

CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION.

A SERMON.

DELIVERED, IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, FREDERICKS-
BURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 4TH, 1835;

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

Hundredth Anniversary

OF SAID CHURCH.

BY THE REV. EDWARD C. MCGUIRE.

FREDERICKSBURG:

ARENA PRINTING OFFICE.

1835.

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FREDERICKSBURG, *November 9th, 1835.*

Rev. and Dear Sir :

By a resolution of the Vestry, at their meeting on Saturday last, it is made our duty to request the favour of you to furnish, for publication, a copy of the Sermon, delivered by you on the 4th ult., in commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of the establishment of the Episcopal Church in this Town.

We assure you, Sir, it gives us pleasure to be the organs of this request; a compliance with which, on your part, will be highly acceptable to the Vestry, and the Congregation at large.

We are your friends,

R. T. THOM, }
JNO. METCALFE, } *Church Wardens.*

November 12th, 1835.

*Gentlemen :—*Your note, requesting, as organs of the Vestry, for publication, a copy of the Sermon delivered by me on the 4th ult., has been received. If, in the judgment of the Vestry, any good end can be subserved by its publication, I cheerfully resign it to their disposal, and the blessing of Him, who can prosper the humblest effort in his cause.

I am your friend and servant,

EDWARD C. McGUIRE.

MESSRS. R. T. THOM,
and J. METCALFE.

O, Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ, himself, being the chief Corner Stone ; grant that, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, all Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace, that they may be an Holy Temple acceptable unto Thee. And, especially, to this Congregation, give the abundance of Thy Grace ; that, with one heart, they may desire the prosperity of Thy Holy Apostolic Church ; and, with one mouth, may profess the Faith once delivered to the Saints. Defend them from the sins of heresy and schism ; “ let not the foot of pride come nigh to hurt them, nor the hand of the ungodly to cast them down.” And grant that the course of this World may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness ; that so they may walk in the ways of truth and peace ; and, at last, be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting, through Thy merits, O Blessed Jesus, Thou gracious Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls, who art, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

S E R M O N .

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII, 20.

"And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World."

A particular reference to my settlement amongst you, as your Minister, has been a frequent custom with me, on *this day*, the annual return of which brings with it the special remembrance of that event. The fitness of such recurrence, and of those serious reflections which belong to it, would fully justify a continuance of the practice, and, indeed, make it more and more suitable, as time prolongs a connexion, which, divine in its origin, must ever be attended with fearful consequences to all concerned. This connexion has existed through a period not often, in the providence of God, permitted to similar relations. This day commences its *twenty third year*. To look back upon a term so extended, and reflect upon the manner of its improvement, could not well be otherwise than a profitable exercise to both minister and people; serving for consolation, or reproof, according to the convictions awakened by the solemn retrospect.

But another subject, not alien from this, and justly claiming particular notice at our hands, will be submitted for your consideration. The reflections usually indulged

will be waived, in order to a wider range of remark, in allusion to the history of this Church, from its foundation to the present period. This special theme of discourse has been suggested by the occurrence of our Hundredth Anniversary. The sacred Edifice, whose removal made way for the one we now occupy,* was erected, in the year of our Lord, 1735. In that year was the Church of God first planted in this place. Then were the truths of the Gospel first dispensed here, and the rites of religion administered according to the chaste, edifying, and scriptural forms of our branch of the Holy Catholic Church. With but occasional intervals of intermission have these sacred ministrations been continued, down to the present day. And yet so few are the striking incidents, distinguishing the silent progress of the Church in that time, that materials are not possessed of sufficient prominence, or variety, to impart much interest to the record of her simple and unobtrusive course. There is, notwithstanding, enough to justify us, at this interesting epoch, in recurring to her history, and that with the hope of imparting some pleasure and, perhaps, profit, to the faithful friends of our Zion whilst a willing tribute of praise is secured to Him who has promised to be with his Church to the end of the world, and never yet disappointed the hopes built upon his word.

This topic, however, will not engross the whole of our discussion, whatever degree of prominence may seem to be its due. Were it more fruitful than it is in matter for an extended enquiry and profitable development, there would still be need to enlarge the scope of historical reference, of argument and reflection, in order to the full illustration of a subject, which, though seemingly insulated, is yet intimately united and interwoven with the great

* The present edifice was commenced in May, 1814, and completed the following year, being opened for divine service in October, 1815.

cause of the Christian Church, as established by Jesus Christ in the Earth.

The Church of God then, as a divine institution, embodying the principles of our holy Religion, together with the *special object* before us, will unitedly engage your attention this morning. And whilst the discussion, thus amplified, must be regarded by all as perfectly appropriate, the opportunity is gladly embraced of bringing before you a subject which ought, I am sure, to be well entertained by all the friends of divine truth. Truth, always valuable, is especially so in sacred things; and cannot be overlooked or put aside, with propriety, or with safety. Nor was there ever a time, when the *whole truth* of the Gospel of Christ should be more anxiously sought after, or better understood, than at the present day. The wide spread prevalence of heresy and schism, the misrule, disorder, and confusion, agitating the numerous and multiplying sects of our free and growing country, can never be arrested, unless the principles of ecclesiastical truth and order, established by Christ and his Apostles, are better understood, and more fondly cherished, by Christian people.

In the words of the Text, we have an unequivocal and infallible guide to truth. It contains the parting promise of Christ to his Apostles, assuring them of his effectual presence, in the duties just enjoined, and in all others, unto the end of the world. The importance of such a promise, to his feeble and unpractised Church, is sufficiently manifest without comment. And in this light, he who runs may read the general meaning of its divine author.

In the examination of this promise, embracing its special import and faithful accomplishment, it is proposed to consider

I. THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH IN HER EXTERNAL CONSTITUTION. And

II. THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE EFFICACY OF HER MINISTRY.

1. *The perpetuity of the Church in her external constitution.*

Especial attention is here claimed to the fact, that the promise of his perpetual presence was made by our Lord to his chosen Apostles. "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." But the Apostles were heirs of mortality, and in time must go the way of all flesh. The declaration before us then could not have been limited in design to them. It must have extended in application to those who, succeeding them in office, would prove a continuing Body upon the earth, and as such, "always" exist, "even unto the end of the world." To these the divine word could be literally fulfilled—to the twelve only in a hyperbolical, or accommodated, sense.

It, moreover, merits observation, that the gracious assurance was made to the Apostles, as filling an office, confessedly, of the highest rank in the Church, as then divinely constituted. It may, therefore, be fairly regarded as designed, by way of eminence, for those, who, throughout all time, should succeed them in the same superior station. And yet the reason of the thing persuades us, that the ministry, in all its degrees, must have been also comprehended. Nor only so, but the whole body of the Church, since the spiritual prosperity thereof, is ever in proportion to the divine blessing, descending on those, who have been expressly given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

In the provisions in question, the Lord then contemplated a Visible Society, adapted to the object of its institution, by the appointment of suitable officers, laws and duties. As in all other societies, these were essential constituents of the Church, and, therefore, must have been ordained, by the great Head, as alike necessary and fit through all the revolutions of time.

In regard to the original constitution of this divine Society, we concur with the Church to which we belong, in believing that it was *Episcopal*—or, that its ministry was so organized, that certain high and peculiar powers were deposited at first with the Apostles, and subsequently with Bishops, as their successors; whilst other officers, existing in two descending orders, or degrees, were entrusted, respectively, with powers, of high importance indeed, but more limited and restricted than those with which their superiors were invested. These views, as held by the Church, are thus expressed in the preface to the Ordinal—“It is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ’s Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons. Which officers were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and, also, by public Prayer, with imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority.” Upon this platform, in respect to the ministry, does the whole body of the Protestant Episcopal Church stand, as far as the matter of *fact* is involved. And it is worthy of attention here, that, of the whole of Christendom, there are eleven twelfths substantially on the same side of the question.

It will be proper, however, that the evidences be furnished, by which the position of the Church, on this subject, may be vindicated. In doing so, it will be necessary that brevity be strictly consulted, as the field would otherwise prove too wide for our time, or the limits of a single discourse. We shall, therefore, only ask your attention to a few of the facts and arguments by which we think the principle in question is amply sustained.

We might refer to the Jewish Church, with its High Priest, Priests, and Levites, of express divine ordination, and hence derive a plausible conclusion in favour of a Threefold Christian ministry. As the one dispensation was typical of the other, it might be expected that there would be a correspondence in this particular, as there certainly was in many other respects. But we pass over this argument, sound as some think it, in favour of more explicit and positive proofs, found in the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors.

The Divine Saviour, whilst on earth, was the visible Head of the Church. The Apostles, ordained by him, constituted the *second*, and the Seventy, the *third order* in the ministry. That the same arrangement prevailed after the Lord ascended up on high, we think can be clearly shown. The Apostles *now* filled the *highest office*; bishops, or elders, the *second*; and deacons, the *third*.

But did this peculiar organization survive the age of the Apostles? All admit that it existed as long as they lived. Some, however, maintain that the apostolic office ceased with the lives of those by whom it was originally filled, and that nothing of the kind subsequently remained in the Church. Of the correctness of this position, we have never seen any satisfactory evidence. There was indeed, an end to the *extraordinary* powers conferred upon the Apostles. And so did similar powers cease, possessed and exercised by other ministers, and by private believers. Yet, as the withdrawing of these gifts, when there was no longer any necessity for them, does not prove that other ecclesiastical offices were, in consequence, abolished, neither does it imply any thing against the permanence of the apostleship. In confirmation of this view we have very conclusive evidence that, during their lifetime, provision was actually made by the Apostles themselves for the continuance of their offices. Thus are there

several instances on record, in which particular distinguished individuals were advanced to the station and called by the name of Apostle. This is true of Matthias, of Barnabas, of Silvanus, and Epaphroditus. It is yet more strikingly true of Timothy and Titus, who were not only stiled Apostles—at least one of them—but they exercised the powers which were peculiar to the office. There is nothing which we regard as more certain, than that these eminent servants of the Lord were sent by St. Paul to Ephesus and Crete, with extraordinary commissions for the discharge of their assigned duties. They were, in the necessary absence of the Apostle himself, directed to exercise their high ministries, in performing offices which inferior resident ministers could not fulfill. They were empowered to assume a chief station in those portions of the Church. They were to “preside over the other ministers—had authority for ordaining Presbyters, or Elders, in every city, as the Apostle had appointed them—for charging some that they preach no other doctrine than that of the Apostles—for setting in order the things that were wanting—for receiving accusations and exercising jurisdiction—for rebuking heretics—for apportioning maintenance—for regulating the public prayers of the Church—for repressing the intrusion of women as teachers—and for watching and overseeing, generally, the flocks and the ministers of them.”* That such authority was delegated to these individuals may be seen by a careful perusal of the epistles addressed to them respectively, and, whatever arbitrary title may be assigned them by the prejudices of controversy, they most assuredly possessed the powers, and exercised the legitimate functions, of the apostolic office.

* Rt. Reverend Daniel Wilson on the Apostolic Commission.

What we say of the sacerdotal preeminence of Timothy and Titus, may also be said, with equal truth, of the pastoral authority of the Angels of the Seven Churches of Asia. Thirty years after the death of the other Apostles, St. John, by divine direction, addresses the chief ministers in these Churches, as having the superintending power, and thus responsible for the conduct and spirit of their respective charges. In Ephesus, where Timothy had presided over other pastors thirty years before, we now find one established in that populous city, as the "Angel of the Church," and, in common with the Angels of the other churches, regarded as the presiding Pastor within his own ecclesiastical limits.

It may here be proper to notice an objection, urged against Episcopacy, founded on the promiscuous use, in the new Testament, of the names bishop and elder or presbyter. It is maintained that, as the terms are convertible, so the office must have been the same. And this never was denied. It is admitted that the titles were from the beginning applied, *generally at least*, to the same officer. But it is not thereby established that the thing intended for did not exist. Whilst there was in the Church the order of bishops, or presbyters, was there not, at the same time, the higher order of Apostles and the lower order of deacons? None will be found to question a fact so obvious. Here then were the three orders of the ministry. Nor is there any difficulty respecting the gradual, successive appropriation of the term, bishop, to the successors of the Apostles. At first—whilst the Church was in its infancy—the title, as we have conceded, was generally applied to such as had the pastoral superintendence of a single congregation. Often, perhaps, there would be found, in a city or town, from the paucity of believers, room only for one or two ministers. There would be

then be occasion for the exclusive services of a resident presiding minister. The Apostles were the ecclesiastical Overseers in all such cases. But as the borders of the Church were extended, and congregations were multiplied, there would arise, gradually, that state of things which would require the introduction of the peculiar form of government for which we contend. Of this, we perceive the first intimations in the establishment of Timothy and Titus, with episcopal powers, in their respective fields of labour. And this practice would obtain more and more, as the Apostles successively left the world. One and another would take their places, and by the time that they had all gone down to the grave, there would be in the Church a Body of men, inferior to themselves perhaps in dignity, but substantially filling the same office, and designated by some appropriate title, and by none more fitly than the one in question. And that such was the fact, we have the concurrent testimony of all antiquity. To cite only the authority of two distinguished individuals—Eusebius, the historian, says, “Those very persons were called Apostles, whom, by usage of speech, the Church now calls bishops”—whilst Theodoret gives us his fuller testimony in the following words: “The same persons were anciently called presbyters and bishops, and those now called bishops, were called Apostles; but, in process of time, the name of Apostle was left to those who were truly Apostles, and the name of bishop was restrained to those who were anciently called Apostles: Thus Epaphroditus was the Apostle of the Philippians, Titus of the Cretans, and Timothy of the Asiatics.”

On this subject, Bishop Wilson, in a work already referred to, has the following observations: “It is not, however, for a name that we chiefly contend, but for the spiritual superintendence and authority which Christ has ordained. If we were to yield the term, (bishop) which

we are far from doing, it would still be true that the office of Minister was first discharged by the Apostles, then committed by them to Timothy and Titus, and afterwards exercised by them by Angels or Messengers of the Asiatic Churches, was perpetual authority in the Church. But with regard to the mere title, which is simply descriptive of the duty the superintendence, it was natural that it should only gradually be appropriated, as the thing designated by it became prominent and distinct before the eyes of men. Things usually exist long before their names, which become attached to them in process of time.* The episcopal, or superintending office, was less complete during the lives of the Apostles, because the superior power rested with them, and the functions of Timothy and Titus were delegated. After their death, however, as these functions and this authority appeared in unrestrained action, the definite and appropriate title would follow. At the close of the sacred canon, the name Angel (or delegate, whether of God or of men) was the term employed by our Lord in his epistles to the seven Apocalyptic Churches, as the appellation then commonly given to the presiding pastor. When the whole apostolic college were dead, the highest authority in the Church would soon receive, by general consent, the title of the Overseers or the Bishops, as their principal duty, that of overseeing and providing for the Church, then rested fully on them."

If then the original constitution of the Church, as Episcopal, was that peculiar frame of church polity designed to be perpetual, and is it binding on the people of God in all ages? Without indulging a spirit of dictation, we conceive but one response can be given to this enquiry. The apostles received, directly from Christ, instructions respecting the organization of the Church, or they would not have been inspired with wisdom secretly for this same purpose in

Must not, therefore, the order of things established by them, be of perpetual obligation, unless subsequently annulled by an equal or higher power? If their authority is not to prevail in this particular, wherein is it to prevail? Our faith rests upon the inspired word as true and infallible. Is the foundation of faith to be undermined, by teaching us to disregard the voice of inspiration in some things, whilst the highest reverence is accorded to it in others? The danger of such a principle must be obvious to every mind.

That the Church thus divinely ordered, and therein bound upon the consciences of christians, has existed, in the essential features of its original constitution, from the beginning down to the present day, may, it is believed, be very easily shown. We learn, from the most authentic ancient documents, that the apostolic office survived the original *twelve*, and was found in the occupancy of holy men, professing to have derived their ministerial authority from the Apostles themselves. Irenæus, a learned father of the second century, assures us that his preceptor, Polycarp, had been made Bishop of Smyrna by St. John. Ignatius, the cotemporary of that Apostle, and Bishop of Antioch, who also suffered martyrdom at Rome, A. D. 107, plainly declares the three orders of the ministry to be essential to a Christian Church. The testimony of Irenæus covers the greater part of the second century, when he assures us that, in every church, there had been a regular succession of bishops, from the time of the Apostles down to his day. He flourished towards the end of the second century, dying about the year of our Lord, 202.

That Episcopacy prevailed throughout the Church from this period, is generally admitted—and that it has come down to us, will be as freely allowed. Prevailing universally, and conspicuously so, as the Church grew and extended herself, this order descended, without material interruption, through the long lapse of *fifteen hundred*

years. During that period, the ministry of the Church existed by an unbroken, *personal* descent from Christ to his Apostles. The golden chain had extended in a regular succession of links, not one of which had ever been added in the wantonness of human caprice, but by the authority which Jesus Christ imparted to his Church. At the Reformation the principle was universally acknowledged, and the practice founded on it, unimpeached. By some of the Reformers, indeed, a different order of things was ever time introduced, not through their deliberate choice, we believe, but from a supposed, perhaps, a real necessity. The English Reformers, however, in reorganizing the Church, adhered, as we think, to the apostolick mode. Some of them had been Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church. Constrained to abjure the errors of that Church, and protest against its gross abuses, they still retained the high and holy office in all its virtue and authority. Their necessary separation from a communion so corrupt, the apostolic succession passed with them into the reformed Episcopal Church. Regularly ordained and consecrated themselves, according to the order of Christ's Church, they were divinely authorized in bestowing the sacred commission on others. Hence the ministry of the Church in England—and hence the ministry of the Church in this country. Through the present venerable president—Bishop—the Bishop of Pennsylvania—over whom nearly ninety years have rolled—the blessing was conveyed to our favoured land. With one other,† long since fallen asleep, he was consecrated at Lambeth, England, by the Arch Bishop of Canterbury, assisted by three other Bishops of the English Church, on the 4th of February, A. D. 1787. Returning in due time to his native land, this

* See Appendix, Note A.

† Rt. Rev. William White, D. D.

‡ Rt. Rev. Samuel Probst, D. D.

cellent prelate has been mainly instrumental in clothing the Episcopal Body in this country with their sacred commissions, as successors of the Apostles. Moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them this office and ministration, the same has been thus outwardly conferred and confirmed by lawful authority. And now, called by a free people, these Messengers of the Church are resident in almost every state of the Union. Each, in his appointed place, aided by other ministers, exercises his holy functions to the glory of God and the good of man. Thus is the Church, which Christ purchased with his blood, extending herself over this Western Continent, in her primitive order, purity and simplicity. Her great Head has planted her, a choice Vine, on our shores, and her branches are shooting rapidly and luxuriantly throughout all the land; inviting the faint and weary to seek repose beneath her grateful shade, and the thirsty, to refresh themselves with the swelling clusters which hang, in such rich profusion, from her boughs. [B]

Which brings us to the second division of our subject, as proposed for your consideration—viz :

II. *The prosperity of the Church in the efficacy of her Ministry.*

The importance of the outward order of the Christian Church cannot well, in our view, be too highly estimated. That this is every thing, however, we do not, by any means, maintain. With this divinely ordained form of government, we know that she may sadly decline, and become exceedingly corrupt, through the infirmity and depravity of human nature. Freely admitting this, we yet conceive it equally certain that, without a due external ecclesiastical polity, there would not only be a sad declension in religion, but Christianity would, in all probability, cease to exist in our world. The order of the Church is the frame-work of the edifice, without which it

could not stand, especially when beaten upon by dangers and tempests. Nor let the pious overlook this consideration, when tempted to think or speak lightly of the external constitution of the Church. By so doing they may, unconscious of the danger, be contributing to that laxity and confusion which, in the end, will reduce away all the props and stays of the Church, and involve her in one wide-spread scene of ruin. Whilst, however, we maintain the value of apostolic order in the Church, we are well assured that the grace of God, only, will make her a blessing to mankind—that a Saviour, ever present with her ministry, alone can give her prosperity, and make her effective in accomplishing the great design of saving men here and hereafter.

To this end was the promise of our Lord, as contained in the words of the Text. And very satisfactory is the evidence, that the word, in which he caused his servants to trust, has never failed. The Saviour had just ascended up on high, and set down on the right hand of the Father of God, when his promised grace descended in rich effusion on his waiting Church. The word, preached by the chosen Apostles, as divinely commissioned for the purpose, was attended with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, and their labour crowned with an abundant spiritual harvest. Multitudes of Jews and Gentiles, quickened by the truth thus declared, renounced their prejudices, errors, superstitions and vices, and gave themselves up to the Lord in a covenant never to be forgotten. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were added to the Church; and, in a short time, five thousand more “heard the word and believed”—all of whom continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” Nor did the incessant cool the ardour of the messengers of Christ. The word, faithfully preached, still had free course, and

glorified. The means employed were crowned with heavenly blessings. Great was the dismay which seized the powers of darkness, and vigorous the efforts of wicked men, to crush the rising cause of the crucified Jesus. "The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. But He who sitteth in the Heavens laughed, the Lord held them in derision." Notwithstanding all the zeal and malice of his enemies, the Lord still owned his word, and the number of the disciples was multiplied, and wonderful fruits attended the increase. The powers, both in church and state, began to be amazed at the things which they saw, "doubting of them whereunto they would grow"; whilst of the people, multitudes forsook their evil ways and unlawful occupations, "confessing and showing their deeds"; "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

Nor after the Apostles fell asleep were the blessings less signal which descended upon their successors in the work of the ministry. The weapons of the Gospel, in their hands, were still "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Persecution, indeed, began to kindle her fires, and seek to put down the new Religion by the terrors of a painful death. But the records of history assure us, that the frowns of tyranny and the pangs of martyrdom, were alike ineffectual. In vain were hoary headed Bishops dragged to the stake, and helpless females thrown to the wild beasts. "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." Truth, from the lips of holy men, enforced by their lives and sealed by their blood, still continued to make its way to the hearts of many,

whilst the patience and fortitude of those who suffered, filled all bosoms with sympathy and admiration, secured the convincing them of the excellence of the faith which could produce such fruits in life and death.

Thus did the Church advance in purity and grow in numbers, demolishing, in her progress, the strong holds of Paganism, until—its lying oracles silenced, its altars cast down, its temples closed, and its cruel rites abolished—Christianity, triumphant, ascended the Throne of the Cæsars. Idolatry could no longer abide the conflict with the Religion. Wherever the holy doctrines and simple principles of the Gospel were displayed, the light was forced upon the minds of men. To its convincing evidence and powerful persuasion, multitudes, before opposed, began to yield; so that, by the end of the third, or beginning of the fourth, century, nearly the whole Roman empire had embraced the truth—there being no longer any serious doubt, among the people at large, as to the divine origin of the Religion of Jesus Christ.

For some centuries, from this period, did the Church continue a great blessing to the world. Men of illustrious piety, zeal and wisdom, ministered at her altars; and multitudes shared the sanctifying grace of their ascended Redeemer—their lives shedding lustre on his cause, and adorning the doctrine which had been espoused by the Church. There was, however, at length, a manifest declension in our vital godliness amongst those who wore the Christian name. Bright examples of holy zeal and self-denying piety might still be seen in various individuals of the Church; but, on the whole, many errors began to creep in, and the age seemed only enlightened by some lingering rays of the departed glory.

And now commenced that dark night, which, for many adverse centuries, brooded over the Church, and

the alleged entire extinction of pure religion among Pastors and People, has served, in a measure, to perplex the question of Christ's continued presence with those who were called by his name.

Is there not, however, an obvious vindication and an easy solution of the seeming difficulty? Where there is a gross departure from the Saviour, on the part of his redeemed people, can we say how far he may justly depart from them without violating a promise, which must have been made with reference to certain implied conditions, involving fidelity and obedience to his laws? Yet is it by no means clear, that the ages in question were completely deserted by him. The outward order of his kingdom, in its essential principles, was preserved; and it can never be proved that he did not bless, to the good of some, the ministrations of the Church, perplexed and faulty as they were. There were, we know, among the higher orders of the ministry, and, no doubt, among the lower, some distinguished instances of eminent sanctity in every age of that protracted apostacy. And we have reason to believe that, among the humbler classes of society, there were not a few who "feared God and worked righteousness," notwithstanding their many and serious hindrances.

In connection with this subject, there is a principle which claims our special attention, in order to a proper illustration and understanding thereof. The opinions of our day, in reference to the corruption of the priesthood, are certainly peculiar and erroneous. To the *office*, ordained by Christ, there is but little importance attached by many, whilst every thing is supposed to depend on the character of him who fills it. The purity of the minister is regarded as essential to the efficacy of his ministrations; which, otherwise, would avail nothing, though his station should be one of divine appointment. Now this doctrine is utterly unsound. The testimony of Christ, himself, is

directly against it. Thus, whilst he severely condemns the conduct of the Jewish Priests, he always respects their office, and required that others should respect him. Did he heal a man of his leprosy—forthwith he “charged him that he should tell no man, but go shew himself to the priest, and offer for his cleansing according as Moses commanded.” “The Scribes and Pharisees”, said he, “sit in Moses’ seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they say you observe and do: but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not.” In agreement with this, and explanatory thereof, is our 26th article. “Although, in the visible Church, the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ’s, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ’s Ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God’s gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered to them, which be effectual because of Christ’s institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.”

And yet, whatever forbearance, or grace, may be vouchsafed his erring Church by the Saviour, reason and revelation unite in the propriety and obligation of correcting the evil of a wicked ministry as speedily as may be. To purge and purify the Church, false to her trust, and refusing her duty, were the Reformers of the sixteenth century moved by the Spirit of Him, who, though he tarry, yet will surely come to the help of His suffering cause. Having, in His inscrutable Providence, hid His face from His Church, through so many dreary ages, mindful of his promise, He now, as the Sun of Righteousness, arose again upon His people, shining upon them

amazing splendour, and with healing in his wings. He raised up men after His own heart, and put His spirit upon them, and sent them forth to preach, and write, and labour, and suffer, for His abused and injured name. To bring to light His imprisoned Word, long shut up and buried in unknown languages, was one of the blessed means by which His servants urged on the triumphs of His Truth. And it deserves our notice and grateful remembrance, that, *on this very day*, occurs the Tricentenary Anniversary of the printing of the first entire copy of the Bible in the English language.* This was the labour of MILES COVERDALE, a man greatly esteemed in his age for piety, knowledge of the Scriptures, and diligent preaching. By this work, printed A. D., 1535, and finished on the *fourth day of October*, was much light diffused among the people, aiding the efforts of those illustrious men, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves, if they might but contribute to scatter the darkness, and let in upon the Church the purifying and invigorating beams of Divine Truth.

We need not dwell upon the labours, or successes, of these men of immortal fame, or tell how, through them, toiling and suffering in his cause, [C] the Divine Saviour once more, in mercy, visited his people. Most of you are familiar with the rapid progress of the Reformation. You know too how the light, spreading from year to year, and rousing up the dormant energies of slumbering nations, at length began to dart its rays across the mighty ocean, into our benighted land. And now the brilliant orb, ascending higher and higher up the glowing sky, begins already to fling the broad beams of his glory back upon the

*There was a proposition made during the present year, and a general disposition manifested to acquiesce therein—that this Anniversary should be celebrated throughout Protestant Christendom.

midnight of the East, causing a light to arise upon gloomy realms, which, we doubt not, shall grow brighter and brighter to the perfect day—the day of universal knowledge and holiness—of millennial purity and bliss. The glorious consummation is fixed in the purposes of the Almighty, and he will bring it to pass; he will “give *heaven* to his Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.”

A few remarks on the history of this particular church will now engage your attention, in which, we believe, will be seen a further confirmation of the truth and faithfulness of Him, who has promised to be with His Church “to the end of the world.”

We have before said that this church was founded in the year of our Lord, 1735—the lot of ground, on which the building stands, having been set apart for that purpose by the law for the erection of the town, which was passed the Colonial Legislature about eight years before [D]. This church then has existed *one hundred years*. During that time, besides the present incumbent, some eight or nine regularly ordained ministers have served, successively, at its altar. With various degrees of profit and acceptance, were the labours of these individuals attended according to their gifts and devotion to duty. Some of them were men of eminent endowments, and much esteemed for their uprightness and other virtues, by the people among whom they ministered. That there have been censures cast upon the spirit in which they discharged their sacred functions, and on the general state of the church, as governed and guided by them, is well known. Nor does it become us to extenuate real deficiencies in a matter of so much moment, though we may be permitted to protest against exaggerated charges and uncharitable opinions. What was wrong in that day, we may safely refer to the unerring adjudication of the Almighty, and

confidence, leave the result to His gracious and equitable decision. We cannot, however, be insensible to the peculiar influences which were, probably, instrumental in bringing about a state of things, which all must regard as by no means desirable for the Church, and it may not be without advantage to make a brief allusion to the same, as tending to instruct and admonish us on whom a brighter and better example has dawned.

The age, to which we have referred, was one marked by very peculiar spiritual characteristics. There was a sobriety and quietness in religion widely prevalent in the Church, both in Europe and America; which, induced by certain powerful causes, had always the appearance of apathy, and, no doubt, often subsided into the unhappy and pernicious reality. This state of things, in the judgment of him who addresses you, may be ascribed mainly to that remarkable religious excitement of the *seventeenth century*, which, fomented throughout and artfully wielded by Oliver Cromwell, issued at length in such disastrous consequences to the peace, piety and liberties of his country. The hypocrisy, cant and wildfire attending that bloody revolution, in which he acted so conspicuous a part—accompanied as they were by ambition, cruelty, arrogance, and contempt of government—produced in time their natural fruit in that fearful re-action by which so much was lost in the respectability and zealous profession of our most holy faith. So much had the public mind been disgusted by the pretence and fanaticism of the Roundheads, that if Christianity was not totally rejected after the Restoration, its language and distinguishing doctrines, identified as they were with the evils they had been abused to sanctify, became offensive and odious to multitudes, who could scarcely bear of religion without recurring to the enormities which had been perpetrated under its abused name and violated authority. Nor was the evil confined

to the general mass of the community—the bitter wars found their way even into the sanctuary of God, and men, infected by the general prejudice, began to yield to important peculiarities of the faith, and by degrees fell upon the dangerous extreme of silence, coldness and formality in the work and service of the Lord.

That this Church, in common with many others in the land—scions as they were from the mother Church in England—shared the evils so widely prevalent from early times such as these, is believed by many persons much better acquainted with the past than I can be. And yet, in the acknowledged absence of that religious fervour and ardour and zeal, which belong to more favoured periods of the Church, may we not claim for that day some little good in the salutary influence of our scriptural Liturgy and those divine ministrations in the word and sacraments, which must operate favourably on the minds of men—ministrations which may at least be regarded as conservative in tendency, if not contributing to growth and improvement? Whatever of deficiency there may have been—and we may again say that we design no exculpation where there is real ground of blame—yet there were doubtless many good things, belonging to that period of our history, which of this happier and sufficiently vaunted day, have much to cause to consider and compare with the things which surround us.

In regard to the whole frame and fabric of society—domestic and civil, were there not, (in the strain of a former writer*), some good things among our fathers which deserve our respect and may well excite our jealousy. Fathers and grandfathers, were not parents in those days greatly alive to the duties they owe to their children, in bringing them up to the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Were not fathers and heads of families much in the habit of regu-

the morals of servants, and setting before them the example of reverence and regard for the worship of God? Was not the exemplary duty of family worship very general throughout the community? Were not children in consequence more dutiful to their parents, servants more dutiful to their masters? Was not the Sabbath sacredly regarded? Did not the distinguished men of the country manifest respect for religion and religious institutions? Were not magistrates strictly mindful of their public station and honored by the people in proportion? Had not the solemnity of an oath a peculiar sanctity attached to it, so that perjury was an unusual crime? Was not the hoary head of age accompanied with reverence and respect? In short, were not the whole circle of social enjoyments bland and soothing, kind and brotherly?

Let me not, however, say any thing, which would even seem to detract from the glory, which is justly due our great Redeemer for that grace which he has showed towards his Church in our own favoured day. That there has been, within the present century, a great and real revival of religion amongst us, in common with the other Churches of our communion in this and the father land, is a truth, as worthy of all praise and gratitude to God, as the fact is clear and undeniable. The fruits of this good work appear on every hand and are so manifest that it is impossible to overlook or to gainsay them. They are seen in the great increase of regular and pious worshippers, who crowd our churches and our altars. They are seen in the erection of numerous sacred edifices in destitute places. They are seen in the zealous labours of Bible Societies, of Prayer Book and Tract Societies, of Missionary Societies and of Sunday Schools. In all these things we see the hand of God, and the faithfulness of that divine Saviour, who has promised to be with his Church, "always, even unto the end of the world." To no other in-

fluence or agency can we possibly refer so great a change to
 Nor can any devout mind, in view of it, restrain the ex-
 clamation, "Lo! what hath God wrought." And surely
 one will fervently adopt the Psalmist's song of gladness
 "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we
 were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled
 with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said
 they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things
 for them. The Lord *hath* done great things for us whereof
 we are glad."

It is meet and right that we should acknowledge the
 goodness of God in raising up his Church from so low a
 state and giving her a name and a place among his people.
 In this signal act of his grace, we are equally bound to
 behold a striking proof of our Lord's unfailing protection
 with his Church. Of this we have surely had an illustration
 so convincing as to shame every thing like doubt or
 unbelief. Indeed it were impossible that the absolute
 truths of religion could receive a more conclusive, practical
 confirmation, than they have in the instance now before
 us. We have here seen our God manifestly at work to
 sustain his own word and give evidence of his veracity
 which none but the most heedless can overlook, or the
 most obdurate deny.

We shall conclude with a few practical remarks.

1. The Church, to which we happily belong, if the
 friends, commends herself to the filial veneration of the
 children, and the favourable acceptance of all, by many
 powerful arguments and many affecting claims. Good
 apostolic in her ministry—pure in her doctrine—simple
 in her worship, and beautiful in all her forms. Her
 system throughout has been framed with reference to the
 vine command, "Let all things be done decently and in
 order." Having carefully followed in every thing the
 vine model, as Moses the pattern shewed him in the
 at

she is strongly averse to innovation and change. Upon the spirit of schism she frowns indignantly, and drives away from her borders all heresy, or erroneous and strange doctrine. She claims to be a divine society and as such to be under the government of her Divine Head, and therefore not subject to the whims or fancies of selfish and fallible men. All her essential principles are fixed and her practice founded on them as immutable and uniform as the truths from whence it is derived.

And yet, though decided and firm, there is a moderation and charity distinguishing the church which entitles her to the highest respect and love of all. Whilst she cherishes her peculiar views and plainly declares them, she does so in unrivalled humility, meekness and affection. Convinced of the truth and excellence of her principles, she commends them in kindness to all, but desires not to force them upon any. The rights of opinion in others are as sincerely respected by her as any religious communion on earth. Her own authentic records give us ample assurance of this and furnish proof of her moderation which can never be shaken. As an unexceptionable witness of her liberal and catholic spirit, the language of her prayers may be cited as enduring monuments thereof. Where shall we look for truth and sincerity, if not in those consecrated moments, when prostrate on the earth, she pours out her supplications before the Throne of the Heavenly Grace. Bowing before the mercy seat, she breathes the ardent prayer to God for His Holy Church universal; "that it may be so guided and governed by his good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led *into the way of truth*, and"—mark her love—"hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and righteousness of life." Again, we behold her spirit, when with almost seraphic ardour and purity she prays in the Office of Institution, that "Almighty God, who

has built his Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone, would grant that by the operation of the Holy Ghost, all Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace, that they may be and Holy Temple acceptable unto him. And especially, in her love of truth, she continues to pray—"that he may give to the congregation present, the abundance of wisdom and grace, that with one heart they may desire the prospering of his Holy Apostolic Church, and with one mouth, profess the faith once delivered to the Saints."

How excellent in spirit, as in order and practice! nothing does she prove herself to be of God, more than the charity which animates all her standards, and breathes through all her services.

2. As members of this congregation let us not fail, brethren, to cherish the reflections which become upon this solemn occasion. A century has rolled away since our fathers first assembled upon this spot to worship God. Here, "in strong and beauteous order ranged," they performed the song of united praise and uttered the exalted petitions of our beautiful Liturgy. But—fathers, where are they?" Their voices have long since been hushed in death, and their earthly abodes exchanged for those of eternity. We follow, my friends, in the steps of those who have gone before us. We come to-day another century. Where will the termination of it find us. Oh who of this numerous assembly will be here to unite in chaunting the requiem of the centennial hailing the dawn of another? Will there be any to unite in another centennial commemoration—will there be any—will there be one? No, my friends, we may safely say, that every living creature now in this world before that day, will have yielded up his spirit to the God who gave it, and his body to the dust from whence it was

taken. Now, a congregation of breathing, animated beings, you will, ere then, be numbered with the pale nations of the dead. You will have your mortal abodes, among the slumbering tenants of the grave, in those silent mansions crowded with the ashes of the long forgotten victims of mortality. Over your sepulchres "the turf will heave in many a mouldering heap, each in his lowly cell forever laid." There you will sleep in the oblivion of the grave, your repose unbroken by the busy hum of life—fast bound in the chains of death,

" Until the eternal morn shall wake
The slumber of the tomb.

Shall we not then awake to a timely sense of our condition as heirs of mortality and probationers of eternity. Shall we not improve our fleeting moments and avail ourselves of the privileges vouchsafed us. Our precious opportunities are on the wing. Our seasons of grace are rolling rapidly away. Our day of life hastens to a close. Soon will our few remaining sands be exhausted and death lay upon us his icy hand. Then comes the day for which all other days were made. Then when the archangel,

" With his golden wing,
Sweeps stars and suns aside."

shall appear above us and around us the amazing terrors of the final judgment.

O then, shall we not hasten to repent and believe the gospel. Shall we not forsake our sins and give ourselves up to Christ—coming away from this devoted world, and entering by the door into his fold—the Church, that we may share his favour and go in and out and find pasture, and gain preparation for the great things which await us beyond the grave.

May God of his mercy grant that we may meet him in the final day with joy and not with grief; and unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, through all ages, world without end. AMEN.

APPENDIX.

SO SOON AS A TREE CEASES TO GROW,
IT BEGINS TO WITHER AWAY ; SO SOON AS
A CHURCH CEASES TO ADVANCE, IT BE-
COMES TORPID AND BEGINS TO DECLINE.

APPENDIX.

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NOTE [A]

On the subject of Episcopacy, Calvin says, "If they would give us such a hierarchy, in which the bishops have such a pre-eminence, as that they do not refuse to be subject to Christ, and to depend upon Him, as their only head, and refer all to Him; then I will confess, that they are worthy of all anathemas, if any such shall be found, who will not reverence it, and submit themselves to it with the utmost obedience."

In a letter to Edward VI. King of England, it is said, that Calvin offered to adopt the Episcopal form of government in the church of Geneva. But his letter falling into the hands of the Popish Bishops, Gardiner and Bonner, a surly answer was returned to it by them in the name of the Reformers. "From that time," says Strype, "John Calvin and the Church of England were at variance in several points, which otherwise through God's mercy, had been qualified, if those papers of his proposals had been discovered unto the Queen's majesty during John Calvin's life."

Luther—speaking of the Romish Bishops and of the duty of submission to them, provided their doctrines were sound—says, "We would acknowledge them as our fathers, and willingly obey their authority, which we find supported by the word of God."

To this effect also have we the opinion of the amiable Melanethon. In his apology for the celebrated Augsburg

confession, he says, "I would to God it lay in me to store the government of Bishops. For I see what manner of Church we shall have, the ecclesiastical polity dissolved. I do see that hereafter will grow up a greater tyranny in the church than there ever was before."

The language of Beza, is as follows—"In my writings touching church government, I ever impugned the Jewish hierarchy, but never intended to touch or impugn the ecclesiastical polity of the Church of England." "If there are any who reject the whole order of episcopacy, I forbid that any man of a sound mind should assent to the madness of such men."

The founders of parity were then candid men, did not pretend to reject episcopacy as unscriptural.

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NOTE [B]

The American Episcopate.

Thirty-one Bishops have been consecrated for the American Church;—Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut; Bishop Kilgour, of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Edinburg; Petrie and Skinner, being present and assisting;—Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, and Provoost, of New York; the Archbishop of Canterbury, [Moore,] the Archbishop of York, [Markham,] the Bishop of Bath and Wells, [Hinchliff,] being present and assisting;—Bishop Madison, of Virginia; the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Rochester, being present and assisting;—Bishop of Maryland, by Bishop Provoost, Bishops Seabury, and Madison, being present and assisting;—and Bishop Smith, of South Carolina; Bass, of Massachusetts; of Connecticut; Moore, of New York; Parker, of Massachusetts; Hobart, of New York; Griswold, of the

tern Diocese; Dehon, of South Carolina; Moore, of Virginia; Kemp, of Maryland; Cross, of New Jersey; Bowen, of South Carolina; Chase, of Ohio; Brownell, of Connecticut; Ravenscroft, of North Carolina; Onderdonk, of Pennsylvania; Meade, of Virginia; Stone, of Maryland; Onderdonk, of New York; Ives, of North Carolina; Hopkins, of Vermont; Smith, of Kentucky; Mellvaine, of Ohio; Doane, of New Jersey; Otey, of Tennessee; and Kemper, missionary Bishop for Missouri and Indiana, all by Bishop White. Of the whole number fourteen have died. The House of Bishops now consists of the *seventeen* whose names follow, in the order of seniority. Bishop White, Presiding Bishop, now in the 49th year of his Episcopate, Bishops Griswold, Moore, Bowen, Chase, Brownell, H. U. Onderdonk, Meade, Stone, B. T. Onderdonk, Ives, Hopkins, Smith, Mellvaine, Doane, Otey, and Kemper.

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NOTE [C]

Episcopal Martyrs.

It is remarkable that the only martyrs among the prominent Reformers, were those of the Protestant Episcopal Church of England. It may not be unacceptable to our readers to have a short account of the fiery trial through which some of them passed in contending for the faith once delivered to the Saints. Our space confines us to the immediate circumstances of their martyrdom.

Bishop Hooper :—Hooper, after being degraded from his priestly office, was sent to his diocese of Gloucester, to be burnt there. At this he rejoiced, hoping by his death to confirm the faith of those over whom he had formerly been placed. One day's interval was allowed him, which he spent in fasting and prayer. Some came to per-

suade him to accept of the Queen's^a mercy, since life is
sweet and death bitter. He answered, 'the death that is
to come after is more bitter, and the life that is to follow
more sweet.' Once as his friends parted with him he wept
tears; "All my imprisonment" said he, "has not done
me do so much." On the 9th of February,^a he was led to
execution. The stake had been made ready near a large
elm tree, in front of the cathedral where he was wont to
preach. "The place round about, the houses, and the
boughs of the tree, were replenished with people, and
the chamber over the college-gate stood the Priest of the
college." Being denied leave to speak, but allowed to
pray, he declared his belief in the strain of a prayer.
While he was on his knees in prayer, a box containing
his pardon was brought and laid before him; at the
sight whereof he twice exclaimed, "If you love my soul,
away with it!" He prayed earnestly for strength by the
God, to endure his torment patiently; and then undressed
himself and kissed the reeds. When he was tied to the
stake with iron chains, he desired them to spare their labour
for he was confident he should not trouble them. He would
fain not have taken off his doublet and hose, but the sheriffs
required them—so that he remained in shirt; and being a
tall man, and raised on a high stool, was seen by all the
people. The fire was kindled, but the wood being green
burnt ill, and the wind blew away the flame of the reeds.
He prayed oft, 'O Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy
on me and receive my soul,' and called to the people that
the fire was burning his nether parts but did not reach his
vitals. The fire was renewed, but the wind still blew it
away, and prevented it rising up to torment him, so that
he was long in torment. The last words he was heard to
utter, were, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." One of his
hands dropped off, before he died; with

other he continued to beat upon his breast for some time. He was near three quarters of an hour in burning.

Bishops Ridley and Latimer. On the 15th of October, following, Ridley and Latimer were led to the place of execution, which was a ditch opposite Balliol college.— Lord Williams, of Tame, had been appointed to see it done, with a sufficient retinue, lest any tumult might be made in the hope of rescuing them. They embraced each other, knelt, each beside his stake, in prayer, and then conversed together, whilst the Lord Williams, and the other persons in authority, removed themselves out of the sun. Ridley distributed such trifles as he had about him to those who were near, and many pressed about him, to obtain something as a relic. They then undressed for the stake; and Latimer, when he had put off his prison dress, remained in a shroud, which he had put on, instead of a shirt, for that day's office. Till then his appearance had been that of a poor withered bent old man; but now as if he had put off the burthen of infirmity and age, "he stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold." When the fire was brought, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out!" The venerable old man received the flame as if embracing it, and having, as it were, bathed his hands in the fire, and stroked his face with them, died presently, apparently without pain. Ridley endured a longer martyrdom, till the gunpowder* exploded, and then he fell at Latimer's feet.

Thus died these two excellent Bishops. The one for his piety, learning and solid judgment, justly esteemed the ablest man of all who promoted the Reformation; and the other, for the plain simplicity of his life, a truly primitive Bishop and Christian.

*Gunpowder had been hung about them to hasten their death.

Archbishop Cranmer:—Cranmer was now led down from the stage and carried to the stake, surrounded by priests and friars, who, with promises of heaven, threats of everlasting torments, called upon him, to renounce errors by which he would otherwise draw innumerable souls into hell with him. They brought him to the spot where Latimer and Ridley had suffered. He overcome by grace the weakness of his nature; and, after a short prayer, put off his clothes with a cheerful countenance and willing mind, and stood upright in his shirt which came down to his feet. His feet were bare-headed, when both his caps were off, appeared perfectly bald, but his beard was long and thick, and his countenance so venerable that it moved even his enemies to compassion. Two Spanish friars, who had been chiefly instrumental in obtaining his recantation,* continued to urge him; till perceiving that their efforts were vain, one of them said, 'Let us leave him for the devil is with him.' Ely, who was afterwards President of St. John's, still continued urging him to repentance. Cranmer replied, 'I repent of his recantation.' Once more Ely called him to stand to his recantation, Cranmer stretched out his right arm, and replied, "This is the hand that wrote it, and therefore it shall suffer punishment first."

True to his purpose, as soon as the flame rose, he held out his hand to meet it, and retained it there steadily, that all the people saw it sensibly burning before it reached any other part of his body; and often replied with a loud and firm voice, "This hand hath written this unworthy right hand!" Never did martyr meet the fire with more invincible resolution; no cry was heard from him, save the exclamation of the proto-martyr Stephen, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" He stood immovable

*In a moment of fear and weakness, this eminent man had induced to sign a recantation; of which, however, he bitterly repented.

the stake to which he was bound, his countenance raised, looking to Heaven, and anticipating that rest into which he was about to enter; and thus "in the greatness of the flame," he yielded up his spirit. The fire did its work soon, and his heart was found unconsumed amid the ashes.

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NOTE [D]

The law for the erection of the Town was enacted in the year 1727—making express provision for a Church and Church-Yard. The law was, in part, expressed in the following language.

I. Whereas great numbers of people have of late seated themselves and their families upon, and near the river Rappahannock, &c. &c.

II. *Be it enacted, by the Lieutenant Governor, Council and Burgesses of this present General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority of the same,* That within six months after the passing of this Act fifty acres of land, parcel of a tract of land belonging to John Royston and Robert Buckner, of the county of Gloucester, situate, lying and being, upon the south side of the river Rappahannock, aforesaid, in the county of Spotsylvania, commonly called or known by the name of the Lease Land, shall be surveyed and laid out, taking the whole breadth of the said tract of land upon the river, by the surveyor of the said county of Spotsylvania, and the said fifty acres of land, so to be surveyed and laid out, shall be and is hereby vested in John Robinson, Esqr. Henry Willis, Augustine Smith, John Taliaferro, Harry Beverly, John Waller, and Jeremiah Clowder, of the county of Spotsylvania, gentlemen, and their successors, in trust, for the several purposes hereafter mentioned; and the said John Robinson, Henry Willis, Augustine Smith, John Taliaferro, Harry Beverly, John Waller, and Jeremiah Clow-

der, are hereby constituted and appointed directors and trustees for designing, building, carrying on, and maintaining, a Town upon the said land: And the said directors and trustees, or any four of them, shall have power to meet as often as they shall think necessary, and shall lay out the said fifty acres in lots and streets, not exceeding half an acre of ground in each lot, and also to set apart such portions of the said land for a Church and Church-Yard, a Market place, &c.”*

The Church-Yard, as set apart under this authority, extended from Main street to Princess Ann street. The ground on the main street proving unsuitable for a burying-ground application was made in time to the Assembly for power to dispose of that part of the lot for purposes named in the petition—and the following law was passed in conformity with the wishes of the applicants, in the year 1772.

An Act to empower the Vestry of the Parish of Saint George, in Spotsylvania, to sell part of the Church-Yard

1. WHEREAS, it is represented to this present General Assembly, by the Vestry of the Parish of Saint George, in the county of Spotsylvania, that the church-yard in the Town of Fredericksburg, in the said county, is inconveniently situated, lying on the side of a hill, and moreover so broken that there is no part thereof proper to erect a new church thereon, which is become necessary, or room left for burying ground, except on the main street of the said Town: *Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, Council and Burgesses of this present General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority of the same, That so much of the said church-yard as has not been heretofore appropriated or used for a burying ground, be, and the same is hereby, vested in the present Vestry of the said Parish of Saint George, and in the Vestry of the said Parish for the*

*By the same Act provision was made for erecting the Town of Falmouth.

time being, in trust, nevertheless, that the said Vestry, or the greater part of them, shall by deed of bargain and sale, sell and convey such part of the said church-yard as aforesaid, for the best price that can be got for the same, to any person or persons, who shall be willing to purchase the same, to hold to such purchaser or purchasers, his or their heirs and assigns, forever.

II. *And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid,* That the money arising by such sale shall be, by the said Vestry, laid out and applied towards purchasing a more convenient piece of ground, in the said Town of Fredericksburg, for the purposes aforesaid.