

A WORD
FOR THE CHURCH;

IN ANSWER TO
THE REV. CHARLES HARGROVE'S "REASONS FOR RETIRING
FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH,"
AND JOINING

"THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN."

BY THE

REV. EDWARD G. CARR, B.A.

Minister of St. John's, Guernsey, Rector of St. Lawrence;
and Domestic Chaplain to Lord Dunsany.

"Obey them that have the Rule over you." HEB. xiii. 17.

Second Edition.

LIVERPOOL:
HENRY PERRIS, 6, CHURCH STREET.
HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO. LONDON; AND
W. CURRY, JUN. AND CO. DUBLIN.

1844.

LIVERPOOL :

PRINTED BY HENRY FERRIS, 6, CHURCH STREET.

I HAVE yielded to the kind request of an unknown friend, in allowing this tract to go into a Second Edition. I have done so the more readily, because I have reason to believe that some measure of blessing has attended its circulation. I am more deeply convinced, if possible, than ever, of the dreadful evils sought to be inflicted on the Church of God by those to whom this tract is opposed : and I pray they may be delivered from the snare in which Satan has taken them. May the faithful members of the Church be more fervent in the prayer “ From all false doctrine, heresy and schism ; Good Lord deliver us.”

THE AUTHOR.

A WORD FOR THE CHURCH,

&c. &c.

NEVER, perhaps, was there a period in the church's history, so fraught with events painfully interesting to the mind of him who loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, as the present. Hitherto, the church, for the most part, has had to contend with her open enemies, or false friends : but in this, our day, Satan seems to have gained a new triumph, in arraying the followers of the Lord Jesus, (shall I say it,) in bitter hostility against each other ; and thus impedes that unity in the church, which, next to his salvation, should be the dearest object of every child of God.

This evidently results from giving undue prominence and weight to matters which even the best friends of disunion must admit not to be *fundamental* to salvation ; and from not considering that the want of union in the body of Christ, is the greatest impediment to growth in grace to the whole body, and each member in particular, as well as to the spread of truth in the world. See John xvii. 21. Undue importance, I say, is attached to the alleged causes of separation from the Church of England, and no *sufficient* weight, (perhaps I might say, no weight,) attached to the strong reasons for adhering to her communion : and thus, in magnifying to the greatest possi-

ble degree, matters of difference, and passing lightly over the advantages of union, many have been led to adopt a course which, it is to be feared, is more the result of bias or instability, than of sound and sober views of Scriptural truth.

The perusal of Mr. Hargrove's pamphlet has pressed these considerations upon my mind,—considerations in themselves painful, but doubly so from their connexion with the name of one who is justly dear to all God's children to whom he is known ; and who will not, I trust, be the less dear to any of them in consequence of the course which he has conscientiously, at least, though it may be unnecessarily and unjustly, adopted. Such a feeling towards *him*, in common with other servants of the Lord who have taken a similar course, will prevent my indulging in either the language or spirit of bitterness, whilst engaged in the disagreeable task of reviewing his Reasons for leaving the Established Church. And to this end, I would adopt his own prayer—"That our God and Father, whom we serve in the Gospel of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, may vouchsafe his blessing, and enable us, by his Spirit, to lay aside all prejudice and party views and feelings, and in the balance of the sanctuary to weigh the subject here before us ; and, wherever the truth may be, to sacrifice unto it, and that at any and whatever cost."

Before I proceed, I would just premise, that my object at present is not a formal defence of the Church of England in general, but an answer to Mr. H.'s "Reasons, &c." This I think it necessary to mention, as Mr. H. omits many charges, usually brought forward by the enemies of the Church of England.

The first reason, which Mr. H. assigns for separating

from his brethren of the Established Church, and that “which probably most pressed on his mind, was the worldliness of the Establishment;” which he contrasts with what he asserts to have found in sacred Scripture, that “the church of God (the *visible* church, of course, he means, otherwise there would be no force in his objection,) was a union of those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints—an *assembly* of those calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, professing salvation through his blood—a separation from the world, a calling out of it (as the word implies,) a people for the name of the Lord,” &c.

Does Mr. H. mean to say by this, that no church can be scriptural which is in any way connected with evil; or, that the worldliness of many, connected *by profession* with the Established Church, forms an argument against the Church itself? If it can be proved that the church is accountable, either for the inconsistencies of her children, or the ungodliness of many who profess themselves her members, there may be some ground for the charge. But if, on the other hand, it be proved that such results arise from an *abandonment of her principles*, and a *disregard to her injunctions*, no reasonable ground remains for such a charge. If the fundamental principles of the Establishment are scriptural, the worldliness, of which Mr. H. complains, is not the use, but *abuse*, of her doctrines and discipline; and to all reasonable minds it becomes at once plain, that separation in such a case is unjustifiable. It can surely be no reason that we should separate from what is good and true in itself, because bad men abuse it; otherwise, the Word of God itself must be abandoned, as heretical and impious. And here it may be well to inquire, *What is the Established Church,*

properly represented? Much depends on properly determining this. Mr. H. would make it to consist of all who are in the habit of attending church service: this is evident from his finding fault with the minister's addressing all his congregation as "dearly beloved brethren." Is this candid? is it just? Is the merit or demerit of any system to be judged by those who *misrepresent* it, because they may constitute the majority of its professed adherents; and not by those who fairly represent it, though in fewer numbers? If so, then the church of God itself, in its broadest sense, must lose its claim to existence; for its false friends are far more numerous than its true members. But the Church of England addresses all as "brethren." By what means is this deduction established? From the minister's words, it will be answered. Well—be it so. Will Mr. H. allow his own mode of proceeding in public worship to be tried by the same standard? Of course, he often uses the expression, "Let us pray," and that, where there are many worldlings; but then he does not mean to include *them*—neither does the Established Church. She teaches the sinner that prayer is the work of the Spirit (see Collect for 5th Sunday after Easter), and that every good thing comes from God alone (see Collect for 1st Sunday after Trinity); she recognises no one as a faithful member, "who has not repented truly of his sins, and who has not a lively faith in Christ Jesus" (see Communion Service). As the fruit of this faith, she requires her children to adopt the language and spirit of entire devotedness to her God: "And here we offer and present unto Thee, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy, lively, and reasonable sacrifice" (see prayer following Lord's prayer in Communion Service). Indeed, it would be difficult

to conceive language more searching, than that the Church of England employs to test the soundness of her professed members. “ Her principle (however), as expressed in her article, is admitted to be true ; but in her practice, Mr. H. found no such thing”—“ faithful men, but no congregation of them.” (Page 5.) Has Mr. H. found such, since he left the church? If so, how did he determine their faithfulness? By his own judgment? But perhaps he was deceived, and that, in the majority. By the voice of the church? What church? A church without bishops, priests, or deacons—not a New Testament church, surely: *for no church existed for 16 centuries without them.* After all, what can Mr. H., or any body of men, do more (*and they may do less*) than the Church of England obliges every one, standing in the place of minister to do—viz. set the truth before the minds of the people, and thus leave upon *them* the awful responsibility of abusing the ordinance of God? Must not Mr. H. after all, be satisfied to receive a man upon a sound confession of faith, “ who is not an open and notorious liver?” Such was the practice of the Apostles: and such is the principle of the Church of England.

Mr. H. desires his readers to look at the Established Church in Dublin, or any other place, to prove that it is not, in that place, “ a congregation of faithful men.” How will he prove this? What is a congregation of faithful men? A number of men *exclusively the Lord’s servants*? If this be a correct definition (and it would seem to be Mr. H.’s), then, there is no such thing, nor ever was—no, not even in the upper chamber where the early disciples met—nor ever will be, till the sheep have passed under the hand of Him that telleth them, at the time of eternal separation. But if the gathering together

of two or three, in the Lord's name and Spirit, constitutes a congregation, will Mr. H. deny the privilege to every church in Dublin ?

In page 6, the Church and the world stand *identified*—a strong expression. Let us look for proof. "Every where I saw the Established Church, there did I see the world." Therefore, they are one and the same thing—every true member of the Established Church is, therefore, a true worldling ! Does such a statement need to be disproved ? If so, Mr. H. happily saves his friends the trouble ; for he admits, "There are faithful men, *individually*," in the Church. If Mr. H. had, I conceive, given due consideration to the subject, he might have come to a conclusion which would have spared him and his brethren of the Church much pain ; for he would see that the Church, properly so called, consists of these men "faithful individually ;" and that the church recognized none others—at least, that her view of membership does not extend beyond "*profession* of salvation through the blood of Christ," connected with decency of deportment ; which is all Mr. H. would require. "My view of the present state of the church (says Thelwall,) is simply this—That those who think as I do, and are stigmatized by the world as Evangelical, Methodists, Calvinists, Fanatics, and so forth, and who really cleave to, and endeavour to preach the doctrines of our Articles and Homilies, are indeed the *real Church of England*—that those who stigmatize us (and though, perhaps, they call themselves High Churchmen), preach in fact nothing but a compound of Popery and Heathen morality,—are *mere intruders and pretenders—Dissenters of the worst and most dangerous sort.*"

But the grand objection is grounded upon the alleged

unsoundness of the Church of England's mode of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What has been advanced on this subject is specious, and needs therefore to be plainly answered. How far Scripture supports the arguments of our adversaries, we shall endeavour to ascertain. First, however, I would ask, In what does Mr. H. conceive communion to consist—on what its advantages to depend? It seems to me that he greatly diminishes its extent and blessedness, by limiting it to a particular place, where some few may be assembled; and resting its advantages upon the soundness or unsoundness of the profession of those few. Why is so much stress laid on communion with the Lord's people, at a particular time and place, and so little upon communion *with the Lord himself*? Can we suppose that any blessing of the new covenant is left dependent upon contingencies? And is this seal of the covenant necessarily stripped of its consolations for the believer, because "the worldling, the formalist, or the Pharisee" vainly intrudes himself? The great privilege (as it seems to me,) connected with the ordinance, arises not so much from meeting the Lord's people there (though that doubtless adds to its blessedness), as *to meet the Lord himself and hold communion with him*,—a privilege with which the presence of the worldling cannot interfere. "Are the children of God (observes the author quoted before,)* to be debarred from coming to his table till the church on earth is free from formal professors and hypocrites—that is, till the tares have ceased to grow amongst the wheat?" "The church of Christ (he adds,) is *one*, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is *one*. We partake of it, not as individuals,—not as separate congrega-

* Mr. Thelwall.

tions,—*but as members of the universal church of Christ*, even as though all Christians upon earth sat down at *one table.*” And again, “The ordinance belongs to *us who believe.* We *only can*, indeed, partake of it. We profess to hold communion with the whole multitude of believers,—with all the members of Christ. And we really do hold communion with them, and with *them only.* We do not communicate with the unbelievers, nor do we profess to do so, even though they should kneel at the table with us; for the principle and bond of communion is *faith*, which in them is wanting.”

But, it is said, *The minister of the Establishment has no right to exclude the formalist, Pharisee, or worldling*, (page 7); we answer, *just as much right as the Scripture gives him.* If Mr. H. had defined the Scriptural rule on this subject, he might have spared the feelings of his brethren of the Establishment, as well as his own time. The position he places them in, makes them “partakers of other men’s sins,—most guilty partakers, too,—building up confusion on confusion,—helping them to that damnation, whatever it means,” &c. This is strong language—I quote, but shall not imitate it. I would only ask, in reply, Where does the Scripture invest the minister or the church with the power which Mr. H. demands for either? Can he produce a single instance from Scripture, to show the discipline of the Church of England to be inconsistent with the practice of the primitive church? The language of Scripture is, “Let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” 1 Cor. xi. 28. It does not run thus: Let the church examine him; or, Let Paul or Peter examine. We know the latter was deceived, and both might be; and, “*à fortiori*,” less gifted disciples in the present day. “Who

art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth."

I shall now undertake to show that mixed communion was recognized by our Lord and his apostles. Both communicated with Judas, as is evident from Luke xxii. 19—22. Our Lord, it may be said, was aware of his character; but not the apostles. This is equally unfounded in fact; see Matt. xxvi. 21—28. This, we are told, if it proves any thing, proves too much. It proves thus much—that our Lord himself allowed a professor (whose outward conduct was decent, which is evident from the question, "Lord, is it I?") otherwise the disciples would have known who was intended,) to a participation of the Lord's supper; and this without any prejudice to the communion of true disciples. That unmixed communion was not intended, and therefore not to be expected in the present dispensation, our Lord shows us in the parable of the tares (Matt. xiii. 25.) Mr. H., however, objects to the applicability of the parable to the case—"The field is the world; He does not say, The field is the church." (Page 53.) Does not the parable prove, however, quite the contrary of what Mr. H. would deduce from it? It is not said merely that the tares were sown in the world; but *among the wheat*, in the kingdom of the Son of Man. That is, in the visible church, *specious hypocrites* would ever be found, whom it is sometimes impossible to distinguish from true believers.

"*But some one may tell me that he knows places in the Established Church where evil is rectified by the exercise of discipline. Well, I readily acknowledge that, in a country parish, one may, by active and continued exertion, succeed in purging out some of the evil.*" (P. 13.) This is not

enough, however : Mr. H. is not satisfied with any church which does not purge out *the whole*. Has he been able yet to discover such ? No ; and therefore he has not joined any.* Then, he is his own church—bishop, priest, deacon, and congregation, are centred in unity. Is *that* church totally expurgated ? But he cannot leave *that*. Well, what he *must* tolerate in himself, he *might* tolerate in others.

The next charge against the Establishment is, “ that she receives support from the state ;” and this connexion with the state obliges her “ to wait on the world for her ministry and discipline, her rank, her support, *her every thing*.” My friend objects to the *principle* of *establishments*. If the principle be proved correct, and in accordance with Scripture, then his objection necessarily loses its weight. It is not the *abuse* of the principle, but the principle itself, to which he objects. The gist of his argument is this—the church and state are connected ; therefore, the church must be corrupt, &c. But what, if the principle of establishments is recognized in Scripture ? Surely, the Scripture cannot recognize what is necessarily productive of evil ! Let us now see whether my friend’s views are supported by Scripture. In the 1st chapter of Ezra we read—“ Now, in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the *Lord stirred up the spirit* of Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in

* The plea of perfect purity will, it is hoped, be no longer put forward by the “ Plymouth Brethren,” to draw members from the Church. If it be not abandoned, the Author, as well as the “ Brethren,” well know it is time it should. He need not specify proofs. The want of honesty in this particular is truly revolting to any lover of truth and candour.

writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you, of all his people? His God be with him: and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem; and whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, *besides the free-will offering* for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them, strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, *besides all that was willingly offered.*" To the same effect is Ezra vi. 3, 4—"Let the expenses be given out of the king's house," And again, in verse 8—"I make a decree, that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered." Perhaps, however, the servant of God rejected support from the state; read verse 14—"And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of Cyrus," &c. Here we find the church of God receiving support from a king—nay, even from a heathen king—and yet Mr. H. will deny the propriety of the church's receiving support from one professedly Christian. It is quite equitable that a king should reward a worldly servant for worldly service, but quite unjustifiable to allow the servant of God a maintenance in consi-

deration of his service. Then, the earth is no longer the Lord's—the king of the country ceases to be responsible to the Lord. But this, (at least, in substance,) is admitted. “*There is a very common argument—I believe a very fallacious one—Let the king provide for the welfare of his subjects—let him see that he rule righteously. This is his duty, and he is responsible for it. The ruler is, I believe, God’s ordinance for this purpose : but he is not responsible for the establishment of religion, for it is not his duty ; at least, I cannot discover any trace of it in the New Testament,*” &c. Page 17. By what process will Mr. H. dissolve the king’s accountability to God in spiritual matters? His responsibility in matters affecting the temporal welfare of his subjects, he admits to be co-extensive with his kingdom ; but in spiritual things, he stands only accountable as any individual. Does any king possess aught that is not the Lord’s? If not, truly he is accountable, if the Lord’s property be not appropriated to the Lord’s service. In Rom. xiii. 4, we have the Scriptural definition of a magistrate — applicable, therefore, to a king—“ He is the minister of God to thee for good.” What good? Surely, all the good he can do—whatever good is authorised by example or command in Scripture.

We are presented, as usual, with the abuses arising from this principle : to notice them, would be to repeat what has been stated before. Once for all—the abuse of wicked men of what is good in itself, is no more an argument against its use, than the fungous excrescence of an oak would prove the tree’s unsoundness. But I would ask Mr. H. does he ever recognize, by practice, what he condemns in principle? Let me suppose a case—not unlikely to occur. Mr. H. comes into a neigh-

bourhood to preach the Gospel—he finds no house open to him for the purpose. There is, to be sure, a spacious school-house which would just suit, but then, it belongs to a worldly squire. He is a good-natured man, however, and freely lends it, and comes, perhaps, himself. Will Mr. H. refuse it, because its patron is a worldling? If not, his principle is contradicted. But this is a trifling matter—be it so. Though trifling, it involves the same principle: and the Scripture says, “He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in that which is much.” Is it not curious, moreover, to observe the strange transition which has occurred in the views of some Dissenters with reference to the subject before us, when so circumstanced, that party feeling and prejudice cease to operate? When King Pomare, of Tahiti, *established* Christianity, and suppressed cannibalism, the *Independent* missionaries, Tyerman and Bennett, who, whilst at home, advocated Mr. H.’s new views about establishments, hailed the *establishment* of Christianity under King Pomare, as a remarkable blessing; and justly, *but not consistently*. Why oppose establishments at home, and advocate them in Tahiti? The reason is obvious; the veil of party and prejudice was removed by a change of circumstances, and then they were enabled to “judge just judgment.”

The next charge preferred against the Establishment is, “her acknowledgment of what Mr. H. believes to be evil, and which, to his apprehension, (and he must act on his apprehension,) is evil, is established in the system, which it is not in the power of her members to evade.” We shall endeavour to prove that Mr. H.’s apprehension of the subject alluded to, is a *mis*-apprehension of the truth; but before doing so, it may be well to notice a common error, and a very dangerous one. The notice

of it, is suggested by the words in the parenthesis—" I must act on my apprehension." I do not mean to deny to Mr. H. the right of judging for himself, and acting consistently with his views. What I desire to rectify is, the too common mistake, that if a man acts consistently with his views of truth, he *must* be acting according to the mind of God. This is by no means true : a man may *sin* conscientiously, " sin not being the *wilful* transgression of a *known* law," as Wesley defines it, " but the transgression of the law, whether known or not." Now, to proceed to the charge, that the Established Church " acknowledges or allows evil," Mr. H. " fears, (p. 20,) that both in principle and practice, the Establishment tolerates evil." This he endeavours to illustrate by infant baptism. On this subject, we are not presented with Mr. H.'s views distinctly : by inference, however, it appears, that he is opposed to infant baptism (see p. 21, towards end). It was not his object, however, for obvious* reasons—to excite controversy on the subject—he merely wishes to prove the manner of administering it unscriptural. He objects to the application of the word *regenerate*, to baptized infants. " Some there are, who profess to believe, that all the children they baptize are really regenerate. If they can believe it, they certainly are honest members of the church ; but on what grounds they believe it, I know not : *I see no word of God* on which their faith can rest ; and without this foundation, their faith is but credulity." The question here to be determined is, whether the promises of God extend to

* This is a subject of controversy amongst " The Brethren." Some contending it is unnecessary ; and others, the reverse. A specimen of union !

children in general, and whether the faithful have scriptural ground for looking for the fulfilment of those promises? That the promises of God extend to children, cannot be denied—"Unto you and your children." That the fulfilment of the promises should be expected, is not matter of "credulity," but of faith. As Mr. H. has not impugned infant baptism itself, I need not show its accordance with Scripture. He objects, however, to the thanksgiving for the regeneration of children baptized, as being too strong; and "he sees no word of God on which this faith can rest." Such word, however, might have been found in 1 John v. 14, 15—"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, *whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him.*" This language is not less strong than that objected to—nevertheless, it is not the language of credulity. Had it not been written *by inspiration*, I doubt not it would offend. But "he sees many thousands, and tens of thousands, rising up to falsify the affirmation passed upon them." Admitted—but is this in consequence of the standard of the church being *too high*? It has been proved not. Nay: but it has arisen from the want of "credulity"—the want of *simple faith* to lay hold on the promises. All the services, and therefore the baptismal, were formed for the *faithful*; indeed, they could be formed for none other; and to the abuse of this service by the faithless, is to be ascribed the evil complained of. Let God's people put God's promises to the test of faith, and they will not hesitate to "*know that they have the petitions they desired of him.*" Indeed, the whole controversy seems to turn on the question, "Are children admissible into the Church of

Christ?" And may not God's ordinance convey blessing to them despite of the unfaithfulness in its administration. If so, there is no reason why the seal of admission should be denied them. But how can we know whether each child is received by the Lord, and engrafted in his mystical body? I answer—there is no need of knowing whether each is accepted—God's promises are general. From God's *general* promises, it is the believer's privilege to regard each individual child presented in faith as a child of God. But, it is said, this expectation is without foundation in fact, and "there is no word in Scripture on which this faith can rest." But what, if there should be? If a case, which altogether contradicts this sweeping statement, can be produced from Scripture, will Mr. H. still call the faith of his brethren by the name of "credulity?" In 1 Sam. i. 27, 28, we find such an instance of "credulity." Hannah prayed for Samuel, and her petition is answered: "therefore, she lends him to the Lord, as long as he lives." How can Hannah tell whether Samuel will serve the Lord? Just by the same process as any believer ascertains that his child is accepted in baptism. She prays in faith, and "knows that she has the petition which she has asked of God." How will Mr. H. reconcile Hannah's conduct with his views of the difference between faith and credulity? Do we live under a dispensation of less privileges than Hannah? or, is our God any other than the God of Hannah? Again, therefore, I repeat it, Mr. H. has done nothing more than prove that abuses exist in the Established Church; and that, not in consequence of its principles, as he asserts, but in defiance of them. Is the church to which he has given his name, *without abuses*? If he can prove this—nay, more—if he can prove that

its constitution is better calculated to secure its members against abuses, than that of the Establishment, I am sure I speak the sentiments of many in saying, "We will join it." A word hereafter on this subject.

The Ordination Service is next brought under review. (Page 26). As usual, we are presented with a number of abuses. "We see crowds of young men with different motives, daily pressing forward for ordination, all professing to be moved by the Holy Ghost," &c. Is this in consequence of due administration of the church's discipline,—or, its total rejection? That the latter is the cause, needs not much proof. The bishop, previous to ordination, requires each candidate to bring a testimonial of fitness from three clergymen of standing; the candidate must then satisfy the bishop himself, by submitting to an examination. It may be said, however, this is not sufficient: the bishop may be ungodly, "being appointed by the state;" the three clergymen recommending may be ungodly, and therefore unfit judges; the young man himself may have a seared conscience (and a seared conscience he must have, if he lightly takes upon him the solemn vows of ordination.) Well—what more can be done? The people should be apprised of his intention of presenting himself. Even this has been provided for: nay more; in England, previously to any young man's ordination, his intention is published before the congregation, for three Sundays successively; and an exhortation given to any, who can assign a just cause of impediment, to come forward and declare it. I cannot exactly say what the discipline of Mr. H's new church is, if there be any; but every candid mind, I think, will admit that, if we have bad ministers, it is not the fault of the church. If this be true, what shall we say of the statement which

occurs in the next page (28), that the church “will recognise episcopal ordination without the ministry of the Spirit?”

Connected with this subject stands, of course, the doctrine of succession: this is termed “Judaizing.” Succession under the Jewish law is admitted; but “the only acknowledged succession I know of, is from St. Peter. Who was Paul’s successor?” This seems, no doubt, very conclusive to my friend—as doubtless is the position he lays down in the next paragraph, viz. that the office of ministering in the church is conferred entirely independent of human instrumentality. “But who was Paul’s successor?” What does Mr. H. mean? Does he want to know that Timothy succeeded him (1 Tim. iv. 7—9), which is plain from the whole tenor of this Epistle? And who was Peter’s successor? The Pope. Well, be it so—is the ordinance of God therefore destroyed? Is the office of bishop necessarily extinct, because it has been perverted and abused? If it be of God, man cannot destroy it. But the office depends on the man. If so, apostleship itself is in danger; for Judas was acknowledged an apostle: “Have I not chosen you *twelve*, and one of you is a devil?” In which passage, the word “chosen” evidently refers to the apostleship of Judas, as he had no interest in election unto salvation. If Judas, therefore, was recognised an apostle, he had the power of ordaining; and if this be proved, what becomes of the common argument against episcopal ordination, grounded on the objection, that its validity depends on succession through the medium of Popery? Bad as the Popes were, they need not be worse than Judas. They who deny that the Christian Ministry has been continued down to the present time will, I think, find

themselves in a difficult position with regard to the Scriptures themselves. If there be no rulers in the Church, divinely appointed, (and "the Brethren" deny that any man can exercise rule save by permission from the people,) then I ask how can such passages as Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, be obeyed? If no man can claim the right of ruling in the Church by a divine commission, then it ceases to be a duty to obey "those who watch for souls." If this duty remains obligatory—then who in the assembly of "the Brethren" is appointed to rule? And if any, how is he appointed? By laying on of hands of those appointed to lay hands? No. By whom then? By the people? This may not be—for it is contrary to the practice of the New Testament and of the Christian Church for 16 Centuries. Hence, as long as this Scripture is to be obeyed, there must be those, who have ever been acknowledged as the divinely commissioned rulers in the Church—and hence it is impossible for "the Brethren" to obey. Can any one place himself in a right position, by taking one, which prevents his yielding obedience to a plain command of God? It is plainly impossible to obey Rulers, where there are confessedly no Rulers to obey. See "Boyd on Episcopacy."

But Mr. H. seems to reject ordination accompanied by any external rites. This is strange. Were not Timothy and Titus ordained by laying on of the Apostles' hands? But what need of this? Was it not enough to be ordained of the Spirit, without any form? So Mr. H. would seem to say—let him settle the matter with the Apostle.

The subject of ordination having been disposed of, we are next presented with a digression on the meaning of the word "profession" (p.30.) "I thought that all

members of the Establishment being baptized, and attending the services of the church, thereby made a profession entitling them to be treated as God's children," &c. And this, Mr. H. seems to think, is the church's view of "profession." If he had examined a little more closely, he might have formed a different opinion upon the subject. The church *does not recognize* those who are baptized, and attending the services of the church, as *de facto*, true professors. This is evident, from the injunction she lays on those "intending to be partakers of the holy communion, to signify their names to the curate, at least, some time the day before" (rubric before the communion service.) What need of this, if she regarded *all* church-goers as professors? Those whom she recognizes as professors, are they who have "repented them earnestly of their sins, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God." Others may *class themselves* amongst her members—they are, however, but "intruders and dissenters of the worst kind."

Discipline, which stands connected with the subject of profession, seems not happily selected. "Discipline, then, is the corrective which God has given to keep the church free from manifested evil." Now, I find it difficult to conceive how discipline can be exercised without subordination, and how subordination can be maintained, where no superiority is acknowledged. How can Mr. H. secure the exercise of discipline in a body, *where a man's judgment of himself is that which determines his suitableness for taking part in the administration of church affairs?* Can any test be more insecure than this? and yet, by such a test, Mr. H. would have the maintainers of discipline (which he advocates) to be tried. A man thinks he is qualified to

preach, or pray, or decide, in matters where sound judgment is needed; therefore, he must be duly qualified, because *he* thinks so. Such is the discipline, such are the officers of "The Brethren." If this be a true model of church government, it is certainly very unlike the government of the primitive church. It never was intended that order in the church should be abolished; this must be done where there is no superior; for there cannot be order without gradation. So much for discipline.

The doctrines, discipline, profession, &c. of the Establishment having been found faulty, of course we may expect to hear some advice as to how the evil may be remedied; this is given accordingly. (p, 39.) "But, say some, and many a one, what shall we do? The Establishment, we know, has its imperfections—we see, we feel the evil in it; but we see nothing better. Do you see the evil? then, cease from it; let that be your first step: God will show you the next, when you have taken that." This advice is certainly consistent, be its claims in other respects what they may. I fear, however, it would be difficult to ascertain its connexion, in any other respect, with either good sense or Scripture. Mr. H. first assumes that the evil of the Establishment is necessary and essential to it, and therefore irremediable; and upon this assumption he grounds his advice. No doubt he is sincere in offering this advice, as he was in adopting the course recommended himself; but he must exercise Christian charity towards those who cannot see things through his medium, and excuse them, if they decline adopting the course he has recommended. They do so, they trust, not for filthy lucre's sake,—as is insinuated (and has been often broadly asserted), p. 43,—but simply because they see no warrant, in the Old or

New Testament, for separating from a Church, *whose fundamental doctrines and discipline are proved to be in accordance with Scripture.* And, moreover, could they see the abuses of the Church, even through Mr. H.'s microscopic medium, they could not discover any denomination of Christians less liable to them. But, says Mr. H. "Cease from evil;" or, in other words, 'Leave the Church:' "let this be your first step." What then? "God will guide to a resting-place." There is a seeming want of candour about this part of my friend's pamphlet, which is unworthy of him. Why not speak out? why not print what he often, doubtless, advises "*viva voce*?" why not say at once, "Come out of the church, and join the "Plymouth Brethren?" But, "to the law and to the testimony." Where does my friend find Scriptural precedent for his advice—how can he establish it, either from precept or example in Scripture? He says most justly (p. 39), "I see no safety, amid the delusions on the right hand or on the left, but in the Word." Perhaps he would furnish some Scriptural safeguard against the delusion of remaining in the Establishment. *There is nothing like a Scriptural proof brought forward to support this very decided position;* and I only trust that any, who may be now wavering, may wait till such proof is produced,—and I have no doubt of their being Churchmen while they live. I shall spare my friend the trouble of producing Scripture in reference to this subject—I shall quote it for him; first premising, that God has had a church at all times, even the darkest; and that there has been evil in it at all times, When the Church of God consisted but of eight souls, there was a Ham amongst them. A mixed multitude went up out of Egypt with Israel. Exod. xii. 38. See also the admi-

nistration of God's own laws in Eli's time, 1 Sam. i.—iv. Isa. i.—v. ; in Jeremiah's time, (as appears from the whole book) ; in our Lord's (as appears from the whole evangelical history). Here we find corruptions as great as the worst enemies of the Church can allege against her. Was the *system* therefore to be condemned ; were the people of God commanded to come out ? Once more—Can we suppose any Christian Church to be in a more corrupt state than those of Ephesus and Sardis, when John was commissioned by our Lord to write to them ? and yet, there is not a word about separation. Surely, if it were the Lord's will that such a course should be adopted by his people, connected with such a church, it would have been signified.

Bnt Mr. H. furnishes an interpretation for these epistles, which perhaps satisfies *him*. The epistles he believes to be *prophetic*—“ exhibiting the features of the whole church in different periods of its passage through the world.” Well, perhaps they are prophetic. I dispute it not. But will any one say, that the history which John gives of the seven churches was not founded in fact ? Are we to regard their circumstantial details as a mere allegory ? Alas ! for the cause which requires such expedients !

And now I shall take leave of this subject, by quoting a passage from the judicious Hooker which seems much to the purpose. It was written to point out the faults of those who attacked the church in his time. “ The method of winning the people's affection unto a general liking of the cause, hath been this : First. In the hearing of the multitude the faults (especially of higher callings,) are ripped up with marvellous exceeding severetie and sharpnesse of reprovee ; which, being oftentimes

done, begetteth a good opinion of integrity, zeal, and holiness, to such constant reproovers of sinne, as, by likelihood, would never be so much offended at that which is evil, unlesse themselves were singularly good. The next thing hereunto is, to impute all faults and corruptions wherewith the world aboundeth, unto the kind of ecclesiastical government established. Wherein, as before, by reprovng faults, they purchased unto themselves, from the multitude, a name to be virtuous, so, by finding out this kind of cause, they obtaine to be judged wiser than others. Whereas, in truth, unto the forme even of Jewish government, which the Lord himself, (they confess) did establish, with like show of reason, they might impute those faults which the prophets condemn in the governors of that commonwealth, as to the kind of English regiment ecclesiastical, (whereof also God himselfe, though in other sort, is authour,) the staines and blemishes found in our state; which, springing from the roote of human frailtie and corruption, not only are, but have been always more or lesse,—yea, and for any thing we know to the contrarie, will be to the world's end,—complained of. Having gotten thus much sway in the hearts of men, *a third step is, to propose THEIR OWN FORME of church government as the ONLY SOVERAIGNE REMEDIE of all evils, and to adorne it with all the glorious titles that may be.*"

Let any candid reader judge whether this is not prophetic of what is passing in the present day, and strictly applicable to the particular body to which Mr. H. has joined himself. The Establishment is first "ripped up with exceeding severitie,"—a good opinion of the zeal of the persons engaged in this work is thus established,—the confidence of the unstable and ignorant se-

cured,—and only one step then remains, “to propose their own forme of government, as the only soveraigne remedie,” &c.

But to the question, “Whither will you go?” to which of the many sects of the day will you join yourself? I reply—to none of them. They are all, I fear, more or less sectarian, and *sectarianism do I hate!!* &c. I desire to be simply, in all its foolishness, a member of the church of God, and to receive as my brethren, the true and holy believers of *every* denomination,” &c. No one who knows Mr. H. can doubt his sincerity in making this statement; but, to my mind, it only furnishes one of the many proofs, how little we understand ourselves. Mr. H. is “ready to receive as his brethren, true and holy believers of every denomination.” Did Mr. H. forget, whilst writing this, what he had written concerning the Established Church? I shall say nothing more in reply to it, than merely to contradict it; and direct the attention of my readers, to the spirit of the pamphlets issued by the “Plymouth Brethren,” particularly those written, I have reason to believe, by Mr. Darby.

Mr. H. (p. 47) alludes to an argument, commonly, and, as it appears to me, justly, brought forward by members of the Established Church, against the lawfulness of leaving her communion; that is, the proof of God’s favour, manifested in the blessing resting on the labours of her ministry. This, however, does not seem to Mr. H. to have much weight: and if it does not prove God’s favour, it is difficult to conceive what could better illustrate it. Can we suppose the Lord would sanction, with an extensive and increasing blessing, the labours of those, who are necessarily “of the world,” because they

are of the Establishment—the “ Establishment and world being identified ?” But we are told, that the good which is done, is “ just in proportion to the irregularity of the clergy, to their unfaithfulness to the laws and ordinances of their church,” &c. This is another of those broad assertions, in which the enemies of the Establishment so often deal, without any foundation whatever in fact. I cannot meet any arguments in defence of this statement ; for Mr. H. has forborne to offer any. Why ? Simply, because he could not. Mr. H. gives, as a sort of proof, the conduct of the “ High Church party, (as they are called,) and, as he believes, the more consistent Churchmen.” *Does he really believe it ?* Does he seriously mean to say, that the doctrinal views of *such* men, as well as their habits of life, are *consistent* with the doctrine and discipline of the Establishment, as set forth in her Articles, Homilies, and Ordination Service ? If so, he must either be very ignorant, or very greatly blinded by prejudice.

Having now noticed all the points, of any importance, contained in Mr. H.’s pamphlet, it remains, that I say a word upon his closing address. Mr. H. again compares what he conceives to be the Establishment, with the Church, (page 61) : the former being “ a body of unfaithful, worldly men, in subjection to the state, with some saints among them.” To these saints he addresses himself. What ground there is for this labour on his part, I have endeavoured to point out. But I cannot avoid noticing the persons to whom he addresses himself : they are those who are otherwise addressed, and on almost every occasion when practicable, on the same subject ;—one neither profitable to their souls, nor the souls of their sometimes well-meaning, but ill-judging Dissenting

friends. — And here I leave the ground of defence. Hitherto I have not charged my friend or his new associates in church-membership, with anything unconnected with simple defence of the Establishment.—I have now to charge them with giving more energy to rending the body of Christ, and sowing division, than preaching the simple gospel. I have to charge them with devoting their powers more to disuniting saints, than bringing perishing souls to the knowledge of Christ. If they feel called to preach the gospel, there is some countenance to be had from Scripture for so doing :—but I see nothing in the Word of God to warrant what seems to be the very essence of their system ; viz. the necessity of drawing pious souls out of a communion, in connexion with which God had blessed them, and in which thousands have lived and died ornaments of the Gospel ; in which martyrs have sealed their testimony with their blood ; in which the primitive faith and government are, I believe, exclusively maintained ;—and in which, also, in this our day, the Lord is working in a way hitherto unknown. This is not the spirit of the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 15 : Rom. xv. 20.

And now, were I asked, why I could not adopt the course recommended by my friends ; I would say, I cannot join you, because I do not see in your body the constituent parts of a New Testament Church. I read there of bishops, priests, and deacons forming a part of the church. In your body, every person is at liberty to assume any office he pleases, or which he is deemed fit to hold, by those in no way authorized by Scripture to appoint him. Mr. James, of Birmingham, (one every way qualified to give an opinion on the subject, and not likely to disparage the merits of Dissent,) confesses that no

case occurs in the inspired history, where it is mentioned that a church elected its pastor. (James, page 12, 2nd edition.) If this be true, what claim can any body of laymen, assembling themselves, and appointing their preachers, or their preachers appointing themselves, have to the name of church?

I cannot join your body, because I see that its constitution prevents obedience to plain commands of Scripture. Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, How, I ask, can these commands be obeyed, when no authority is recognized?—I cannot join you, because I know I should leave an apostolical and primitive communion, to join a new one of man's invention;—with this disadvantage too, that the mixed communion, which I should in such case join, is less secured by the constitution of the body, from the intrusion of unbelievers, than the communion of the Established Church, when duly regulated. In your body, I believe, each member has the power of introducing others to "break bread," without any other proof of their discipleship, than that which an *unsound* judgment may secure. There are many, we know, whose hearts are right, who are yet very unfit to judge of the sincerity of others. I know, in such a constitution of things, there *must be* a great mixture—*I know it from fact*. In the Established Church, it need not be so. The minister is invested with a power of rejecting the ungodly, from a participation in the communion of saints; and if the Lord give him a sound judgment, there is much more likelihood of a pure communion, than could reasonably be expected, where every member is allowed to present others, and they others, and so on. Can Mr. H. *now* exercise the authority, with which the Church of England invested him, for excluding unfit communicants? He may raise his

voice, as doubtless he would ; but his voice being but one, (though perhaps the only wise and sound one,) is drowned in the multitude of others ; whose place *in the Church* would be, “ *to obey those who had the rule over them.*” To quote the strong language of Mr. James, “ He may flatter like a sycophant, he may beg like a servant,—but he is not permitted to enjoin like a ruler. His opinion is received with no deference—his person treated with no respect—if he say any thing at all, it must be somewhat similar to the ancient soothsayers, for he is only permitted to peep and mutter from the dust.”

Lastly,—I cannot leave the Established Church, because I should thus abandon *the only Church*, which erects a *permanent* barrier against error ;—which she does in her formularies and Articles. The answer will be, “ We have the Word, and we want no other security.” So have heretics and schismatics of every name, and all profess to draw their doctrines from it. Let us not forget the remarkable fact, that those churches on the continent, and elsewhere, once remarkable for piety, but remarkable also for having *no written formularies*, are they which are *now most distinguished by heresies* of the most awful kind ; the Churches of Germany and Switzerland, for example.

To the Lord’s people, then, who may be wavering as to the lawfulness of remaining in the Church, I would say, rather consider the lawfulness of *leaving* it.—Will you curse what God is blessing ? will you, by your act, discountenance and condemn a Church, which has stood the test of eighteen centuries, and which the Lord is in a most signal manner acknowledging ?

You are offended at the too open communion of the church—are you sure of close communion if you leave

it? *Have you prayed* for a better administration of discipline in the Church, *in which God has blessed your soul with light and life*, before you entertained thoughts of *departing from her communion*? If this practice were more general, we should have less cause for separation; but this duty, it is to be feared, is seldom, if ever, faithfully discharged, by those who separate. Consider the certain evil that must result from rending the body of Christ, and the very uncertain good to be expected, either to your own soul, or the souls of others; and take heed lest pride, or love of change, may not operate unduly with you.

Pause and *pray*—**PRAY MUCH** before you take this *decided measure*; and may the Lord guide you into all truth!

THE END.