same person, then all human arrangements for ministry, by election, appointment, consecration, or ordination, are impertinencies; or, in other words, are acts of unbelief concerning the power of the Spirit and the gift of God. This is, indeed, the principle of the Apostasy,—disbelieving the power of the Spirit, and substituting the power of man in its place.

I can scarcely suppose a member of the Established church, who should search the Scripture with a desire to find the truth in it, could come to any other conclusion, than that his church is exceedingly different in its ministerial operations from the churches of the New Testament. Every one, who does not read the Scriptures with resolute prejudice, *must see this*; nor would the words “Bishop” and “Deacon,” which are to be found in the New Testament, at all prevent this discovery; for although these titular words are in the New Testament as well as in the Prayer-Book, yet still an attentive perusal of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and all the other passages alluding to the same subject, must convince every candid mind that ministry in the Establishment is practically different, *toto cœlo*, from the workings of ministry described in the Epistles. The detection of *the principle* of this difference might be a task of some difficulty,—I believe it is; but when once explained, the principle becomes too manifest to be denied; and we then see plainly, that in the Scriptures God alone appoints and gives to the ministry, whilst in the Apostasy it is man that appoints, and not God.

Against this statement, what has Mr. Venn to plead? He makes two assertions; each, in my opinion, savouring of temerity; 1st, that the Elders, Pastors, and Teachers were *not* appointed by God, but by man, in the Scriptural era. And, 2nd, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, pretended, in words, to be conveyed in the clerical ordinations of his communion, is not really conveyed, but is only a title and call to office by man. The second assertion we have already examined; the first we must see in Mr. Venn’s words:—“It is destitute of all Scriptural foundation, that the elders were ever ordained by the immediate act of God (1st Lect. p. 43); all the Elders, whose ordination is related, were *selected* and *ordained* by man, either by the Apostles or by individuals having a higher rank than the ordinary Elders.” (Ibid.)

Now this bold assertion must mean, that Mr. Venn does not consider the gifting of the Saints by the Holy Spirit, their selection by the Spirit, and their separation unto office by the Apostles, Prophets, and Elders, where such separation took place, to be the immediate act of God. It is an assertion that calls in question the divine operations of the Holy Spirit in the Church, or one that denies that the Apostles and Prophets were really under the influence and direction of the Spirit. Take the very instance that Mr. Venn himself gives in the preceding page (1st Lecture, p. 42),—the case of “the ordination” of Timothy; do we not find that the case is thus stated in the Scriptures? “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 Tim. iv. 14). Here it is said that Timothy had received a gift, and that it was “in him,”—what was this? was it not some gift of the Holy Spirit? Is not “prophecy” also mentioned as a concurrent item in this ordination? is not “prophecy” a gift of the Holy Ghost? and if so, is not the gift divine?

Mr. Venn insinuates, in a hint peculiarly characteristic of his style, that this gift was only "office." "The gift of God—whether by this expression is meant the Holy Ghost, or *any office of ministry*—was conferred on Timothy," (p. 42.) Surely this is dangerous handling of the word; for to say nothing of the obvious *object* of this insinuation, (which is to bring down Timothy's ordination to a level with the lifeless ceremony of the Prayer Book "gifts" of ordination,) it opens the door to any one who may choose to deny the real, sanctifying, life-giving power of the Paraclete in the Church; for if a gift solemnly asserted to have been given—a substantial power known to be in Timothy—a power in giving of which "prophecy" was concurrent—was only, after all, "an office," what have we left us wherewith to defend our hopes and our belief that the Holy Ghost really does dwell, in true and vivid powers, in believers, and that their bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost? "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." "If the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead *dwell* in you," &c. All such doctrine as this might be set aside, and might be referred to our being called Christians, and being put into office as God's servants when we *profess* christianity; for if the greater assertions fail, the less will fail more easily; if a gift of extraordinary power imparted by the Apostles and Elders was no gift, but only "an office of Ministry," then the ordinary gift of the Spirit may of course, only mean an office of service; and thus it might be asserted, that when Christians are said to have the Spirit, it is only to be understood that they are recognized as being *titular* Christians.

It is very easy to comprehend the motives which prompt the managers of secular religions to suffocate a belief in spiritual energy, and to close up the fountain of divine ministry with an *official* seal; it is in keeping with all their policy and their measure of faith, to exclude "God himself" from the assemblies of the saints, that "man himself" may be enthroned and pulpited instead; but if we have faith, even as a grain of mustard-seed, we dare to trust to the life of the Church, and in that life to wait and worship, expecting the Author of the promised blessing to visit his twos and threes, though all the doors be bolted, and though the atmosphere of incredulity surround us on every side.

What, then, is the pregnant meaning of Mr. Venn's words, when, referring to 1 Tim. iv. 14 and 2 Tim. i. 6, he says, "whether by this expression is meant the Holy Ghost, or *any office of ministry*?" (1st Lect. p. 42.) What can this mean, but that Mr. Venn deems a human appointment to an ecclesiastical office to be on an equality with the reception of a divine gift from the sovereign Author of all spiritual power? or rather, should we not say, that he would have us to understand those deeply solemn words which Paul used to Timothy, as a sort of conventional hieroglyph—a phrase of clerical dialect, not really meaning the facts which they express? These things, indeed, are common* in the Church of England; so common are they, that clergymen, by force of habit, seem to have forfeited the gift of moral perception, in estimating the standing impiety of their formularies; but it is not so

* In the reign of Edward VI., when the Prayer Book was ratified by Act of Parliament, the preamble stated, that the Commissioners appointed by the king to compose that book, had accomplished their work *by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*. Dr. Lingard shrewdly remarks, in his history of England, that this was a singular assertion, seeing that some of the Bishops employed on that occasion had wholly dissented from their coadjutors.

in the word of God; and no Apostle, no Saint, no Teacher there, ever presumed to speak of the gifts of the Holy Ghost as only meaning an appointment to office, or indeed as being one shade less than the true power communicated by Divine authority, in some actual and perceptible gift for the edification of the Church. Indeed, the grace of life in the Church, as engaged to it by the word of God, consists in this, that its members have the Spirit, that to be a christian and to have the Spirit are synonymous terms, Rom. viii. 9, and that the Lordship of Christ in the Church is known and owned only by the help of the Holy Ghost, and by no other way, 1 Cor. xii. 3. If there be any power of truth in the Church, (and it is called the pillar and support of the truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15,) it is owing to this circumstance, that it has received the Spirit of Truth, which is to abide with it for ever, John xiv. 16; and it is *in consequence of this donation* that the world can not understand the Church of God, because it can neither see nor know the Spirit of Truth which gives vitality to the Church. The effect of this gift was to call out of the world those persons whom the world esteemed foolish, weak, mean, and despicable, and through them to confound the world's wisdom, power, and greatness;—this was the general effect of the Spirit to all the members, 1 Cor. 27, 28; and this was done when, through the Holy Ghost, the Lordship, sovereignty, and sceptre of the crucified Jesus were taught and owned: on this followed a donation of ministry or service, by the same Spirit, to any of the redeemed house, the selection and qualification being *divine* and not human. This is taught at large in 1 Cor. xii., Eph. iv., and Rom. xii.; and thus the church was God's building, and not man's. It could not be *national* on such a principle, unless indeed the Almighty had been pleased to sanctify a nation; but this was not so; he was pleased to bring into the fold many thousands of the Jews, Acts xxi. 20, at Jerusalem, in the life-time of Paul, and doubtless many thousands after; but it was an election; and if the Apostles went to a city, it was not the whole population that joined the Church, but "much people" in that city, as at Corinth. Acts xviii. 10.

How could the world possibly accept such a system? how could such elements of weakness, according to all the thoughts of man, ever be otherwise than despised by the world? As long as the "Spirit of truth" was owned as the governor, and the only governor, the upholder, and the only upholder of the Church, the world never could receive it, even as they had not received the Head of the Church, because he, being anointed without measure by the Holy Ghost, lived before the world the life of dependance on the unseen power and majesty of God. And yet, as long as the Church walked in faith, it walked in power, by miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in power by bringing in multitudes from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It walked in power, because with the work of faith was also joined the labour of love; but all this time the world could not receive it—there was nothing then in it to attract the world. Faith, patience, and love! these three marks of life, can find no appeal to the world's heart, whose marks of life are incredulity, pride, and selfishness. So the world de-vooured the flock, and murdered myriads of the saints, holy men and women, children of the Most High God, but despicable and detestable in the eyes of the world, because they walked not in the world's creed of *power*, but in their Redeemer's symbol of *faith*. But a change came over this vision; she who was, whilst walking in her high places, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, descended down to earthly things, and left her seat in which she sat with Christ, Eph. ii. 6, to walk in the palaces of emperors, and in the courts

of kings, exchanging a heavenly for an earthly portion. When the Church but ever so little descended into the world, faith disappeared, and the power of the flesh then superseded every thing. All was changed, excepting the names of some things, which it was convenient for them to retain. If the Church was to become a bride for the world, needs must it be that all her principles of faith must be renounced; and hence it is, that in every possible way, the Churches of this world have accommodated themselves to secular thoughts and maxims. A ministry endowed by the Holy Ghost, as it was at first, never could, for the revolution of one year, be endured by a nation: suppose, for instance, that an act of Parliament were to enjoin, under heavy penalties, liberty of ministry in all the parish Churches, and to establish the 12th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, as the only form of worship which was to be sanctioned in the nation! we can easily foresee what would be the result. But what *do* we see, as actually approved by the world?—a clerical body, a sacerdotal caste, appointed by man; for the upholding of which, learning, talent, wealth, power, precedence, and titles, must be provided, and that abundantly. These things are; they were not so at first: not even Mr. Venn can deny this;—why then does such a ministry as this trouble itself with “the Holy Ghost?”—what has it to do with this unmanageable anomaly?—why does it, like a parrot, utter the word “gift,” when it has not, even remotely, a comprehension of what it means? Simply because it has, through a stream of tradition, retained the use of a language which enunciated a truth at first, but only stamps a falsehood now.

Hence will be understood the deep interest that clergymen of the world's churches must ever have in opposing any statements that would vindicate the church of God as being *really and truly* guided and governed by the Holy Ghost. They do, indeed, pray for this* in the church of England, but oh! if this prayer were granted them, how, without delay, would a moral earthquake shake into ruins the dreamy repose of those preachers who now talk about the Gospel but know not the cross, and are strangers to the life of faith; and how would it clear the temples made by men's hands of those Christians who, either from fear or ignorance, now associate themselves in God's worship with the children of disobedience. To put aside the ministry of the flesh and to give room for the ministry of the Spirit would strike at the constitution of the Establishment, which, in its 23rd Article, broadly states that man is the author of ministry;—“we ought to judge those to be lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by MEN.” There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the Establishment that would stand the test of the “guidance and government of the Holy Spirit.” The clergy, by the concession of its eager advocates, are *not* called into ministry by the Holy Spirit, they do *not* receive the Holy Ghost, they have no gift in them to stir up; the church does not consist of persons who in the largest judgment of charity are Saints; there is no communion of Saints in it, and cannot be, without virtually denying the fundamental principles of the Prayer-Book, which recognizes “the congregation” as “the spouse of Christ;” there is no discipline such as a spiritual person can contemplate even with patience; there is no love of the Brethren in it, for what child of God can love the parish with a “pure heart fer-

* “More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church, that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth.” (Prayer-Book.)

vently?" All that we can say in its favor is, that there are individual saints to be found in it, whose piety is of necessity frozen up into the reserve of private devotion; and that it contains clergymen who, in spite of the Bishops and the Prayer-Book, are raised up here and there to preach the Gospel as long as the jealous vigilance of the Prelates will permit the work to go on. Of course I say nothing here of the Establishment as it may be considered, and justly, an efficient police under the government; neither do I touch on its learning, and the external dignity and decorum which it presents to the world. Let all that stand. But I speak here to the consciences of those who have a spiritual discernment, and who know full well that the true Church of God is not of this world, and is ever pourtrayed in the Scriptures as suffering with Christ, guided by his Holy Spirit, and passing through much tribulation as a stranger and pilgrim. Of the true Church, and in it, they could say, "if any man *love* not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." Of those who had "the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof," there was an intelligible precept that the Saints should *turn away* from such. (2 Tim. iii. 8.) Of those preachers who preached any other Gospel than that which the Saints had already received, the sentence was fixed that *they were to be accursed*. (Gal. i. 9.) The Saints were commanded to mark those who caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to *avoid them*. (Rom. xvi. 17.) But now it is the fashion to deny all spiritual discernment, to denounce it even as a sin, and to assure us that ungodly and unconverted "Angels" were kept in the Church by the express command of Christ, and that it is schism to turn away from any that are in office, according to tradition; whatever may be their ungodliness or impiety. These points are pressed by Mr. Venn; and it is the common talk of the Clergy now a days, "that if the Clergy administer doses of spiritual poison" in their ordinary teaching, the taught must patiently receive it, and by "active faith" extract "nourishment and instruction from the teaching, though in the main the given lesson be falsehood, and the proposed sustenance be little better than poison." (Melville's Sermons.)

The anathema of the Church of God is pronounced on those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity: (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) the anathema of the church of Rome on those "who affirm that the ceremonies, robes, and external signs, which the catholic church uses in the celebration of masses, are rather incitements of impiety than offices of devotion:" (Council of Trent, sess. xxii. cap. 5, c. 7.) the anathema of the church of England on those who "affirm that the rites and ceremonies of the church of England, by law established, are wicked, antichristian, or superstitious." (Canon vi.)—The Church of God is occupied about love; the churches of men about ceremonies and external order; the Church of God seeks to walk and suffer with a rejected Redeemer, that it may hereafter reign with him; the churches of men seek power and station in the world, execrating in the mean time with impotent anathemas all who avoid their superstitions or detest their avarice. All the laws of the Church of God are about spiritual things, and spiritual power;—the 12th of Romans is a chapter of canons for the Church of God; compare that chapter with the "constitutions and canons ecclesiastical" of the church of England, or with the decrees of the Council of Trent. There you will see at once the two kingdoms; there you will understand without any difficulty to whom those two kingdoms belong; there you may comprehend the difference between the church and ministry of the Spirit, and the church and ministry of the flesh.

A few more words now to examine the effects of the national religion on the doctrine of the Spirit. The church of England consists of clergy and laity; the clergy, through the rite of baptism, do spiritually generate all the children of their parishioners, giving, as they say, in baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost; on those occasions they pray thus: "give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation." When the rite has been administered, "they yield hearty thanks that it hath pleased God to regenerate the child with the Holy Spirit, and to receive him as God's own child, by adoption, and to incorporate him in his holy church." Thus, in pretension, the whole parish has the spirit of adoption, whereby it cries Abba, Father: every baptized individual in the parish is born of the Spirit, and is an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; and thus the whole realm is spiritual,—the whole population is not in the flesh but in the Spirit; they that till the soil and they that toil at the loom, army and navy, landman and seaman, "are washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." On this superstructure of mockery, saving *faith* can not stand; no person, who really believed in the national baptism, could believe in justification by faith as a *second state for the baptized*: the two things cannot stand together, and thus there are but three conditions left for the nation: 1st, ignorant indifference, or infidelity on every point connected with the Christian religion. 2nd, A superstitious belief of baptismal regeneration; in other words, *Puseyism*. 3rd, Disbelief of the doctrine, with outward appearance of adhesion to it, as the Evangelical clergy and their disciples.

It being then the boast of the Church of England, that the whole nation is its heritage, we certainly do hereby perceive, if we have the least discernment of divine things, that it can not be the church of God. The English people, that is, the whole world in England, constitutes the Established Church; all the parishioners of all parishes, provided only they choose it, belong to this system, which rests on ordinances and not on faith. "The congregation," (meaning thereby the assembled multitude of baptized persons who meet in the parish Church,) is called in the Prayer Book "the spouse of Christ." "The Church and congregation," says the Bishop to the Priest, in the ordination service, "whom you must serve, is his spouse, and his body—they are the sheep of Christ." The Church of England, empowered by Act of Parliament, takes the whole population, and calls it the flock of Christ; it takes the world, and calls it the congregation of the faithful; and thus, by stamping false titles on things, it speaks of itself as "the Church," when indeed it is no Church at all. How can the whole population of a great nation, every man, woman, and child in it, be the election? where can grace be seen when there is no distinction? what has faith to do in such a system, when all have, without faith, those privileges which, in the word of God, are attached to faith only? "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," says the Scripture;—"Ye are saved by Baptism," says the Establishment, which makes the whole nation God's elect children. Grace and baptism are in the Established Church synonymous;—wherever a priest of the succession sprinkles water on infants, in all parishes, and in all places, and in all circumstances, there is grace; and there are brought into being the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. In the Scriptures, there is a broad and palpable distinction between the church and the world:—"I pray for them, I pray not for the world;" in the Church of England there is no world to be seen, for it is all

church, all grace, all election. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," can have no practical application in the English Church; the world disappears there, and the millions become "the spouse, the body of Christ."

On this footing they are on a par with the Church of Rome; indeed, it is precisely the fundamental principle of Rome, *claiming the world through ordinances and not through faith*. As it was in the Popish days of the English Church, so it is now: the whole population belonged to the Church; Acts of Parliament ousted the Popish clergy, but turned over all their claims and privileges to the clergy of the Protestant school. The law decreed that the Established Church should have a geographical dominion, and it commanded all parishioners within that territory to communicate three times in the year. The law gave the world to the clergy of the thirty-nine articles, and that donation they call the mystical body of Christ.

They that can not see these things to be contrary to the New Testament, must surely have lost all moral perception. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," was the primary blessing on the Church, and is a distinctive blessing ever resting on it. It is the very life of the Church that the Son is only known through the grace of the Father, (John vi. 44,) and through the teachings of the Holy Spirit, (1 Cor. xii. 3.) This is the master principle which our Lord himself laid down, when he said he would build his church so as to be stronger than the gates of Hades. The Church of England requires no revelations of the Father, no teachings from above, but it requires baptism; it troubles itself not at all about the unction and the sealing, when it introduces sheep into its fold, (2 Cor. i. 21;) but it requires ordinances; and here it agrees with Rome,—“Whosoever shall affirm that children are not to be reckoned among the faithful by the reception of baptism, because they do not actually believe, let them be accursed,” says the Church of Rome, (Council of Trent, de Bap. 13.) “All men have not faith,” (2 Thess. iii.) asserts the Scripture; “but all men in the United Kingdom have baptism,” says the Church of England, and they therefore are “the faithful.” “It is of faith that it might be of grace,” says the word of God.—“No,” says the Church of England, “it is not of faith but of baptism, that it might take in the whole population.” The Scriptures, therefore, are reduced to a nullity by the Prayer Book, which, beginning with baptism, and ending with the absolution of the dying, wholly extinguishes and renders impossible, the doctrine of justification by faith. “Our justification begins in baptism,” is a doctrine very lately promulgated by the * Bishop of London! and the Oxford sect knows full well, that with this dogma all that they require must follow. To keep out faith as the door and commencement of christian life, must evidently be the aim and object of every national church; for if faith, which the Scriptures assert is the gift of God, be the door of the Church, then the parish cannot come through that door—the population of the country can not pass through that entry. The strait and narrow door must be taken down for a national religion; and a broader and larger entrance by far be set up instead. And what difference, I ask, (and I claim a very distinct answer to the question,) is there, in this respect, between the Church of Rome and the Church of England? In the Romish communion, the baptized population, not denying the supremacy of the Pope, constitutes the Church;

In a charge to the clergy delivered in October, 1842.

all persons, be they never so wicked and ungodly, are the members of that church; the highway robbers, the Lazaroni, the valets, the lacquets de place, the rogues of all classes, the debauchés of the nobility, and all the sons of Belial, secular or ecclesiastical, all, in fact, that have their *bodies* baptized, are the members of that church; so it is with the Church of England; there is absolutely no difference, and can be none. The population of England belonged to the Church before the reformation introduced by king Edward VI. When that monarch ousted the Papal pretensions, still the population (not believers) belonged to his new church; there was nothing changed then; *un beau matin*, one fine morning the population was turned over from the Pope to Cranmer's church; for however much the Pope and Cranmer might differ on other points, they wholly and absolutely agreed on baptism; and by baptism each claimed the world, the question between them only being this, whether the King or the Pope should possess the prize: that the population of the country constituted "the church," they doubted not; and Cranmer would, not less than the Pope, have decreed that man a heretic, and have treated him as such, who should have denied that baptism of the population was the door of the church. The Establishment therefore requires all men's *bodies*,* and having taken the body for "merchandise," it can not fail also to make traffic of "souls." Hence, that all things may be fulfilled, the sale of souls is a daily occurrence in the Establishment, as it used to be a matter of notorious merchandise in the Romish Church. The pastoral office, the cure of souls, is continually brought to the hammer; take the Record, a religious newspaper, of any day's publication, and you will see, amongst the advertisements, without fail, some mercantile transaction about livings, advowsons, and pastoral duties. The number of the population generally comes in as the last item,—so many bodies—so many men and women living within the parish—so many baptized sheep for the speculating shepherd to take into the account, in purchasing or changing his pastoral cure.

Are not these things so? and can any one, who has the least spiritual discernment, doubt that this is not the church of God? Is this the church that Christ loves?—"He loved the Church and gave himself for it;" and is His love to the Church of England such, that it can be presented to us as the pattern and type of all conjugal affection? The Apostle, looking at the *Church of God*, tells us, that the love of Christ to it is the pattern of love between husband and wife, Eph. v. 25. "We are part of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," the Apostle says in the same place; who are '*we*'? the same Epistle tells us all about it; they are persons "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world;" "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ;" "accepted in the beloved;" "redeemed through his blood, and forgiven all their sins, through the riches of his grace;" "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;" "quickened together with Christ;" "saved by grace through faith; created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them;" "one time without Christ, and strangers from the covenant of promise; but now made nigh by the blood of Christ;" "built upon Jesus Christ himself, the chief corner stone;" "a holy temple in the Lord, builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." This is indeed but a small portion of the description of the church of God, in that Epistle alone; well; does this describe the Church of England? why not? why should a

* See Rev. xviii. 13, *σώματα*, translated in our bibles, "slaves."

sound churchman shrink from all this? If the Church of England be indeed the church of God, he *must* say all this: and why should he shrink from it? he that has swallowed the camel of the Prayer Book's baptism, need not be straining * off these little gnats in the wine of the Establishment's cup of fornication. He that has hardened his conscience to substitute water for faith, and rubrics for the grace of God, and the census of the population for conversion and change of heart, need not mind the sting of these smaller gnats, the puncture of these minor impieties. Let him swallow all, and let saint and sinner, light and darkness, be all confounded and confused, in order that the Church of England may preserve undiminished her station, as a crowned lady in this world's glories, which Satan, † by permission, distributes to whomsoever he chooseth.

All then, that are born in the flesh, and are baptized, are members of the Church of England.

Such are the regenerated! now for the generators—or the clergy. We have seen what their advocates state about their ordination, and that all giving and taking of the Holy Ghost, on these occasions, is only “words.” Here, then, again, is solemn mockery, deliberate deception; but that is not all; for too often it happens, that these spiritual generators are themselves bitter enemies of the work of the Spirit made manifest in converting the souls of sinners, and turning them to Christ.

I need only refer to the exceeding antipathy felt by the High Church Clergy to the preaching of true saving justifying faith by their Evangelical Brethren. As I have already intimated, some of the Bishops used sedulously to persecute “this way” in their dioceses, that is, with all the power they possessed, they endeavoured to put it down with a high hand, and often succeeded. Many such instances are known. I appeal to the Evangelical Clergy, many of whom will remember, and some have personally felt the truth of what I here aver; for it was no uncommon thing when a *curate* (and therefore as a curate defenceless), was by his preaching of Christ known to be turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to see the work suddenly stopt by “a verbose and grand epistle from Capreæ”—an arbitrary ukase from the palaced Prelate, sternly commanding the converter of souls to desist and depart from his diocese. Take the following as a specimen: it is genuine, and has been already in print.

‡ “Reverend Sir,

I understand you have got a person of the name of ———, your Curate at Stoke, whose preaching both in doctrine and manner is objectionable to the parishioners in the highest degree. I desire that you will immediately dismiss him from your curacy, and at the same time inform him, that I shall not permit him, to take another in my diocese.

I am, &c.,

Buckden Palace.
1803.

Geo. Lincoln. (Tomline.)

* *Straining off*: see Matt. xxii. 24. Greek, διυλίζοντες, not *straining at*, as in our bibles; the figure is from straining the wines of the ancients, in which small insects were apt to lodge.

† “And the Devil said, all this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it: if therefore thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” Luke iv. 6.

‡ The clergyman to whom this imperious mandate was directed, was simply a diligent Evangelist. Some in the parish complained to the Bishop that he was “a Methodist.” The Prelate, whose prejudices were always excited by this ac-

Now, if it be said that this is a specimen of misrule forty years ago, still it is part of the system; and this is done by a spiritual generator, who "gives the Holy Ghost for the work and office of the Priest," the Priest himself, afterwards, in consequence of this gift, generating into grace the whole parish. But several such instances I have known within the last twenty years; and there is published proof before us, that these things are doing this very year, and that the tendency of the system is as it was, and as it ever must be—to oppose the operations of the Spirit of God. I refer to "the Charlinch Revival," a very interesting account of which is to be seen in a pamphlet published by the Rev. H. J. Prince. I can but refer to it, hoping that my readers will themselves read the pamphlet; suffice it to say, that when a powerful work of conversion began in that parish by the prayer and preaching of that honored servant of Christ, Mr. Prince,—when young and old were awakened and turned to the Lord with purpose of heart, a mandate from the Bishop of the diocese drove the Evangelist an exile from the parish, and deprived the new born children of their spiritual father. The work began in November, 1841; on May 4th, 1842, the following entry appears in the pamphlet: "The minister had his license revoked by the bishop" (p. 18). And again: "it is right to mention, that before the Bishop actually took this step, he called on the curate to resign his curacy. This, however, he could not consent to do; for having waited on God for guidance, *he was shewn distinctly that he could not, in accordance with the will of God, or consistently with his glory, take one step voluntarily to quit a position in which the Lord himself had evidently placed him, and where also he had abundantly blessed him, and was still blessing him.*" (43.)

What materials for reflection does this afford us!—a Bishop, the spiritual father of the Clergy, one who tells the Priest at his ordination, that he "must seek for Christ's sheep that are scattered abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever," (*The ordering of Priests—Prayer Book,*) as soon as he hears of a strange work doing in a certain parish in his diocese, re-

cusation, and who in such cases generally acted as if accusation and condemnation were inseparable, lost no time in dismissing the poor curate. His accuser was an eaves-dropping farmer.

From the Rev. Sydney Smith's letter to Archbishop Singleton, I select the following instance, which he has recorded.

Bishop. Sir, I understand you frequent the meetings of the Bible Society.

Curate. Yes, my lord, I do.

Bishop. Sir, I tell you plainly, if you continue to do so, I shall silence you from preaching in my diocese.

Curate. My lord, I am very sorry to incur your indignation, but I frequent that society upon principle, because I think it eminently serviceable to the cause of the gospel.

Bishop. Sir, I do not enter into your reasons, but tell you plainly that if you continue to go there you shall be silenced.

The young man did go, and was silenced! (p. 47.)

Within the last few weeks, the Rev. D. K. Drummond, of Edinburgh, a clergyman of the Episcopal church, has been obliged to forego his ministerial duties. He was zealous beyond the rigor of the canons; the Bishop, who loved rubrics more than conversion, and understood more of form than of grace, so inhibited the Evangelist, that there was no other course left for him than to withdraw from his labours altogether. This he has done; the Bishop has stopped "these irregular proceedings," the formalities of death are preserved, and the canonical darkness of the Episcopal Church fully vindicated.

probates converted, wicked boys and young men brought to the foot of the cross, and a deep spirit of piety and contrition spreading far and wide amongst a most godless people, suddenly banishes the Evangelist whom grace had endowed for the work. And why? *ostensibly*, at any rate, because the Evangelist admitted the converted youths to the Lord's Table before they were "confirmed," and because he had "*recommended* several respectable, but unconverted persons in the parish," to abstain from the communion. Here, then, the Bishop was acting correctly on canonical law; "confirmation" is required of youths before they communicate; and respectable persons having been baptized and confirmed have a *right* to communicate. Mr. Prince was acting as spiritual discernment would dictate, to recognize God's own work of conversion and saving faith as sufficient, and to disregard man's inventions of confirmation. The Bishop consulted the canons, the Evangelist the work of grace. The Bishop and the Evangelist were at issue, and the Bishop ejected the Evangelist. But such is the piteous havoc of this system, that even Mr. Prince, so sad is the position of the spiritual Clergy, was not acting consistently; as a Clergyman, he ought to follow Clerical Law and the Prayer Book; he had as little right to set aside confirmation as he could have to cancel baptism, or any other ordinance of the Church; he had no warrant to "recommend" respectable but unconverted men to abstain from the communion; for the Prayer Book acknowledges them as children of God, and members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. Had Mr. Prince *sincerely* and *practically* believed his solemn engagement of "assent and consent" to all that the Prayer Book contains, he could not have thus fallen under the censure of the Prelate. Thus each party was offending; the Bishop was quenching the Spirit and opposing a work of grace, the Evangelist was discovered to be in a false position which by no right reasoning do we see how to defend; and thus does the system of the Establishment act, when the Spirit of grace is seen to be really working through the ministrations of those men whom the Head of the Church, and not an Episcopal ordination, has called into the Evangelist's work.

As another scene in this land of darkness—a very touching scene in the ministry of the Establishment—I would refer to the cruel torture of conscience experienced by some of the Clergy, who, awakened to see the evils of the Church in which they minister, know not what method to adopt in order to reconcile their actual position with the precepts of the New Testament. Some of these things, or it may be, all, noticed in these pages, they tacitly acknowledge and *feel*; they see the Prayer Book and the Bible to be opposed to one another; they see the Church of God to be another thing quite than the Church of England; and they know their position as Clergymen to be questionable at least. To act according to their convictions is ruin—loss of bread, loss of friends, loss of every thing—they know not which way to turn; and thus, some, alas! go all their lives with a sense of sin and condemnation on their souls, too great to be expressed but by those who are enduring it. These things I have seen. What tearing and rending of the conscience! what a scene of shame and guilt! what earnest anxieties any where to find any subterfuge for a racked and anxious soul! Some flee to Puseyism; and after mighty efforts to deceive themselves, with a hardened conscience leap into the abyss of the sacramental superstition; some shelter themselves behind sophisms and quibbles that a child would be able to detect; and some come forth and touch no more the unclean thing. I could draw up a long list of Clergymen who have seceded from the Establishment within the last ten years, though doubt-

less the list could be more than doubled; the process, indeed, is always going on somewhere; it ever must, as long as the conscience of man exists; for *some* will ever be found who can not shut their eyes and harden their hearts to their true position; some will ever be examining these things, and turning them over anxiously in their minds. I may here be allowed to record a fact that came under my observation. In the year 1834, an aged Clergyman, a stranger to me, having heard that I was in London, called on me. He had lately seceded, and in doing so he had thrown himself and family in faith on providence. He described to me the following scene between himself and his diocesan.

Bishop. Well Mr. —, I hope you are not coming to day to tell me any thing more about your uneasiness as a Clergyman of the Established Church.

Clergyman. But, indeed, my lord, I am; I am sensible of your goodness in wishing me not to act hastily in this matter, but the time is now come for me to act decidedly.

Bishop. I hope not, Mr. —: consider your family; consider your sons; what will you do with them?

Clergyman. I consider most my own conscience; I leave myself and my children in the hands of providence.

Bishop. But what are you going to do?

Clergyman. I resign my preferment this day into your Lordship's hands.

Bishop. Pray reconsider the subject; you will repent of this when it is too late.

Clergyman. With God's grace, I trust never to repent; my mind is made up.

Bishop. Alas! alas! what is your reason for acting so inconsiderately?

Clergyman. My reasons are manifold, my lord. I may mention one, however, which is much on my conscience,—the worldliness of the Establishment, the confusion of the Church and the world in it, and union of Church and State.

Bishop. Union of Church and State! why I myself do not at all approve of that—AND WHAT THEN?

Clergyman. Nay, my lord, *you* must act as you think right; but for myself, I this day quit the Establishment.

Mr. Venn has himself touched on another evil connected with the ministry of his communion; it is the case of those Christians who find themselves located under the ministry of a blind and "ungodly man." (2nd Lect. p. 116.) This is a subject which Mr. Venn discusses in several pages. The first remedy proposed is "to appeal to the Bishop." This, Mr. Venn declares, is "a duty" in such a case. Appeal to the Bishop! surely Mr. Venn can not be serious in proposing such a remedy. First of all would be the deep trial of making such a hazardous experiment, facing the great man in his palace, and stating before the dignitary the peculiarities of the case. The Bishop and his chaplains would, from the mere impulse of clerical feeling, be always more disposed to take part with the accused clergyman than to listen to murmurs against him. Then would arise the question of orthodoxy, and a definition of "preaching Christ." The Bishop, ten to one, would be of the school of baptismal grace,—a lover of rubrics, and a watchman of the canons

To him, preaching baptismal regeneration and its consequences would be rightly dividing "the word of truth." The clergyman would likely enough be of this school himself, for so it mostly happens that those who are deemed sound churchmen by the Prelates, are by the people esteemed blind and ignorant preachers, under whose ministry they can derive no benefit. In this case (and most cases of "appeal" would be of this sort), the Bishop would lecture the appellant on his unsound views, and, very probably, dismiss him with something very different from encouragement. But supposing that the Bishop were disposed to take the appellant's part, and that the "blind and ignorant minister" were a respectable moral rector or vicar; in other words, not a curate;—and no case is more common than that; what could the Bishop do? Beyond the administration of a reproof, which, of course, the benefited clergyman would be quite at liberty to disregard, the Bishop could do nothing; indeed, we may assert, that few prelates could any where be found who would think themselves called upon to interfere on the vague accusation of "not preaching the Gospel;" and yet, it is this very deficiency, which in most cases sends the parishioners from the parish church to the Dissenting chapel.

Mr. Venn, however, gravely tells us, "that it is incumbent on the Bishop to attend to such complaints, and, in certain cases, he would be able to depose the accused clergyman." (p. 117.)

But, if we wish to get at the real truth on this subject, we must turn to another quarter; and here, therefore, it will be well to listen to the learned writers of the Oxford Tracts.

"A large proportion of our livings is in the hands of laymen, who may be of any religion under heaven; and the laws of England (it must be confessed with sorrow) watch so jealously over the interests of these patrons, and so little over those of the church, that they *compel* the Bishops, except in cases so *outrageous* that they can hardly ever occur, to accept at once of the person first presented to them, and to commit the cure of souls to him by the process of institution. It is worth observing what Judge Blackstone says on the subject: 'Upon the first delay,' says he, 'or refusal of the Bishop to admit the clerk, the patron usually brings his writ of *quare impedit* against the Bishop for the temporal injury done to his property in disturbing him in his presentation. The writ of *quare impedit* commands the Bishop to permit the plaintiff to preach; and unless he does so, then that he appear in court to shew his reasons.' What sort of reason the court will be satisfied with, the Judge informs us in another place: 'with regard to faith and morals,' says he, 'if the Bishop alleges only in generals that he is *schismaticus inveteratus*, or objects a fault that he is *malum prohibitum* merely, as haunting taverns, playing at unlawful games, or the like, it is not good cause of refusal if the cause be some particular heresy alleged, the fact, if denied, shall be determined by a jury.' The sum of the whole is, then, that unless the Bishop can prove to the satisfaction of a jury in a court of common law, that the person presented to him for institution has been guilty of some particular immoral act, above the grade of *malum prohibitum*, or has maintained some opinion such as shall come under the strict definition of heresy, he loses his cause, and then, if he persist in his refusal, is liable to an action for damages, in which the Judge informs us 'the patron may recover ample satisfaction.' Now, if any one were to search among his own acquaintances for those whom he considers least fit for clergymen, he would certainly find that his reason for thinking so was of a kind which he could not make good before a court of justice. Those who wish to see this mat-

ter in its true light should read over 1 Tim. iii. to verse 10."—Tracts for the Times, No. 59, p. 7.

Mr. Venn's other remedy must be given in his own words:—"Why then, I ask, when your spiritual interests alone are concerned, when you and your family are exposed to the evil of a *blind and ungodly* pastor, and are without the advantage of enlightened teaching and faithful pastoral superintendance, should you plead that you can not go and live in another place? Why should you complain, if you are called upon, for the sake of Christ and your own souls, to *remove from one parish to another?*" (p. 118.) And he then inculcates the beauty of the stranger's and pilgrim's life to a true Christian, and that it is a mark of the life of faith to "be scattered abroad throughout the world, having no certain dwelling places."

This scheme, if indeed it be seriously proposed, is truly extraordinary. What then! are the parishioners to pack up goods and chattels and to live the life of gypsies or wandering Scythians, *quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos*, in order to escape the nuisance of blind and ungodly pastors? and is this a picture of the flock of Christ—the sheep scattered abroad throughout the world, that they may at last find in some favoured valley of the Anglican Arcadia a faithful shepherd, who will really tend them and feed them? And are we to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in caves and in dens of the earth, to realize our life of faith, that life being made manifest by our fleeing from the face of ungodly pastors, idle and ignorant priests, and stupid carnal preachers? Yea, truly; Mr. Venn gravely and with solemn sentences recommends a movement and a decampment of parishioners pestered with unprofitable clergymen; and he can look with dry eyes on the spectacle of tradesmen quitting their business, and merchants their counting-houses, agriculturists their farms, country squires their halls and seats, and all men their homes, in order that "as strangers and pilgrims" they may find some other parish where a faithful clergyman resides. And all this for what object? to keep us within the pale of the apostolical succession, and to prevent us, as an easier method, seeking some other ministry, where our souls may be fed. Mr. Venn, however, writes as if he were in earnest on this theme, and remarks, that by this process "unworthy pastors would receive a public and cutting rebuke, and would be deterred from undertaking so sacred an office; and the Bishops would be much more cautious both in ordaining and in *instituting*, and be quickened to a more vigilant superintendance of the clergy." (p. 119.)

As for the "unworthy pastors," we may safely say, that if they will not heed Moses and the Prophets neither will they heed the flight of their parishioners,* and that if they seek the shepherd's crook for filthy lucre's sake, as is known full well they very often do, the "cutting

* Mr. Venn's plan of the stranger's and pilgrim's life for discontented parishioners, seems to be especially denounced in the canons of his church; "the Churchwardens, or Questmen, and their assistants, shall mark whether any *strangers* come often or commonly from other parishes to their Church; and shall shew their minister of them, lest, perhaps, they be admitted to the Lord's Table among others; which they shall forbid, and *remit such home to their own Parish Churches and ministers*, there to receive the communion with the rest of their own neighbours." (Canon xxviii.)

The communion of saints in the Established Church is therefore exactly on the footing of a parish settlement; where a man's settlement is, there must he communicate.

rebuke" of a fugitive parish would disturb them very little. The Bishops, we have seen, must *institute* on presentation; the more cautious they might essay to be in this branch of their duties, the deeper would be the difficulties in which they would find themselves involved. The courts of common law would soon settle this attempt at Episcopal reform; and thus it would come to pass, that deserted parishes, a wandering population, and vigilant Bishops, would all fail in mending the matter; and the ministry of Mr. Venn's church would continue, as it is at present, a standing proof of the vanity of man's attempt to substitute his own devices for the power and grace of God.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

Appointments of the Bishops.

THE following letter has been published in the "Memoirs of the Duchess of Marlborough." It was written by Dr. Hare, a fellow of King's-college, Cambridge, and tutor of the Marquis of Blandford, the Duke of Marlborough's son. Dr. Hare was afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, and then of Chichester.

"Madam,—I am extremely obliged to your grace for the honour of your letter in relation to the bishoprick of Worcester. For myself I can say that I had no manner of expectation that my request should succeed at this time. In compliance with the wishes of my friends, I did what I did without proposing any other satisfaction to myself but that of knowing in what manner it would be received. My Lord Duke, considering the situation he is in, I should not have writ to, but that I could not very decently omit it when I applied to others; but your grace saw it was next to not writing at all; nor did I expect any answer at the time I wrote to his grace. Lord Godolphin and Lord Cadogan happened to be both in town. The latter told me, with great profession of kindness, that he believed *the thing* was already promised, but that he was just going to Hampton Court to try what could be done, and send me an answer, which he did in the civilest terms possible; but the true answer I had from Lord Godolphin, who wrote to Lord Sunderland in my behalf like a true friend. His Lordship deferred his answer till he saw him,—that the thing was so fixed some time ago it could not be altered, but if it had not been so, he could give his Lordship no hopes of my having it without first coming to an explanation with me.

"I own this last part of his letter was so shocking to me that I immediately wrote a long letter to your grace, who, I knew, was in the greatest intimacy with Lord Sunderland, complaining of this usage; but afterwards I threw it aside. I did hope that the fidelity and attachment I had shewn to Lord Marlborough for seven years past, to say nothing of former services, would have procured me a civil denial at least; but I see how it is; the friendship I have had from a child for Lord Townsend weighs more against me, than all other things can do for me. . . . But to return to Lord Sunderland. I believe his Lordship would think me very dull if I did not interpret his answer as a declaration that I am to expect no favour during his ministry. Indeed, had it not been his resolution to defeat my expectations, I am fully satisfied his Lordship would not have been in such a violent haste to procure a promise of Worcester before it was void. If this be really his Lordship's meaning, I beg it as the last favour of your grace plainly to tell me so; and, in that case, I most faithfully promise never again to give your grace the least trouble on my account. If I am to expect as little favour from a whig ministry as from a Tory one, it shall be to my comfort that I am conscious to myself I have not deserved it." &c.

Bishop Newton, in the Memoir of his own life, tells us, that when Green, his old friend, was made Bishop of Lincoln, he reminded him of a common friend

of theirs, Mr. Seward, of Litchfield, whom he knew that Bishop Green was disposed to serve, and hoped that he would collate him to a prebend of Lincoln. The bishop replied that he should always bear him in memory, and if ever an opportunity offered he would certainly give him a prebend, but at present he *stood engaged eleven deep* to the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Hardwicke, and other friends."

This must mean, that the Bishop of Lincoln had made promises of eleven chief preferments to the ministers for their dependants; and this, it is to be presumed, was somewhat in the form of a bargain for his own appointment to the see of Lincoln.

"*The vacant Bishoprick.*—Already several candidates are in the field for the See of Cashel. The general impression is, that Archbishop Pakenham, Brother in Law to the Duke of Wellington, will be the new Bishop. Dr. Daly, who has been so long involved in the litigation about the Deaconry of St. Patrick, is spoken of; but Archdeacon Pakenham is *more likely to be successful.*"—Record Newspaper, Nov. 21, 1842.

No. II.

The Priesthood, and the Altar.

THE Bishop of London has, in his charge to the clergy, lately published, considerably accelerated the retrogressive movement of the Established church towards those dreary times and opinions when priesthood was set up in the church by the bold avowal of the Levitical theory. The following sentiments in the Bishop's charge are precisely those of the fourth century.

"We have indeed," he says, "our sacrifice, and our altar, and our priesthood to offer the one and minister at the other, but the sacrifice is a spiritual sacrifice, and the altar only a spiritual altar. We slay no victim, we shed no blood, without which there can be no remission of sins. We commemorate one great and final sacrifice, properly so called, in the manner appointed by our Lord; and we continually present to God that memorial of praise and thanksgiving, and so apply to ourselves by faith the results of the one propitiatory sacrifice; and the whole is rightly, but figuratively, termed the Eucharistical sacrifice—the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. As to our priesthood, let us beware of arrogating to ourselves the character of mediators between God and men, in any sense which implies that we can stand between them and their Judge, except with reference to that mysterious efficacy which belongs to the Christian intercession, by whomsoever offered, if offered in faith. At the same time, let us be careful to impress upon ourselves and others just notions of the real objects and inherent dignity of our office. It is ours to realize instrumentally, to those for whom Christ died, the blessedness of which the Levitical priesthood administered only the shadow; *it is ours to graft them into the body of Christ's Church, to initiate them into the sacred truths of the gospel, to turn their hearts to the wisdom of the just; guiding them to him who alone can deliver them from the bondage of sin, declaring, as his Ambassadors, remission and assurance of pardon, and dispensing to His household the spiritual food and sustenance of his body and blood—to do all this, and on that account to have the chief stations in that household, to be entitled to the affection and respect of all who belong thereto.*

Our blessed Saviour's charge to St. Peter, and through him to his ministers, was "Feed my sheep!" Whatsoever acts of kindness or authority are requisite for the due execution of that message, with respect to those who are committed to our care, it is ours to exercise and theirs to acknowledge and submit."

The clergy are here set up as priests to offer a spiritual sacrifice, a sacrifice of thanksgiving; exactly in this respect answering to the priests of the Mosaic economy when they burnt the incense on the golden altar within the holy place, an office of eucharistic fragrance on the theory of the acceptance of the sacrifice without. When the sacrifice had been burned on the altar, and there accepted, the priest entered into the holy place, and there burnt the incense. Incense was the type of prayer and thanksgiving, the acknowledgment of a God, who, through atonement, had appointed an access to himself. Our Anglican clergy assume this place for themselves; they tell us they have no sacrifice to make, because they have no blood to shed; though the blood that *has been shed*, and the sacrifice that *has been slain*, they have to offer in the bread and wine, concerning which, it is now again the fashion to speak as in the days of Archbishop Laud, with words that differ not a hair's breadth from the assertion of the real presence.

It is somewhat important to unravel this mystery, seeing that many persons erroneously lay it down as a maxim, that where a sacrifice is not slaughtered there can not be a priesthood. This is a mistake; it is not the sacrifice, but the access to God consequent on the sacrifice, which is the grand prerogative of a priest. Now, our Anglican priests have the modesty to allow, that the one sacrifice was slaughtered when our Lord was crucified, therefore they say they do not sacrifice but they offer memorials of the sacrifice, and come nearer to God in the office of intercession than the people do; and herein is their priesthood: *access to God such as the laity can not claim.* This the Bishop of London calls "realizing the blessedness of which the Levitical priesthood was only the shadow." Let us now hear how the Pope has dogmatized exactly in the same strain. "The priests," say the Decretals, "intercede for the people, and consume their sins, because they remove them by their prayers and oblations; and the more worthy the priests are, so much the more readily are they heard for the necessities for which they intercede."—*Ipsi sacerdotes pro populo interpellant, et peccata populi comedunt, quia suis precibus et oblationibus ea delent atque consumunt; qui quanto digniores fuerint tanto facilius pro necessitatibus, pro quibus clamant, exaudiuntur.*—*Decret, Causa 1. quest. 1. c. 91.*

Briefly, then, this is the picture of the change that has taken place.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE APOSTASY.

The church one in Christ Jesus.	Clergymen and laymen.
The church of God, consisting of his elect and called people.	A dead church, built of bricks and stones.
Upper chambers, rooms in houses, or other places for meeting, unconsecrated.	Consecrated temples, holy places, holy chancels, holy churchyards.
A table to put upon it the wine and bread.	An altar, considered the holiest thing in the temple.
No pulpit; but any saint having, according to the grace given, a word of doctrine or exhortation (1 Cor. xii.).	A pulpit for orations, priests dressed in their surplices, mounted in the pulpit, and reading written declamations.
Praying in the Spirit, and giving thanks in the Spirit (Eph. vi. 18; Col. ii. 7).	Forms of prayer, liturgies, litanies, ceremonies and rubrics.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE APOSTASY.

- No office ; but gifts of the Spirit, given for works of service or ministry. Archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons, inaugurated into office by men, but having no gifts of the Spirit.
- The whole body of believers having boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Christ (Eph. iii. 12); and knowing no priest but the Great High-priest who ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. vii. 25). Human priests, claiming to themselves the "mysterious efficacy which belongs to Christian intercession." Absolving the people from their sins.
- The disciples meeting together to break bread on the first day of the week. "The sacrament," administered three times in the year, according to the canons, or once a month.
- Breaking bread and drinking wine amongst the disciples. A priest "administering the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, which are verily and indeed taken and received in the Lord's supper."
- The saints having communion with the Father, and the Son, and with one another, through the Spirit. The "people communicating with the Priest" (See Rubricks in communion service).
- The redeemed family giving thanks for the forgiveness of sins, and for the love of God made sure in Christ Jesus. Frightened sinners "earnestly repenting of their misdoings, and declaring that the burthen of them is intolerable."
- The saints rejoicing in the Lord, because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven them (Eph. iv. 32). Priests, "by the authority" which, they pretend, is "committed unto them," absolving sinners on their death-bed from all their sins.
- "The house," over which Christ is, as the Son of God, for it is "his own house (Heb. iii. 6); consisting of those who have received him (John i. 12) by faith; who have believed in him; who are justified by faith, and so have peace with God (Rom. v. 1). Being born not of the flesh, but of the will of God (John i. 12). The whole baptized multitude in the parish; men, women, and children,—all who are entered in the parish register, who have no faith, who have never received Christ, and have no peace with God. Being born not of the will of God, but of the will of the flesh, and by the sprinkling of the priest.

We have heard the Bishop of London on the Priest, let us now hear Archbishop Laud on the altar,—

"God forbid that we should worship any thing but himself; but if to worship God when we enter into his house or approach his altar be an innovation, it is a very old one. For Moses did reverence at the door of the tabernacle, Num. xx. 6; David calls the people to it, with a *venite*, 'O come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before our Maker,' and in all places it is a bodily worship.....and after Judaical worship ended *venite adoremus* as far upwards as there is any track of a liturgy, was the introitus of the Priest, all the latin Church over.....And you, my honorable Lords of the Garter, in your great solemnities, you do your reverence, and to Almighty God, I doubt not; but yet it is *versus altare*, towards his altar, AS THE GREATEST PLACE OF GOD'S RESIDENCE UPON EARTH. I say the greatest, yea greater than the pulpit, for there (at the altar) it is 'this is my body,' but at the pulpit it is at most but 'this is my word;' and a greater reverence is due to the body than to the word of our Lord. And so in relation answerably to the throne

where His body is usually present, than to the seat where his word is usually to be proclaimed." ("Liturgy, Episcopacy, and Church Ritual, by Wm. Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury," p. 376, lately republished at Oxford.)

Amongst the many doctors of the Anglican Church who have taught thus, I select a few sentences from "Johnson, Presbyter,"—"We have an altar from which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle" Heb. xiii. 10. From which words I would prove, First, that it is an oral eating which the Apostle here speaks of. Second, that the oblation here understood, is that of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Thirdly, that consequently, by the *altar* is meant the communion table..... The question is, what is the common meaning of the word *altar*, when used by Christians in relation to the Christian Church? and here all antiquity, from Christ Jesus himself down to the present age, does unanimously affirm, that the most usual and received signification of that word in relation to the Christian Church, is that of a communion table; this therefore must be the meaning of it here as well as elsewhere..... If the *holy board* on which the sacred mysteries are performed, be on that account an altar, then the body and blood of Christ there represented are an *oblation*; but the holy board on which these mysteries are performed is an altar, and therefore the representative body and blood of Christ must be an oblation; and if an oblation, then certainly propitiatory and expiatory, because the principal was so in the most perfect manner..... It is a great honor done to Christ, frequently to represent to God, as well as man, what we believe to be the most wonderful and engaging favor that ever was, or could be performed for us. It is further, the greatest honor we can do God the Father to present to him the most valuable oblation that we can give or He receive—an oblation which can be offered no where but in the Church of Christ, and by none but the officers commissioned by him..... This is the doctrine agreeable to our present forms of celebrating the holy Eucharist, and is in conformity with the primitive Church, and Scripture itself: and if we thus understand the Liturgy, *there will be no occasion for any of our people to run to the Church of Rome to have this defect supplied.*" (Tracts for the Times, No. 81, pp. 319).

With such evidence as this before us, I see not how the Church of England need hesitate to accept the decree of the Council of Trent on Priesthood, which is in the following words,—“Sacrifice and Priesthood are so joined by the ordinance of God, that both are found together in every dispensation. Since, therefore, under the New Testament, the Catholic Church has received the divine institution, the holy and visible sacrifice of the Eucharist, it must be acknowledged that she has a new and visible and eternal priesthood. Now the sacred Scriptures show, and the tradition of the Catholic Church has always taught that this priesthood was instituted by the Lord our Saviour, and that to his Apostles and their successors in the Priesthood, the power was given to *consecrate, offer, and minister his body and blood*; and also to remit and retain sins” (Sess. xxiii. chap. 1).

If there should be any question about ministering the body and blood, the words of the Prayer Book at any rate assert that the bread and wine are the body and the blood, leaving it to the two sections of the clergy to put their own interpretation on these expressions. The Oxford section has unquestionably the proper and plain meaning of words in their favor.

In closing this appendix, I would observe, that the words, “we have an altar,”

Heb. xiii, 13, which are now every where appropriated by the Puseyistic Clergy to establish their superstitions about the communion table, have been long ago rejected by some of the most judicious of the Roman Catholic doctors. Estius says it does *not* mean the altar of the sacrament, but figuratively alludes to Christ and his sacrifice. It is instructive to observe the Anglican Clergy exceeding the Romanists in their perversion of the word of God.

No. III.

Judgment in Escott v. Mastin, at a meeting of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's most honorable Privy Council, Whitehall, July 2nd, 1842.

THIS was an appeal against the decision of Sir Herbert Jenner, Judge of the Court of Arches, in a suit promoted by Frederick George Mastin against the Rev. Thomas Sweet Escott, Vicar of the parish of Gedney in Lincolnshire, "for refusing to bury the corpse of Elizabeth Ann Cliff, infant daughter of Thomas and Sarah Cliff, of the parish of Gedney, convenient warning having been given him thereof." The sentence of the court below was, "that the Rev. T. S. Escott be suspended for the space of three months from the time of publishing the suspension, from all discharge and functions of his clerical offices and the execution thereof, and that he do pay the costs of the suit."

Towards the conclusion of an elaborate judgment, pronounced by the Right Honorable Lord Brougham, his Lordship said,—

"The sentence appealed from must be affirmed in all its parts, and the appellants must further pay the costs of the appeal.

"The strange misapprehensions which have been entertained by some worthy men, touching the nature and grounds of this proceeding, and the force of the sentence that has closed it, seem to impose upon us the duty of stating in what the offence consists, and what authority the Courts Christian exercise respecting it. The notion has been ventilated, that the Court in this case assumes to direct clergymen as to their spiritual duties, and to bind them (as it has been termed), by ordering what they shall do in future. It has also been suggested, by high ecclesiastical authority (a Reverend Prelate so stated in 1826), in reference to the decision of 1801, that they who think the sentence contrary to the Rubric, may conscientiously submit to the law as interpreted by the Judge, or may not less conscientiously refuse to read the service if *prepared to risk the expense of prosecution and make the ultimate appeal*. Now, let it be once for all understood, that the Court has never in these cases assumed any such office as that of dictating to, or directing, or even warning clergymen touching the discharge of their duties. Nor has it interfered, nor does it in any way occupy itself with the spiritual portion of their sacred office. But the law has required clergymen to do certain things, under a certain penalty, which it has annexed to disobedience, and the same law has required the Judge to enforce that penalty, when his office is promoted by a competent party: and he, the Judge, is left without any choice whether he shall or shall not exercise his judicial functions. Nor let it be imagined that any one's conscience is thus *forced*. Whoever conscientiously disagrees with the Court on the construction put upon the rubric, may, if he also conscientiously thinks that he can not

yield obedience to the law as delivered by the court, *give up an office to which the law has annexed duties that his conscience forbids him to perform.* The case of such clergymen is not peculiar. Persons in a judicial station have, and very recently, felt scruples about administering oaths in the discharge of their ministerial functions. What course did they pursue to seek relief for their conscience, without violating their duties as good citizens? they did not complain that their conscience was forced—they did not retain the emoluments of a station of which their conscience forbid them to discharge the duties—they *sacrificed their interests to their duty*, and gave way to those who could honestly fill the place and honestly hold the office by performing its appointed functions." SENTENCE AFFIRMED WITH COSTS.

This lecture in ethics, read to the clergy, is a remarkable instance of the curiosities evoked into being by the union of the Church and State. The state wants the Clergy, and requires their services, repaying them with plenty of the good things of this world; but if the Clergy of the impracticable school begin to disturb society with their vexatious superstitions and clerical malignity, then the State steps in, and caring not one farthing for "sacraments" and consecrated priests, commands the perturbators to forego their acts of bigotry, suspending them in the mean while from their clerical functions, and saddling them with costs. If the Clergy cry out about their "consciences," the State tells them with ironical reverence, that they greatly respect "their sacred functions" and would not for the world meddle with their "holy mysteries"—but the law says certain things shall be done and certain things left undone, and if the Clergy can not acquiesce in the commands of the law, they may then *abdicate*, and seal the sanctity of their principles with personal martyrdom. If they can not obey the law, they can resign their preferments, and if not allowed to act as persecutors, "according to the dictates of their conscience," they may at any rate become CONFESSORS for the more illustrious vindication of their scruples.

No. IV.

The Angels of the Seven Churches.

MR. VENN has written at some length, in his first Lecture, on the Angels of the seven Churches, recorded in the Book of Revelations, because, as he tells us, "the boldest efforts have been made to explain away the evidence afforded by the Epistles to the Seven Churches in favor of Episcopacy" (38): and in other places he frequently refers to this subject whenever he feels called upon to advocate his favourite scheme,—*the necessity of having bad Bishops in the church.*

I would here take this opportunity of stating my opinion of the seven angels, an opinion which I have long entertained, and wholly irrespective of any ecclesiastical question, that it appears to me most in harmony with the general tenor of the Apocalypse, and most in keeping with its spirit, to understand the angels of the churches to be what they are said to be—angels, that is, spiritual beings of the celestial dominion. If it should be asked what may be the office of the angels of the churches, I must reply that I know not, as little as I know or understand the office of "the angel of the waters" (xvi. 5), or of several other

angelic ministers or powers conspicuously acting in the Apocalyptic drama ; and, I believe, it is precisely owing to ignorance on a mysterious theme, felt but not acknowledged, that interpreters have given us a gloss of which they can make something, but which, after all, has disturbed rather than forwarded the due explanation of the Apocalypse. We can comprehend what Bishops are over churches, but we do not know what angels of churches are ; and thus we gladly accept that which we do know, rather than trouble ourselves with a difficulty of which we do not possess the solution.

As soon as the angels were turned into Bishops, or Presbyterian ministers, or ministers of other sects,—for many sects have here claimed a niche for their own clergy,—it became almost hopeless to investigate the language of the Apocalypse in this place ; polemical jealousies impeded the efforts of criticism, and the interests of clergymen stifled a fair investigation of the text. Mr. Venn can not, by any means, be classed amongst the disinterested examiners of the subject ; he enters into it with a more than usual display of zeal for the general interests of his *case* ; he is here a partizan, and not a critic.

But what, I would ask, could Mr Venn gain, supposing he were to establish his favourite point, that angels are Bishops (the inversion of this proposition Mr. Venn would probably not sustain) ; for still the question remains to be settled, what sort of Bishops and what sort of Episcopacy are we to understand by these angels ? Is it the Episcopacy of Rome, or Lambeth, or the Episcopacy of the Greek church, or of the Nestorian Christians ? I presume Mr. Venn would not dare to exclude the Romish Bishops, seeing that he alludes to them with gratitude in his Lectures, as he is sensible that he owes to them whatever claim he may have to the clerical character (see p. 89) ; but if he admits the Romish Episcopacy as being represented by the angels, then the Romish Bishops turn round upon him and deny altogether that the Anglican church has any Bishops at all, or that Mr. Venn himself is a clergyman ; and thus we see the perplexity occasioned by this interpretation.

But now briefly to Mr. Venn's explanation of the subject. He tells us that the Epistles in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelations are to *the churches*, for that can not be denied, as in each it is written, " he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to *the churches* ; " " but then," says he, " in the midst of a Book to the churches, a message is sent to the Bishop ; and wherever the address is in the singular number, it is for the Bishop and not for the church." He illustrates his plan by referring to the letter to Pergamos, " in which," he says, " the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses belong to the Bishops," leaving thereby nothing for the church but the final promise of the hidden manna and the white stone. If this be correct, the letter certainly is not to the church but to the Bishop, and the postscript ought to have been thus,— " He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Bishops." This is still more conspicuous in the message to the church of Philadelphia, in which nothing is left for the church but the concluding conditional promise ; and so, more or less, of all the rest, though it is most apparent that the concluding promise of each message has a reference to all that has been uttered before, whereas Mr. Venn would appropriate all to the individual Prelate, except the promise at the end of each message, which he says is for the church. The frequent interchange of the singular and plural number in the messages show clearly enough that the things said to the angel are said to all ; as, for instance, " *thou* hast not denied my faith even in those days wherein Antipas, my faithful martyr, was slain

among you" (ii. 13). "I know *thy* works I will give unto every one of you according to *your* works" (ii. 19, 23). "Unto you, I say, and to the rest in Thyatira," &c. These, Mr. Venn assures us, are parentheses, and that the address to the Bishop is, in these instances, to be separated and carefully sifted from the address to the churches; but if so, what confusion and blundering have we in the composition! and how unlike to the finished and careful plan of the rest of the Book, and how strained and forced, merely to elaborate the problem of this undemonstrable prelacy.

I care not, however, to enter more at length on this subject, as it has been done by others; I would only here notice the preposterous use that Mr. Venn makes of this exegesis; for as he has decided that the warnings and precepts are for the Bishops and not for the churches, so do we hear him gravely saying, "That it may be a question whether the Bishops of Laodicea and Sardis were *unconverted men*; certainly they were very *unfit* men for their office" (p. 110). Again, "the Bishop of Laodicea was lukewarm and self-deceived, the Bishop of Thyatira was timid, the Bishop of Sardis had a name only to live but was dead" (p. 128). Poor Bishops! how unkindly their friends can write about them when it suits their purpose; this, however, is now the current language amongst the clergy, that the Scriptural Bishops were very sorry characters—very imperfect officials—very worthless persons; and there is an object in this which is obvious. Hear how another clergyman rails against the Bishops of Scripture:—"In the Apocalyptic churches we find unconverted and ignorant Bishops, who were yet stars in the right hand of Christ, from whom he expected ministerial labour, and whom he exhorted to repentance and diligence. *The Bishop of Sardis was a mere nominal Christian*, yet this *unconverted Bishop* is admonished to attend to his Episcopal duties. Christ's faithful ones submitted to him as their Bishop, and in so doing were sinless. The Bishop of Laodicea was *ignorant, proud, and lukewarm*, and yet he too was in the right hand of Christ, his angel, that is, his messenger in the church" ('The Accordance of the Church of England with Scripture,' a sermon preached by the Rev. Joseph Baylee, Liverpool, 1839). Sentiments like these we may leave to the just indignation of every right minded and intelligent Christian.

It is indeed distressing to meet with such flagrant misuse of the Scriptures; for not only is the valuable doctrine of these two golden chapters thus rendered insipid and useless, not only are many precepts of deep and lasting moment thus lost to the church by abstracting them from the saints and turning them over to an intrusive Prelate, but the vilest representation is thus set before us of the divine Saviour and his kingdom, merely to uphold the corrupt fabric of a worldly religion. What then! is heaven opened to our gaze by the Apocalyptic prophet to make us behold with amazement the Son of God in his celestial majesty, the Alpha and Omega of the designs of Almighty wisdom, holding in his right hand as stars of vivid glory "proud, ignorant, lukewarm, self-deceived, and unconverted men, wholly unfit for their office," and a scandal to the churches groaning under their burden? Is this in keeping with the rest of the New Testament, and is this the style in which pernicious pastors are elsewhere commended to our notice? "Grievous wolves," said Paul to the church at Ephesus, "will enter in among you, not sparing the flock; yea, amongst you Elders will men arise speaking perverse things." How would Mr. Venn describe such?—as stars in the right hand of Christ? for these wolves having been Bishops they must be stars and angels; and thus the Chief Shepherd holds

grievous wolves in his right hand for the benefit of the flock. "If," says Paul again, "**AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN preach any other Gospel unto you** than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed*" (Gal. i. 8, 9). Here a curse is pronounced even on an angel from heaven who preaches false doctrine; are then the angels of Lambeth above the angels of heaven? and if the celestial hierarchy would fall under an anathema for false or ignorant teaching, are the false teachers, and unconverted, ignorant, proud Prelates of the Angliean communion to still glitter as stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of glory, because they are in the succession, and are at *the dry end of the channel*?

To Mr. Venn it seems a matter of small moment what may become of the congregati
 interprets
 except tho
 but to rem
by his prov
more zealo
saints is trc
the proper
this is a rej
let the man
the saints b
scheme of c
it is not req
enough to tl

grievous wolves in his right hand for the benefit of the flock. "If," says Paul again, "AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed*" (Gal. i. 8, 9). Here a curse is pronounced even on an angel from heaven who preaches false doctrine; are then the angels of Lambeth above the angels of heaven? and if the celestial hierarchy would fall under an anathema for false or ignorant teaching, are the false teachers, and unconverted, ignorant, proud Prelates of the Angliean communion to still glitter as stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of glory, because they are in the succession, and are at *the dry end* of the channel?

To Mr. Venn it seems a matter of small moment what may become of the congregation of the righteous if only the Prelate keeps his place, for thus he interprets the Scriptures:—"I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (Rev. ii. 5). The Lord does not threaten to remove *him*, but to remove *his people* from him, either scattering them among other churches by his providence, or inclining them to go elsewhere where they would have a more zealous and devoted ministry" (p. 120). If then a congregation of the saints is troubled with a Bishop that has "fallen, and has need of repentance," the proper remedy is to scatter the sheep and to break up the church; and this is a representation of the justice and equity of the Divine government! let the many be exiled and the unrighteous individual keep his throne,—remove the saints but on no account remove the sinner! This is, indeed, a favourite scheme of church government with Mr. Venn, as we have already seen. But it is not requisite to add more words on the subject, The case must be clear enough to those who do not desire to be misled.

ERRATA.

- n p. 7, Note,—for *the word Priest*, read *the word Prelate*.
- „ p. 12, 2nd paragraph, 1st line,—for *could*, read *would*.
- „ p. 20, Note,—for *Eutichius*, read *Eutychius*.
- „ p. 24, the two last words are repeated in the first words of p. 25.
- „ p. 26,—for *puritannical*, read *puritanical*.
- „ p. 44, 1st paragraph, 1st line,—for *at least*, read *at last*.
- „ p. 48, Note, 3rd line,—erase *the Bishops*.
- „ p. 56, 5th paragraph, 10th line,—for *especially*, read *episcopally*.



