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ART. I.—*Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A., late Senior Fellow of King's College, and Minister of Trinity Church, Cambridge*, with a selection from his writings and correspondence; edited by the Rev. William Carus, M. A., Fellow and Senior Dean of Trinity College, and Minister of Trinity Church, Cambridge. The American edition edited by the Right Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for the Diocese of Ohio. New York, Robert Carter, 58 Canal street: Pittsburg, 56 Market street.

THE Rev. Charles Simeon was a burning and a shining light in the English church in his day. Although there were among his contemporaries, men of greater genius and greater learning, yet it may reasonably be doubted, whether any individual, during the period of his ministry, left so extensive and so deep an impression on the public mind, as Mr. Simeon. In our opinion, evangelical religion, in the Church of England, owes more to his exertions, under the blessing of God, than to the labours of any one man. The reader, however, will be better able to form a

whom we have to do. Both are reduced to a mere power or principle. Christ as the Son of God is lost. So also in his system the Holy Ghost, is not a divine person, but "the common-spirit," or common sentiment of the church. The Holy Spirit has no existence out of the Church, and in it is but a principle. In this way all the precious truths of the Bible are sublimated into unsubstantial philosophical vagaries, and every man pronounced a Rationalist, or what is thought to be the same thing, a Puritan, who does not adopt them.

Though we have placed the title of Dr. Tyler's Letter to Dr. Bushnell at the head of this article, the course of our remarks has not led us into a particular consideration of it. This is not to be referred to any want of respect. The subject unfolded itself to us in the manner in which we have presented it, and we should have found it inconvenient to turn aside to consider the particular form in which Dr. Tyler has exhibited substantially the same objections to Dr. Bushnell's book. Dr. T. however seems to make less of the promise of God to parents than we do, and to have less reliance on Christian nurture as a means of conversion. We are deeply impressed with the conviction that as to both of these points there is much too low a doctrine now generally prevailing. And it is because Dr. B. urges the fact of the connexion between parents and children, with so much power, that we feel so great an interest in his book. His philosophy of that fact we hope may soon find its way to the place where so much philosophy has already gone.

ART. IV.—*The Apostolical Succession.* *author?*

IN opposition to the doctrine, that Presbyterian ordination is invalid because not derived from a superior order of ministers. there is a twofold argument, negative and positive. The negative argument is founded on the fact, that there is no order of church-officers existing by divine right superior to Presbyters; that no such order can exist as the successors of the primitive Bishops, for these were identical with the primitive Presbyters; nor as successors of the Apostles, for these, as such, had no suc-

cessors. The positive argument is founded on the fact, that the primitive Presbyters actually exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry.

There is only one ground left, on which the validity of Presbyterian ordination can be called in question, viz. that it is not derived even from true Presbyters, that is to say, from the regular successors of the primitive Presbyters. This ground has commonly been taken by the advocates for the necessity of Bishops as an order superior to Presbyters. It is through such Bishops that the succession has been usually traced. The two doctrines are however not identical, nor even inseparable. Even granting what we have alleged—that there is no superior order, and that Presbyters have always rightfully exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry—it may still be said that this, at most, only proves modern bishops to be nothing more than Presbyters, and as such authorized to govern and ordain, but that these powers may not be claimed by those who cannot, like the Bishops, prove themselves to be the successors of the primitive Presbyters.

This argument against the validity of Presbyterian ordination, we propose to examine; but before we do so, it will be necessary to define the meaning of certain terms continually used on both sides of the controversy. The necessity of this arises from the fact, that much confusion has been introduced into the subject by the abuse of terms and by confounding, under one name, things which are materially different. The substitution of a sense in the conclusion wholly distinct from that used in the premises, must vitiate the argument, although the effect may pass unnoticed. Hence have arisen many current fallacies, the popular effect of which has been to give a great advantage to that party in the controversy, by whom, or in whose behalf, the stratagem is practised. Thus when the question to be agitated is whether apostolical succession is *necessary* in the Christian ministry, the term employed admits of two distinct interpretations. It may be said to be necessary, in the sense of being convenient, useful, desirable, and therefore binding under ordinary circumstances. The necessity here predicated of succession is an improper or a relative necessity, from the admission of which it would be most unfair to argue the existence of an absolute or strict necessity, as of a condition *sine qua non*, without which there can be no

valid ministry. Yet these meanings of the word are easily confounded, or the one supposed to involve the other, so that our theoretical admission of the value of succession, and our requiring it in practice, is regarded as a contradiction of our doctrine, that it is not essential, and the seeming inconsistency throws weight into the scale of the adverse argument. The fallacy consists in the assumption, that the utility and relative necessity of this arrangement springs from its absolute necessity, whereas it springs from its simplicity, convenience, and the want of any better method to perpetuate the ministry. If we are bound to effect a certain end, we are bound to effect it in the most direct and efficacious method; but if this method ceases to possess these qualities, our obligation to employ it ceases, while our obligation to attain the end remains unaltered.

The facility with which the two things here distinguished are confounded, may be made apparent by an illustration. It is a rule of most legislative bodies, that the qualifications of the members shall be judged of the body itself, and consequently that no new member shall enter upon his functions, until formally recognised and admitted by his predecessors. This practice has been found so useful and is reckoned so important, that with us it is inserted in the Constitution, and in England, whence it is derived, the House of Commons has by solemn votes asserted it to be a natural and necessary right inherent in the body. The historical fact, however, is, that this important power has repeatedly changed hands, and that very recently a proposition has been made to transfer it. Whatever may be thought, by those concerned and authorized to judge, of the expediency of such a change, it would evidently not affect the source or tenure or extent of legislative power in the members of the house. The obvious advantages belonging to the present system, and the force of habit and association, may have led men to believe, that reception by the sitting members is essential to the legislative standing of one newly elected; but in point of fact, it is derived from a source exterior to the body, and independent of it. This is not adduced as an argument against ministerial succession, but merely as an illustration of the fact, that a relative necessity may come to be confounded with an absolute necessity, or at least regarded as a certain proof of it.

The same discrimination is necessary in relation to the word

succession, which may either mean an uninterrupted series of incumbents, so that the office is never vacant, or a succession, in which the authority of each incumbent is derived directly from his predecessor. The material difference between these senses of the term, and the facility with which they may nevertheless be confounded, will be made clear by a single illustration. The Kings of England and the Presidents of the United States hold their office in a regular succession, equally uninterrupted and equally necessary in both cases. But the nature of the succession is entirely different. Each King derives his kingly office from his relation to his predecessor. Each President derives his office from the people, without any action on the part of his predecessor contributing to it, often against his wishes, and sometimes in direct opposition to his claims as a competitor. The former is a derivative succession; the latter a succession of mere sequence. Nor is this the only distinction to be made in the application of the word succession, which may sometimes have relation to whole bodies or classes of men, and sometimes to single individuals, in which respect it may be distinguished as general or particular succession.

With these preliminary explanations, we shall now proceed to consider the necessity of what is called the apostolical succession as a condition of a valid ministry. And let it be observed that the amount of evidence in this case should bear due proportion to the extent and the importance of the allegations in support of which it is adduced. If the question were whether an unbroken succession is lawful, or expedient, or an ancient practice, or of apostolic origin, much less would be requisite to establish the affirmative than is required to prove it absolutely necessary to the existence of a valid ministry. When a question of such moment is at issue, it is not too much to ask that the proof adduced be clear, conclusive, and if possible cumulative also. And especially may we expect the proposition to be confirmed by an express divine command, or in default of that by some clear scriptural analogy, or, at the least, by clear proof of some natural necessity arising from the nature of the ministry or its design. All these conditions might be fairly insisted on. The want of any, even of the least, would shake the credit of the adverse doctrine, much more the want of several and even of the greatest;

but if all are wanting, we must either reject the doctrine or believe without a reason.

To begin with the most important, if not indispensable: where is the express command, requiring an unbroken succession in the ministry? The only passage which can be made to bear such a construction, is that in which Paul writes to Timothy: "the thing that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* In order that this text may be made to prove the doctrine now in question, it must be assumed, first, that it relates to a regular derivative succession in the ministry; then, that it makes such a succession absolutely necessary; and lastly, that it makes the succession more necessary than the other things mentioned in connexion with it, viz. faith or fidelity, ability to teach, and conformity of doctrine to the apostolic standard. Without this last assumption the argument will prove too much for those who use it, by proving their own orders to be vitiated by a want of ability or faith in any of their predecessors. But all these assumptions are gratuitous. The text speaks only of the transfer of authority to teach from Timothy to others, without mentioning the precise mode in which the transfer should be subsequently made. It is not even said, "who may be able to ordain others also," as might have been expected if the precept were intended to enforce the necessity of an unbroken ministerial succession. But even granting that it does enjoin such a succession, it does not so enjoin it as to make it more essential to the ministry than many other things which were enjoined by the Apostles upon their contemporaries, but are now regarded as no longer binding. Or if this be conceded, it is surely arbitrary in the last degree to make it obligatory as to this one circumstance of a succession, and not as to others which are mentioned with it. There are four things included in the requisition, the continuance of the office, faith or fidelity, ability to teach, identity of doctrine with that of the Apostles. Now the adverse argument supposes the first of these—and that not merely the continuance of the office, but its continuance in a certain form—to be rendered absolutely and forever binding, while the others are regarded as mere secondary circumstances. Either no such distinction is

* 2 Tim. ii. 2.

admissible between the parts of the command, or if it is, it may be differently drawn. If one may insist upon the mere succession as essential, another may, with equal right, insist upon fidelity, ability, or soundness in the faith. This last, indeed, may be contended for, not only with an equal but a better right, because the test of doctrinal conformity is elsewhere made essential, which is not the case with that of succession. All this would be true, even if uninterrupted succession in the ministry had been expressly mentioned in the text, whereas it is found there only by inference, so that if we adopt the meaning which the adverse argument would put upon the passage, we are under the necessity of supposing that which is not mentioned here, nor at all commanded elsewhere, to be more obligatory than other things, which are particularly named here, and especially enjoined elsewhere. If this is unreasonable or absurd, the text in question cannot be a proof of the necessity of an unbroken ministerial succession. And yet this, if not the only text, is much the strongest, that has ever been appealed to, in support of the position. There is no other which has even the appearance of an express command upon the subject.

It is necessary therefore to supply the want of positive explicit declarations, by the substitution of analogies, for instance that afforded by the succession of the Jewish Priests. As these were ministers in the church of God, it may be argued, that the requisition of uninterrupted succession, in their case, creates a strong presumption, that the same would be required in the Christian ministry. But can it prove such succession to be absolutely indispensable? Such a conclusion presupposes, 1. that the existence of succession in the old economy can be binding upon us without express command; 2. that the only analogy thus binding is that of the Levitical Priesthood; 3. that the succession of the Jewish Priests was of the same kind that is now contended for; 4. that in this Levitical succession, thus obligatory on us, there are some things which we may discard or imitate at our discretion.

Let us look at the ground of these assumptions, and first that we are bound by the analogy of Jewish succession. It will not be denied by either of the parties to this controversy that the churches of the old and new dispensations were essentially the same. As little will it be disputed that in some points they were extremely different, and that the differences were not

arbitrary or fortuitous, but characteristic. Now the grand distinctive features of the old dispensation, and of the church under it, were its ceremonial forms and its restrictions; the stress laid upon outward regularity, and the limitation of the church to one small country and a single race. And as some parts of the old economy were intended to be permanent, and others temporary, these must be distinguished by observing whether any given rite or usage bears the peculiar impress of the system which was done away in Christ. Let this test be applied to the requisition of an uninterrupted ministerial succession. With which economy does it more naturally harmonize? With that which was characteristically ceremonial, making spiritual interests dependent, to a great degree, upon external forms, or with that in which the ceremonial element appears to be reduced to its minimum? With that in which, by means of local restrictions, an unbroken succession might be easily secured and promptly verified, or with that in which the abolition of all national and local limitations makes the application of the rule precarious, if not impossible? Surely if any institution or arrangement can be said, in an extraordinary measure, to require and presuppose the peculiar circumstances of the ancient dispensation, the necessity of uninterrupted succession may be so described.

But this is not the only consideration which would lead to the conclusion that the official succession of the Jewish constitution was a temporary rather than a permanent arrangement. There is another reason which deserves attention. The ceremonial and restrictive character of the old economy naturally tended to produce and foster a certain spirit of exclusiveness and overweening attachment to external circumstances. This was, to a certain extent, necessary to the successful operation of the system, one important end of which was to keep the Jews distinct from other nations until Christ should come. But when he did come, this necessity being at an end, the disposition which before had been intentionally fostered, was discouraged and denounced. And even while the old economy subsisted, all excess of the exclusive spirit which belonged to it was checked and censured in a manner which most clearly intimated, that the institutions out of which it grew, and to which it attached itself, were of a temporary nature. Of these corrections and rebukes, which run through all the writings of the prophets, we have one re-

markable example near the first introduction of the Mosaic system, when seventy elders were selected as the subjects of a special inspiration. "And it came to pass that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad, and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle, and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua, the son of Nun, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" Num. xi. 25—29. Here we are expressly told, that these two men had all that was essential. "They were of them that were written," i. e. designated for this very purpose; this was their external qualification. "And the Spirit rested upon them"; this was their internal qualification. Yet simply because they were not visibly united with the rest, because "they went not out unto the tabernacle," but "prophesied in the camp," the zealous Joshua would have them silenced. The reply of Moses seems to have been designed not merely to check Joshua's excessive zeal for his master's personal honour, but to point out the error of postponing the highest to the lowest evidence of divine authority, and taking it for granted that God could not or would not grant his spiritual gifts beyond the bounds of a certain temporary organization.

A remarkable parallel to this instructive incident occurs in the New Testament. Even in the announcing of the new dispensation, John the Baptist had intimated that the Jewish prejudice in question would be wholly at variance with the changed condition of the church. "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matthew iii. 9.) And yet no sooner was the apostolic body organized than a Judaic spirit of exclusiveness began to show itself, a disposition to regard external union with that body, as a necessary proof of authority derived from Christ. "John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

But Jesus said, forbid him not, for there is no man, which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." Mark ix. 38, 39. Some, indeed, are of opinion that our Saviour intended to express disapprobation of the man's proceeding as unauthorized; but of this there is no intimation in his language, and it seems to be directly contradicted by the words, "forbid him not." On the contrary, he seems to teach distinctly, that the evidence of connexion with him was of a higher nature than connexion with his followers, and derived directly from himself. To follow them was indeed a strong presumptive proof, that they who did it followed Christ; but to work a miracle in his name was a direct proof of the same thing. Christ had conferred the power of casting out devils on his personal attendants and immediate followers. We do not read that he had publicly conferred it upon any others. It was natural, therefore, that they should regard it as impossible for any others to possess it rightfully. But here was a man, upon whom Christ had bestowed it nevertheless, and he refers them to the possession of the gift itself, as a sufficient proof that he had so bestowed it. This he could not do without implying that the exclusive spirit, which occasioned his rebuke, was one belonging to the temporary system of the old economy.

From this, and from analogous expressions used by Paul in his epistles, in relation to the same contracted views, as well as from the intrinsic qualities which make an indispensable succession in the ministry peculiarly accordant with the forms and spirit of the old economy, we surely may infer, that the analogy of that succession cannot be absolutely binding upon us, unless enforced by an express command. But even if the mere example were thus binding, its authority must of course extend to all the great theocratical offices, and not to that of the priesthood alone, which was no more a divine institution, and no more a type of Christ's mediatorial character, than the offices of King and Prophet. But in the succession of the Kings there was a breach made very early, as if to warn us not to argue from a uniform custom to an absolute necessity. David was no less the successor of Saul than Solomon of David; and yet in the latter case there was derivative succession, in the former not. This, it is true, admits of another explanation; but as to the Prophets, there appears to have been no reg-

ular or uniform succession in their office. The general analogy of Jewish institutions, then, and even of the great theoretical offices, would lead to the conclusion, that an unbroken ministerial succession is by no means indispensable. Let us grant, however, for the sake of argument, that the only binding analogy is that of the levitical priesthood; it is not true that in it there was an uninterrupted derivative succession from the time of Moses to the time of Christ. Not to mention that the line of the succession of High Priests was twice changed during the period of the Old Testament history—which, as we shall see, was by no means an unimportant circumstance—it is notorious matter of history, that after the Roman conquest, the derivative succession of the priests was interrupted, and the appointing power vested in a foreign government. And yet the High Priests who, according to the adverse doctrine, could not be legitimate successors of the earlier incumbents, appear to have been recognised as such by the Apostles, and by Christ himself; for when officially adjoined by Caiaphas, acting in that character, he broke through the silence he had hitherto maintained.

But even granting that the levitical succession was in these respects precisely such as our opponents plead for, and that being such it binds us to exact conformity, this obligation must extend to every thing which necessarily entered into the levitical succession. But that succession was hereditary, and must therefore bind us, if at all, to a hereditary Christian ministry. If this conclusion be evaded by alleging, that the hereditary mode of derivation was a secondary circumstance, derivative succession being all that is essential, then the same thing must be true of the succession which is formed upon the Jewish model; that is to say, the only thing essential in our case is a derivative succession, the precise mode of derivation is an accidental circumstance. If so, hereditary succession, though not necessary, must be lawful, and if lawful entitled to the preference, because more ancient and accordant with the Jewish model, than the mode of ordination. If it be said, that God has changed the mode, but made the principle still binding, this assumes the existence of some explicit revelation on the subject; but if there were such a revelation, there could be no need of resorting to the analogy of Jewish institutions as a ground of obligation.

Again, if one may arbitrarily distinguish between the derivative

succession as essential, and the hereditary mode of derivation as an accident, another may, with equal right, insist upon a different distinction, and discriminate between a mere unbroken series, or constant occupation of the office, as essential, and a derivative succession, or the constant derivation of authority to each incumbent from his predecessor, as an accidental circumstance. This analogy then proves either too little or too much, for it either leaves the main point in dispute discretionary, or it invalidates all orders not derived, by a hereditary succession, from the primitive presbyters. This is the case, let it be observed, even after we have granted that the Jewish succession is a binding example, that this binding power is restricted to the priesthood, and that the succession of the priesthood was a derivative unbroken succession; all which, as we have seen, are mere gratuitous concessions.

It would seem, then, that the argument from analogy is no more conclusive than that from an alleged command; or in other words, that the necessity of uninterrupted succession can be neither indirectly nor directly proved from scripture. If this be so it must of course be fatal to the adverse doctrine, unless it can be shown that there is some inherent necessity for such a constitution, independent of a positive command, and springing from the nature of the ministry itself or of the ends it was designed to answer. Now it will not be disputed, that the end for which the ministry was instituted is the maintenance of truth and its inseparable adjuncts. But if uninterrupted ministerial succession is essential to this end, they must always go together. If the end can be secured by other means, the necessity of this means cannot be absolute. To say that a certain means is essential to a certain end, and yet that the end can be secured without it, is a contradiction. If then succession is essential to the maintenance of truth, they must be always found together. But that teachers of falsehood and apostates have been found in the line of the most regular succession, under both dispensations, is an undisputed and notorious fact. Some of the highest papal authorities admit that even in the series of the Popes there have been heretics and infidels. And few perhaps would question that the truth has been *de facto* held and taught by those who were externally irregular and without authority. The doctrines of what is called the Low Church are regarded by some high Episcopalians

as a serious departure from the faith; and yet these doctrines are maintained, not only by priests, but by bishops, in the boasted line of apostolical succession. The opposite opinions, on the other hand, have sometimes been espoused by men in churches charged with wanting this advantage, and before any change of their external relations.

Here then, according to the adverse doctrine, is succession without truth, and truth without succession. The latter cannot therefore, be essential to the ends for which the ministry was founded. The necessity, if any such there be, must have respect to the continuance of the ministry itself. It may be argued that no positive command is needed, because God undoubtedly designed the ministry to be perpetual, and to this end an uninterrupted succession is absolutely necessary. If so, the necessity must arise, either from something peculiar to the office of the ministry, as different from all others, or from something in the nature of office in general, something common to this office with all others. Now the only thing which makes the ministry to differ from all other offices is the peculiar relation which it bears to God; but this instead of making succession more necessary makes it less so. However indispensable such an arrangement might be thought in human institutions, its absolute necessity would seem to be precluded, in the church, by God's perpetual presence and unceasing agency. And as to office generally, that an unbroken derivative succession is not essential to its perpetuity, is very clear from the familiar case, before alluded to, of kings and presidents, two offices which surely may be equally perpetual, and yet in one of them derivative succession is entirely wanting. That a succession of mere sequence is essential to the perpetuity of office, is no doubt true; but to assert it is to assert an identical proposition: it is merely saying that in order that an office may be never vacant, it must be always filled. Since, therefore, a succession of the kind in question is essential neither to the ends for which the ministry was instituted, nor to the perpetual existence of the ministry itself, there seems to be no original necessity arising from the nature of the case, and superseding the necessity of positive explicit proof from scripture.

If, in default of all such evidence, the necessity of such succession is alleged to rest on the authority of the church, the question immediately presents itself, of what church? The practical use of the whole discussion is to ascertain what is a true

church, by establishing criteria of a valid ministry. To say then that the church requires something as the indispensable criterion of a true church, is to reason in a circle. It is, in effect, to take the thing for granted, without any reason; and to this, irrational as it may seem, there is a strong disposition on the part of many. But let them remember that besides the unreasonableness of such a course, it has this inconvenience, that it opens the door for an indefinite number of precisely similar assumptions. If one undertakes to say, without assigning any reason or attempting any proof, that apostolical succession, in the sense before explained, is absolutely necessary to a valid ministry, another may, with equal right, and equal want of reason, insist upon inspiration, or the power of working miracles, pretending at the same time to possess them. Nor would this claim be chargeable with any more absurdity than that which we have been considering, but on the contrary admit of a more plausible defence. If for example a follower of Irving, believing himself to possess an extraordinary gift of tongues, should make this the indispensable criterion of a valid ministry, and plead the promise of extraordinary powers to the apostles and to those who should believe, the actual possession of these powers in the primitive church, and their obvious utility as means for the diffusion of the gospel, he would certainly make out a very strong case, in comparison with that of him who pleads for the necessity of apostolical succession. The charge of mere delusion, or unauthorized assumption would admit of being easily and pungently retorted, and indeed no argument could well be used by the champions of succession against those of extraordinary gifts, except at the risk of having their own weapons turned against themselves.

The same is true, in an inferior degree, of many other requisitions which might be insisted on, if once the necessity of proof could be dispensed with. There is therefore no security against extravagant and groundless claims, except in the position that no, one however slight and seemingly innoxious, shall ever be admitted without clear decisive evidence, of which we have seen the one now under consideration to be wholly destitute. On this safe and reasonable principle, the failure to establish the necessity of apostolical succession, from the word of God or the nature of the ministry, must be regarded as an ample vindication of our orders from the charge of invalidity. To make assurance

doubly sure, however, we shall add to this negative view of the matter, several positive objections to the doctrine of apostolical succession, in the sense before repeatedly explained.

In the first place, it appears to be at variance with the doctrine, common to both parties in this controversy, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme Head of the Church, and as such present with her to the end of the world. The doctrine of succession seems to rest upon a false and fanciful analogy, derived from human institutions, where the founder, being mortal, loses all control of his affairs by death, and is thenceforth inaccessible, except in a figurative sense, through those who have succeeded to the trust. In them he lives as "in a figure," (*ἐν παραβολῇ*, Heb. xi. 19:) and through them his will is supposed to be consulted and complied with. Now in such a case succession is the only link between the founder and later generations. It is indispensable, or may be so in certain cases, only because nothing can be substituted for it. But the church of Christ is no such corporation; for its founder, though once dead, is alive again and ever liveth to make intercession for his people, and as Head of the Church is still within their reach. True, he uses human intervention in the government of his church, i. e. the intervention of its present rulers; but to say that his communications pass through all the links of the immense chain which connects the church of this day with the church of the apostles, is to say that he was nearer to their first successors than he is to us; for if he was not, why must we resort to them as an organ or medium of communication?

And what seems especially remarkable is this, that those who plead for the immediate presence of our Saviour's body in the eucharist should deny his spiritual presence in the church, by deriving all authority, not from him directly, or through those whom he actually uses as his instruments, but through a long succession of dead men, reaching back to the apostles, as if Christ had never risen. Thus the popish doctrines of the real presence and of the sacrament of orders, by a strange juxtaposition, go together. The doctrine of succession seems to place the Saviour at the end of a long line, in which the successive generations of his ministers succeed one another, each at a greater remove from Him than that which went before it, and consequently needing a still longer line to reach him. But ac-

ording to our view of the true doctrine, Christ, as the Head of the Church, may, in some respects, be likened to the centre of a circle, and the successive generations of his ministers to points in the circumference, at various distances from one another, but all at the same distance from the centre of the system. Through those who thus surround him he may choose to act on others who are still without the circle, as for instance in the rite of ordination; but when this has brought them into the circumference, they derive their powers as directly from the centre as if none had gone before them. All valid powers are derived from Christ, and not from the apostles, or from any intervening men whatever. The agency of men in ordination is a simple, natural and efficacious method of perpetuating the ministry without disorder, recommended by experience, sanctioned by apostolic practice, and approved of God, but not essential to a valid ministry, when Providence has made it either not at all attainable, or only at the cost of greater evils than could possibly attend the violation of external uniformity.

The argument thus drawn from Christ's relation to the church may seem at first to prove too much by proving, that the scriptures are not necessary as a rule of faith, because the author of the scriptures is still living and accessible. The fallacy in this objection lies in overlooking two essential points of difference between the cases. The first is, that the word of God contains explicit declarations of its own exclusive claim to our obedience, and denounces curses upon any who shall venture to add to it or take from it; whereas the apostles put in no such claim for their direct successors, and utter no anathemas against all others who should claim to be Christ's ministers. The other difference is this, that in the scriptures there is no succession, as there is in the ministry. The bible of the present day is that of the first century, and claims the same respect that would be due to the original apostles were they still alive. This total want of correspondence in the circumstances takes off any force, which the objection drawn from the analogy of scripture might have had against our argument, that the necessity of what is called the apostolical succession supposes Christ to be no longer in reality, but only in name or retrospectively as matter of history, Head over all things to the Church.

Another positive objection to the doctrine is, that a different test of ministerial authority is expressly and repeatedly laid down in scripture. This is the test of doctrinal conformity, as taught by Paul, in reproving the Galatians* for abandoning the doctrine of gratuitous salvation, under the influence of erroneous teachers. That these teachers acted under the authority of a regular external warrant, may be inferred not only from the improbability that such influence could have been exerted by private individuals or self-constituted teachers, but also from the form of Paul's expressions—"if I or an angel from heaven"—which imply that the Galatians might naturally be disposed to justify their change by appealing to the authority of those by whom they were induced to make it. As if he had said, it is in vain that you plead the apostolical commission and authority of these false teachers, for if I myself or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed. His reproof of the Galatians for their doctrinal defection necessarily implies that it might have been avoided, by refusing to receive the instructions of their teachers. But unless he meant to teach, in opposition to his teaching elsewhere, that they ought not to acknowledge any spiritual guides whatever, his meaning must be that they ought to have applied a discriminating test to those who came to them as public teachers. But what should this test be? The answer to the question is given in the words, "though I, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The form of an anathema which Paul here uses, includes all possible degrees of censure; for one who was accursed of God could not be recognised as a member of the true church, much less as possessing authority in it, or entitled to the confidence and obedience of its members. The expressions are so chosen too as to extend to every class of persons whose pretensions could at any time be called in question. He does not say, "if any private individual or unauthorized public teacher"—he does not say, "if any ordinary minister, not of apostolic rank"—he does not say, "if any other apostle"—he does not even say, "if any human being"—but by mentioning himself and an angel from heaven, deliberately cuts off all claim to exemption from the operation of the

*Gal. i. 8, 9.

rule. The standard of comparison established is not something to be afterwards made known, but something notorious and fixed already. He does not say, "another gospel than that which we shall preach hereafter"—he does not say, "another gospel than that which is propounded by the church"—but "any other gospel than that which we have preached to you already."

Now if Paul could thus appeal to his oral instructions as establishing a standard from which he had himself no right to swerve, how much more may such a test be now insisted on, when the canon of scripture is complete, and a curse impending over any who shall venture to add to it or take from it. If Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, preaching any other gospel than the one which he had preached already, must be treated as accursed of God, how much more must any other man, departing from the standard of true doctrine now confirmed and sealed forever, be rejected as an unauthorized pretender to the ministerial office, whatever his external claims may be. If to this it be objected that a man may be accursed of God, and yet be entitled to respect and obedience as a minister, this can be true only where the curse remains a secret, not where, as in the present case, it is explicitly revealed. That Paul when he says ἀνάθεμα ἔστω does not speak merely of God's secret purpose, or of the ultimate perdition of false teachers, but declares the duty of the church respecting them, is evident from the imperative form of the expression, "let him be (treated or regarded as) anathema"—from the irrelevancy of a mere prediction to the writer's purpose—and also from a parallel passage in the second epistle of John, where the same test is established. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." 2 John, 9. This might seem to relate merely to God's personal favour, without any bearing upon ministerial authority or standing; but such an explanation is precluded by the practical directions in the following verse. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed," *ib.* v. 10, much less submit to his instructions, or acknowledge his authority, in order to avoid which even social intercourse with such must be forborne, "for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." *ib.* v. 11. In these two passages, by different apostles, and ad-

dressed to different persons, conformity of doctrine to the apostolic standard is emphatically set forth as essential to a valid ministry, the want of which could be supplied by no external warrant or commission. The apostolical succession, therefore, in its purest form and clearest evidence, can be of no avail without this doctrinal conformity, because the church is bound to treat not only the successors of apostles, but apostles themselves, and even angels from heaven as accursed, if they preach another gospel.

It may be said, however, that although this doctrinal conformity is necessary, it is not sufficient; that the apostolical succession is another test of valid ministrations, and one equally essential; that the rule which Paul prescribes to the Galatians presupposes an external regularity in the official character of those to whom it is applied; and that although it proves even apostolical orders to be worthless without purity of doctrine, it does not prove purity of doctrine to avail, apart from an apostolical commission. But does not the explicit and repeated mention of the one condition, as absolutely necessary, without the least allusion to the other, in the very cases where it was most important to enforce it, for the guidance of the church, and the prevention of pernicious misconceptions—does not this present a serious objection to the doctrine that the thing thus passed by *sub silentio* was no less essential to the being of a valid ministry than that which is expressly and exclusively enjoined? If the early Christians were as liable to suffer from the want of apostolical authority in ministers as from their want of orthodoxy, why are they frequently warned against the latter, but against the former never?

This objection presses with peculiar force on those who look upon external regularity (including apostolical succession) as the great security for truth of doctrine. If Paul and John had thus regarded it, they surely would have urged their readers to adopt so simple and effectual a safeguard, by submitting to the exclusive guidance of a duly sanctioned and commissioned ministry; their failure to do which is as decisive as a negative proof can be, that they did not even think of apostolical succession, as a preventive of the evil to be feared, but thought it necessary to direct attention to the evil itself, as one with which the people must contend directly, and from which they could escape unhurt only

by vigilance, a just discrimination, and a timely exercise of private judgment. Let it moreover be observed, that the value of the apostolical succession, as contended for, depends in a great measure on its furnishing a simple and sufficient method of determining who are and who are not true ministers, without the necessity of seeking other evidence or applying other tests. The very fact, then, that another is required after all, and that the worth of apostolical succession, even when it can be ascertained, depends upon the doctrinal correctness of the persons who possess it, makes it not indeed impossible but highly improbable that this external test was ever meant to be essential. The end to be attained, on any supposition, is the maintenance of TRUTH, in the most comprehensive sense of the expression; and the strongest recommendation of the doctrine which we are opposing is that it appears to furnish a convenient, tangible, and efficacious method of deciding between different opinions, without being under the necessity of canvassing their merits in detail. But what is the practical value of this method, if its application must be followed by an inquiry whether those who can abide this test are apostolical in doctrine also? This is equivalent to laying down a rule, that we are bound to receive as teachers of the truth all who have apostolical commissions—provided that they teach the truth.

An illustration may be drawn from military usage. The design of countersigns or watchwords, in an army, is to furnish those who act as sentries with a simple and decisive method of discriminating friends from foes. But what if the officer, in giving out the word, should add an exhortation to observe the dress, complexion, gait, and language of all persons who present themselves, and suffer none to pass who are not in these respects entirely satisfactory? Such a direction might be very wise and necessary; but it would certainly destroy the value of the simpler test to which it was appended; for if even those who give the word must be subjected to this further scrutiny, the only advantage of the watch-word would be to save a little unnecessary trouble in a few rare cases. Another illustration of a more pacific kind is afforded by the usage of the Scottish churches in admitting communicants to the Lord's table by means of tokens, bearing witness to the fact of their having been approved by the competent authorities. If in addition to this testimonial, an examination of

the person were required on the spot, the use of tokens would be soon dispensed with as an empty form.

It may be objected to this illustration, that it supposes proof to be required of the very thing which is attested by the token; whereas apostolical doctrine and apostolical succession are distinct and independent tests of ministerial authority. This is true, if apostolical succession is required simply for its own sake or the sake of some mysterious influence, actually derived from the apostles, through the line of their successors, which we have seen to be at variance with the doctrine of Christ's headship. But if, as we suppose will be admitted by most Protestants, the apostolical succession is of value as securing the possession of the truth, then the express command to judge of the pretensions of all ministers directly by their agreement with the apostolic doctrine, makes it highly probable, to say the least, that an indirect method of determining the same thing was not meant to be equally essential as a test, the rather as it is not even mentioned or referred to, in connexion with the other.

We have seen already that the doctrine of apostolical succession, as essential to the ministry, proceeds upon the supposition, that it may be clearly ascertained, and that it furnishes an easy and infallible criterion by which to try the claims of all professing to be ministers. Now if this were the case, it would be inconsistent with the whole scheme of God's providence respecting his church, as disclosed in scripture and verified by history. So far as his purposes are thus made known, it forms no part of them to place the church beyond the reach of doubt or the necessity of caution. There are promises of ultimate security and triumph, but none of absolute assurance and exemption from perplexity in the mean time. On the contrary the word of God abounds with warnings against error and deception, and with exhortations, not to outward conformity as a preventive, but to watchfulness and diligence and nice discrimination. Christians are there taught not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God; to prove all and hold fast that which is good. "There must be heresies (or sects) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. xi. 19. This would seem to be a very unnecessary discipline, if the original organization of the church involved a simpler and less dangerous method of attaining the same end.

With these intimations of the scripture agree perfectly the facts of all church history, as showing that the means by which God has been pleased to preserve and to restore the knowledge of his truth have not been those afforded by ecclesiastical organizations, or implicit faith in certain teachers as successors of the apostles, but others involving the necessity of studying the truth and searching the scriptures, as the only sovereign rule of faith and practice.

When considered in this aspect, the alleged simplicity and perfect certainty of apostolical succession in determining all doubts, without the troublesome necessity of reasoning or investigation, far from proving it to be a necessary part of the divine economy in governing the church, would rather tend to raise a strong presumption, that it formed no part of it at all, because at variance with its other parts, and with its fundamental principles. And this presumption is abundantly confirmed by the fact, which may easily be verified, that no such facility or certainty as that alleged attends the process, but that, on the contrary, whatever it may seem to be in theory, it always must, in practice, be uncertain and precarious. Now if the apostolical succession, as we have already seen, is not explicitly commanded, and must therefore rest its claims on its necessity or usefulness, and if its only use can be to furnish a criterion of valid ministrations, it is clear that want of safety and efficiency in its application must destroy its claims to be regarded as a necessary part of the divine economy by which the church is governed.

That God has suffered apostolical doctrine and apostolical succession to be put asunder, in a multitude of cases, and so changed the condition of the church under the new dispensation as to render it unspeakably more difficult to ascertain a ministerial succession than it was under the old, are cogent reasons for regarding the hypothesis of its necessity as contradicted by the providence of God. And this leads directly to the last objection which we shall suggest, to wit, that apostolical succession, as a test of ministerial authority, is an impracticable one, and therefore useless. The official pedigree of no man living can be traced with certainty to the apostles. This state of the case might be expected *a priori*, from the very nature of the case itself. That every link in the immense chain should be absolutely perfect in itself and in its connexion with the rest; that no flaw should

exist, in any instance, from defect in the act of ordination or the ministerial rights of the ordainer, through a period of eighteen hundred years, and an extent of many nations, must, if looked at without prejudice, be seen to be an expectation too extravagant to be fulfilled, without an extraordinary interposition to effect it, of which we have neither proof nor promise.

The reason that it does not thus strike every mind, when first presented, is that the nature of the succession in question is apt to be obscurely or erroneously conceived. Many assume that nothing more is meant by it than the perpetual existence of a ministry, and its continuance by ordination. But that this is far from being the succession against which we are contending, is apparent from the fact, that it is not the test applied to non-episcopal communions. These are required to demonstrate the validity of their ministrations by an exact deduction of their orders from the first ordainers. That this should be possible, could never be expected *a priori*. That it is not possible, may easily be proved *a posteriori*, from the fact that even under the most favourable circumstances, where the line of the succession has been most conspicuous, most carefully guarded, and attended by the most abundant facilities for verifying facts—as for instance in the case of the Roman bishops—no such succession has been proved.

But apart from these considerations, the impossibility of proving a particular succession, in the case of any minister, is tacitly admitted, on the part of those who claim it, by evading the demand for proof, and alleging the fact to be notorious. The case of ministerial succession is compared to that of natural descent from Adam or Noah, which no man can prove, but which no man disputes. The fallacy of this analogical argument scarcely needs to be exposed. The descent of any individual from Adam is notorious only on the supposition that the whole human family is sprung from a single pair. This being assumed, the other follows of necessity. If all descend from Adam, so must every one. To make the cases parallel, we must suppose a plurality of races, and a dispute to which of these a certain individual belongs. In that case the appeal to notoriety would be absurd, and in the absence of explicit genealogies, the only proof available would be the correspondence in the physical characteristics of the progenitor and his alleged descendants. In the supposed

case this might be a difficult and doubtful process from the want of any accurate and authentic description of the ancestor. But in the case of ministerial descent, we have the advantage of a description not only exact but infallible, with which those who claim to be successors of the primitive ministers may be compared with rigorous exactness. Let us suppose that according to the scriptures men had sprung from two distinct originals, and that these were represented as distinguished by the same external marks which now distinguish Africans from Europeans. If any one should claim to be descended from either of these stocks, and his pretensions were disputed, the nearest approach that could be made to a solution of the question, would be by comparing the complexion, features, form, hair, &c., of the claimant, with the like particulars ascribed in scripture to the father of the race. The application of the rule might be precarious, but without specific genealogies, no better proof could be adduced, or would be called for.

This imaginary case affords a close analogy to that of apostolical succession. Certain bodies of men claim to be exclusively descended, by official derivation, from the primitive apostles, and reject the claims of others to a similar descent, upon the ground that they are not able to produce specific proofs of an unbroken succession. But when charged with the same defect in their own orders, they appeal to notoriety, as if there were no room to doubt or question their extraction. But it may be questioned, on the same grounds upon which they question that of others; and the only way in which the point at issue can be settled is by comparing the distinctive attributes of those who now profess to have succeeded the apostles in the ministerial office, with the corresponding traits of the apostles themselves. By this test we are willing to abide. We lay no claim to apostolical succession, except so far as we agree with the apostles and the primitive ministry, in doctrine, spirit, discipline, and life. And we consider our opponents as reduced to the necessity, either of submitting to the same test, or of proving in detail their individual descent from the apostles. The attempt to substitute for such proof the admitted fact, that the Anglican or Romish clergy of the present day are, as a body, the successors of the apostolic ministry, is to evade the difficulty by confounding general and particular succession, by insisting on the latter when our orders

are in question, and producing the former when their own commission is demanded. This, we say, is a virtual admission of the fact, which forms the ground of our last objection, viz. that apostolical succession, in the strict sense of the terms, and as a practical test of valid ministrations, is impracticable and therefore useless.

If then, as we have tried to show, this doctrine is not only unsupported by express command and binding example, and by any necessity arising from the nature of the ministerial office, or the ends for which it was established, but at variance with the doctrine of Christ's headship, superseded by the surer test of doctrinal conformity to apostolic teachings, contradicted by the providence of God, and practically useless even to its advocates; it is not perhaps too bold an inference from these considerations, that an incapacity to trace our ministerial authority by regular succession, step by step, to the apostles, is no conclusive argument, nor even a presumptive one, against the validity of Presbyterian orders. Here we might safely rest the defence of our ministrations against all attacks connected with this point of apostolical succession; but we cannot do justice to the strength of our position, without exhibiting the subject in another point of view. We have endeavoured to show, that the apostolical succession, which we are accused of wanting, is not essential to a valid ministry. This would suffice to justify our claims, even on the supposition that our opponents possess in the highest degree, what they demand of us, and that we, on the other hand, are utterly without it. But we have furthermore seen reason to believe that our opponents have it in a much more limited degree than that which they require of others. This, in addition to the unessential character of the advantage, would at least have the effect of bringing us nearer to a level with our neighbours, still supposing apostolical succession in the ministerial office to be altogether wanting upon our part.

But even this residuary difference between us, with respect to the validity of our pretensions, disappears when it is known, that so far as apostolical succession can be verified, the Presbyterian Church in the United States possesses it, as really and fully as the Church of England. In making this assertion, as in all the reasonings of the present article, we assume as proved already, that a superior order in the ministry to that of presby-

ters is not essential to the being of the church, but that from the beginning presbyters have exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry. If so, it is through them that the apostolical succession must be traced, and we accordingly maintain that our orders may be just as surely traced in this way up to apostolic times, as those of any other church through bishops. The denial of this fact has, for the most part, been connected with the false assumption that the ministry of our church has been derived from that of Geneva, and depends for its validity on the ministerial authority of Calvin; whereas we trace our orders, through the original Presbytery of Philadelphia, to the Presbyterians of Ireland, and the mother-church of Scotland, which is well known to have been reformed with the concurrence and assistance of men regularly ordained in the church of Rome. The principal admixture of this Scottish element, in our earliest presbyteries, was with New England Puritans, among whom only two examples of lay-ordination are believed to have occurred, and whose ecclesiastical system was originally founded by regularly ordained priests of the Anglican establishment. The proportion of those members, in our primitive church courts, whose ordination was derived from more obscure and doubtful sources, such as the Welsh and English Independents, was extremely small. Whatever then a regular succession may be worth, we can lay claim to it as far back and as certainly as any of our adversaries.

This fact is indeed so "notorious," that it has been met, for the most part, not with a denial of the fact itself, but with an allegation, that the only apostolical succession in existence is derived through Bishops, as superior to Presbyters. It is the need of something to destroy the force of presbyterial succession, as a fact which cannot be denied, that has occasioned the perpetual and almost universal combination of the doctrine of succession with the doctrine of episcopacy, as alike essential to the organization of the church. We have ventured, however, to discuss them separately, and have thus been led to the conclusion, that the highest powers of the church belong to Presbyters as such; that succession, if derived at all, must be derived through them; and that through them we possess it no less certainly and fully than the church of England or the church of Rome. We cannot indeed, show that every link in the long chain has been without

a flaw, but neither can our adversaries do so upon their part. Until the Reformation, the two lines are coincident, and since that time, the continuation of the series of Presbyters, in Scotland, England, Ireland, and America, is as certain and notorious as that of Bishops. Supposing, then, as we of course do, that the rank, which we have claimed for Presbyters, is justly due to them, it follows necessarily, that no objection to the validity of Presbyterian orders can be founded on the want of apostolical succession; partly because it is not absolutely necessary, partly because we are as really possessed of it as any other ministry or church whatever. When any urge this argument against our ministrations, they assume two facts, both essential to the truth of their conclusion; first, the fact that such succession is of absolute necessity, and secondly the fact that they alone possess it. If either of these assumptions is unfounded, it destroys the argument; for if succession is not necessary, it matters little who has or has it not; and if on the other hand we have as much of it as our opponents, they can have no pretext for impugning the validity of our ministrations. By disproving either of these two positions, the conclusion is destroyed. By disproving both, it is doubly destroyed, "twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

ART. V.—*Christ's Second Coming: will it be Pre-Millennial?*
By the Rev. David Brown, A. M., Minister of St. James' Free Church, Glasgow. Edinburgh: 1846. 12mo. pp. 386.

As early as the second century, there seems to have been a general expectation in the church, that Christ would return to the earth, and spend a thousand years with his disciples. The current notion of the happiness to be enjoyed throughout this period became gradually more and more debased, until the doctrine was itself rejected by more spiritual Christians, and by some of them along with it the book of Revelation, on a single obscure passage in which the chiliastic doctrine rested. After the lapse of ages, during which it seemed to be forgotten, a new interpretation of the Apocalyptic *millennium* became current. This supposed the *terminus a quo* to be the institution of the