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*The Use and Authority of the Pastoral Office,
and the Rite of Investiture with it, considered.*

A
S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D

In His MAJESTY'S Chapel at *Whitehall*,

A T T H E

C O N S E C R A T I O N

O F T H E

Right Rev. Father in G O D,

C H A R L E S,

L O R D B I S H O P o f C A R L I S L E.

O n S U N D A Y, M A R C H 21, 1762.

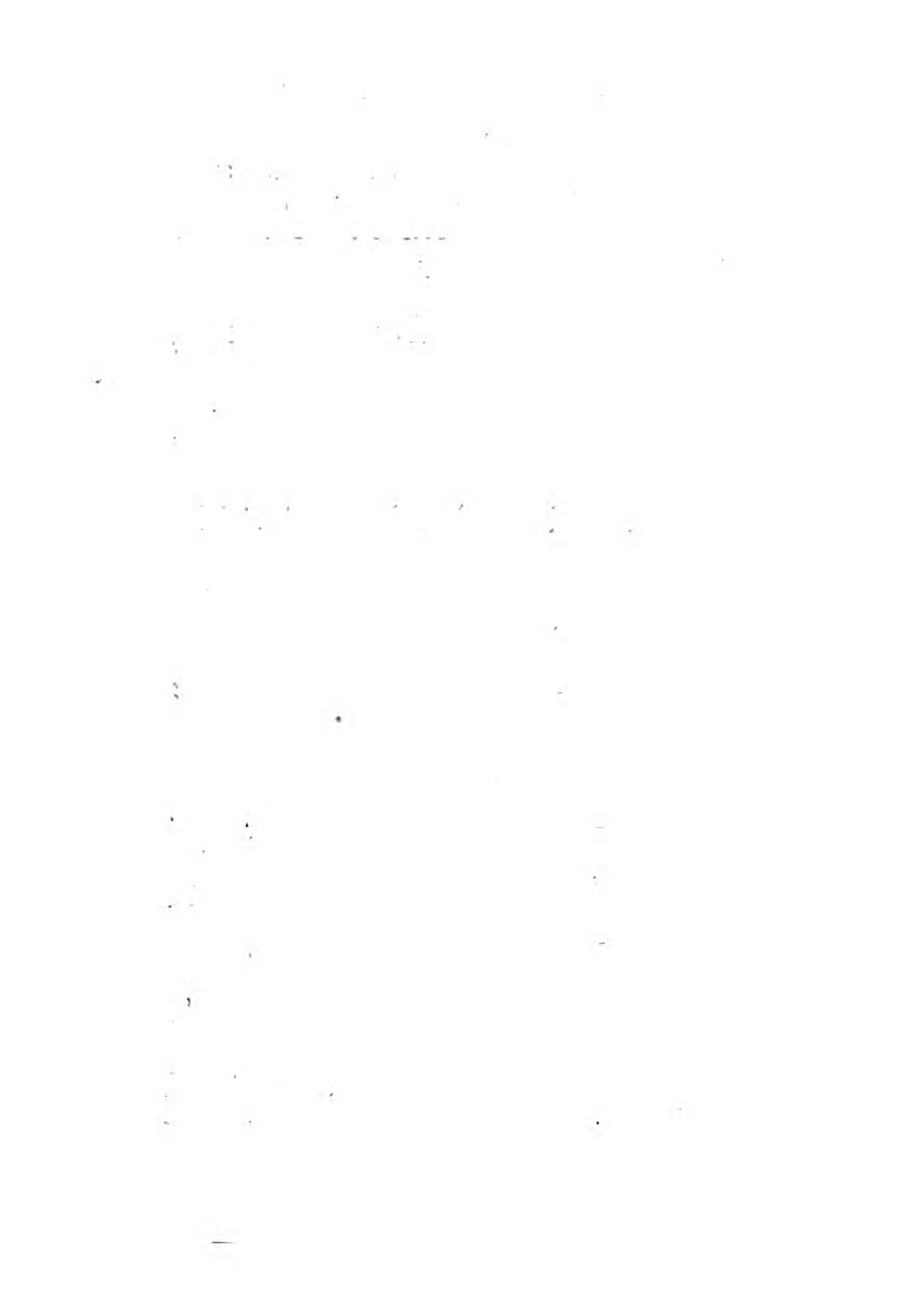
By WILLIAM PARKER, D. D.
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY to His MAJESTY.

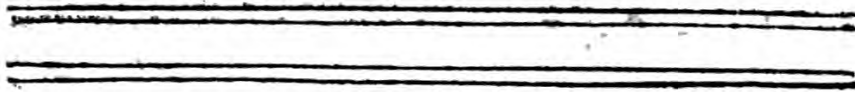
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M D C C L X I I . 6^d





T O

The Right Rev. Father in God,

C H A R L E S,

Littleton

LORD BISHOP of CARLISLE.

MY LORD,

THIS discourse preached at
your request, and published by
his Grace's order, naturally throws
itself under your protection. The
command indeed of so great a master
of composition, as his Grace, is the
a only

only reason I can have for offering it to the candid acceptance of the publick. I shall say nothing here of your lordship's qualifications for the high station, into which you are admitted, because I would say nothing, which can look like flattery. This only I will confess, that in the choice of my text, I had an eye to that innate disposition of benevolence, so distinguishable in your lordship's character, and so becoming the pastoral office. Diligence in discharge of function may be presumed, where natural inclination to promote the religious welfare of mankind is animated by fraternal zeal, which from a serious attachment to truth hath presented to the world one of the most judicious and ingenious vindications of christian

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ftian faith and its evidence, that the present age hath produced, in the history of St. Paul's conversion. The merit of this production coming from a learned lay-hand, is so much the more acceptable to the clergy, as it adds the weight of more impartial consideration by many among the laity to the cause of truth, and our holy religion. The argument is peculiarly adapted to affect the calmly considerate Jew, and at the same time to have its influence upon the fair unbiaſſed free-thinker. Let either of them be but as attentive and honeſt as Paul was; and we need not doubt, but he will ſoon become in heart, what that ingenuous convert wiſhed all his hearers, not only *almost*, but *altogether*, what himſelf was, a ſincere
chriſtian.

[iv]

christian. I am with due gratitude for the long friendship, wherewith you have honoured me, and the opportunities you have given me of experiencing its integrity,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged,

And most obedient servant,

APRIL 8, 1762.

W. PARKER.

ISAIAH xl. II.

*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;
he shall gather the lambs with his
arm, and carry them in his bosom;
and shall gently lead those that are
with young.*

WHOEVER seriously reads over the history of this country, and traces back the mischiefs that have arisen from the blindness of superstition, or the unruly zeal of enthusiasm, will think himself happy, and find ample reason to bless God, that he is born in an age, wherein a system of religion is established upon rational principles, and supported by rational means: neither enforced by the law of violence, nor carried headstrong over law in the spirit of anarchy. He will esteem the nation blessed, wherein true Christianity stands serene, protected by the favour, and illustrated by the example of regal piety and virtue.

B

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Such a retrospect will always furnish reason to the discreet to keep a due, and well-tempered guard against any subtle attempts of superstition industrious to return, or any new-introduced seeds of enthusiasm studious to take root. This is the business of the true shepherd; watchfully to guard his flock against the noxious plant of any kind. And an arduous task it is to the general overseer of the flock. It supposes various talents; it implies prudence of address, sagacity of discernment, and ardor of diligence in the application.

The words of the text, above all, direct gentleness. And this is no mean recommendation of our present established church. The *shepherd* is a figurative expression in language not uncommonly applied to governors of any kind. More peculiarly applicable is it to the inspector over christian knowledge. It is a figure adopted by the highest authority among Christians. *I am the true shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine*, saith the great revealer of christian truth. He pointeth out at the same time the just criterion by which we are to discern in the society the *true shepherd*: namely by a regular admission through some
right

right authority; either from manifest divine credentials, such as he brought with him; or correspondent to divine appointments, such as he and his apostles left behind them.

Thus the office was guarded by him from intrusion: that his church might be a regular established household with proper inspectors over it: that so confusion may not rage within the gates; and therein no man know his proper department, or his proper province. *Verily, verily I say unto you, He that entreteth not in by the door, the proper door of admission into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief, and a robber: but he that entreteth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.*

All this is descriptive of the benefit of right admission into office, of the regularity ensuing it; and the mischiefs arising from illicit intrusion into sacred functions. These mischiefs in society are described by the hand

of violence, or the wiles of seduction: by the strong arm of the robber, or the pillage of the inveigling thief. But, where admision is obtained by due authority, the prophet *Isaiah* informeth us in the text, what is the proper character and conduct of the truly affectionate, tender governor: *He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that are with young;* or as the word is rendered in the margin of our Bible, agreeably to the Syriac version, those that give suck; or, according to another sense of the original *Hebrew* word, those that have brought forth, and are of course employed in cherishing and suckling their young.

This passage hath usually been looked upon as predictive of the office of the *Messiah*. It may also be considered as descriptive of their office, who are appointed to have the oversight of right instruction and order in the church of the *Messiah*. And these observations naturally lead our minds to some remarks which offer themselves, suitable to the present solemnity,

1st, upon the authority implied in the character of the christian shepherd;

2^{dly},

2^{dly}, upon the expediency of some visible commission, and credentials of regular admission into sacred office; and the fitness and wisdom of our own form;
 3^{dly}, upon the qualifications, and conduct requisite in the truly christian pastoral governor.

First then we may observe, that some degree of power and authority is implied in the character of a shepherd. It implies authority to supervise, to regulate, and conduct. It is a power to find, and to point out the proper fields of pasture to the flock; *to call*, according to our Saviour's description, *the sheep by name* into it; to go before them in the way; to make them acquainted with the voice of his directions; to take heed, that they follow him into the pastures of life.

In the exercise of this power over moral agents there is something necessarily implied of a judicial nature; ever to be kept indeed subordinate to the civil constitution of a state; that there may be neither confusion in the mixt discipline, nor tyranny in the absolute ecclesiastic power. But such a weight of influence is included in the very essence of authority; without which it could not be exerted

erted to any useful purposes; or indeed exerted as authority at all. The office of the shepherd supposes authority to watch over, to check, to curb, and to restrain the wandering flock, to bring back the sheep that hath been lost. For how great would be the confusion in civil society, how fatal the mischief to the spiritual flock, if while the shepherd stood in the field, one voice were permitted to call them one way, another without any restraint to call them another, all studious to withdraw them from their proper salutary pastor!

His province then supposes some degree of social discipline. Now all discipline is irksome to the licentious: it is no wonder therefore that every degree of authority hath at different times been railed against by those, who have fallen under its cognizance; to whom it hath been troublesome, whether in the most moderate civil state, or the mildest church-regimen. But nevertheless all society upon earth necessarily supposes subordination: and subordination supposes superiority somewhere lodged: and this superiority is lodged for the sake of social discipline, and the maintenance of social order.

Were religion indeed a thing indifferent to
human

human beings, were it of no significance to states, by what tenets men were influenced, political bodies might perhaps think themselves less concerned about the established religion of a country. Some perhaps might be indifferent about *any* establishment. But this is not the case: experience of all ages sheweth us it is not. Where the flock is not fed with *wholesome*, it will find out *noxious* food unto itself. Experience proves that the greatest injuries to society have been produced by false tenets of religion zealously propagated, and furiously maintained: a sett of men without *any* principle of religion at all would be a very dangerous herd of creatures to all their fellow-beings. For, where there is no internal restraint of action, dreadful is the result of vehement overbearing passion. All wise civilized states therefore have agreed in the sentiment, the necessity of establishing *some* religion, as a first foundation of publick welfare, and cement of social unity in the *publick* body; and all regular establishment supposes social order.

Our Saviour therefore represents the collective body of professors of his religion by figures of speech, which denote society. They are called an household, a family, a kingdom,

kingdom, a flock over which presides a shepherd, a vine and its shooting branches: and his apostle St. Paul denotes the church, or collective body of Christians, as many emblematick writers have done political society, by the body natural. But over every associated body there must be an head; to every vine there is a root; over every household there is a master; to every family a father; over every kingdom a prince.

Let not men therefore complain of institutions, which the very condition of their own nature, and the support of their own good, have made necessary. Exorbitant extension of power there *may* have been by some of those advanced to high authority in Christ's family, as all institutions among frail, human creatures are liable to abuse; and the corruption of the best makes them sometimes the worst. Such extensions of power there *have* been. Witness the church of Rome. But let not the protestant church of England be wounded through the sides of the church of Rome!

For it hath been the art of writers, enemies through prejudice, sometimes enemies upon principle, to regular institutions, to aim a dart at popery, and intend, that it should
glance

glance upon protestant ordinances: sometimes enemies through disgust to a particular person, they have directed a shaft at a dignity, which in their serious hours they would not hurt, merely to affect a person, who has incautiously behaved with some appearances of pride, or arrogance in the station. Appeal to their honest thoughts in other cases, perhaps their own, and they would think it hard, they would feel it hard, they would call it cruel, that the order and welfare of society should suffer through the imprudent behaviour of one or two intrusted with authority.

For the expediency of *some* kind of pastoral inspection, not to intermeddle with disputes about the antiquity and origin of any established form, which would be a scope too large for my present appointment, the expediency, I may say, of some degree of regimen in the religious body, the utility of our own form, and its correspondence with other wise institutions of society, will upon the foot of reason vindicate its continuance in a well-regulated state, for the spiritual as well as civil benefit of all, by means of an established, well-tempered religious discipline over those, who officiate in sacred functions. And

we may dismiss this head with one observation, that there never was any regulated conjunction of men upon earth without supervising directors of some kind or other, whose injunctions had their weight. Even the most licentious have their leaders; popular for a day, or the creatures of an hour, raised by tumult and canvas, and soon deposed by sedition springing naturally out of the bowels of their own faction. The best and happiest societies have been those, where the authority hath been most deliberately confirmed; and whether the office hath been temporary, or for life, a regular institute of succession hath been established. This leads me to the

Second point proposed, namely the expediency of some visible commission, and outward proof and credentials of admission into the pastoral office, and the fitness and propriety of the form used by our own church. The great institutor of the christian society, in his emblematick description, observes, that *the true shepherd entreteth in through the door into the sheepfold.* He defineth *him*, and *him alone*, who thus entreteth, to be the true shepherd: and signifieth that the sheep will attend with security to *his voice alone*: because *the thief who entreteth in another way,*
cometh

cometh only to steal, to kill, and to destroy. And again he saith, *I am the door*; the way of admiffion is by *me*: the true authority of the shepherd is derived by commiffion from *me*: *By me if any man enter in, he shall be faved, and shall go in, and out, and find paf-
ture.* If any man then defire admittance, let him allow Chrift to be, what he claims in this fenfe to be, *the door* of entrance. Let him offer himfelf in the way which is moft conformable to the ordinance of Chrift, and to venerable ufage tranfmitted through fuc-
ceffive ages down to the prefent days.

Modern enthusiasts may pretend what *in-
ternal* call they please: but it may be fairly asked, how do they prove that call to the doubtful hearer, if they have no *external* commiffion to preach the gofpel? For the credentials of miracles are now ceafed. And even as to thofe, who have received the general commiffion of ordination into fome degree of facred function in his church, Chrift by this gofpel, and by his ordinances calleth them home to their proper fold: to their proper diftrict, whereunto they are appointed by due authority. They are, according to the tenor of his emblem, and his apoftle St. Paul's explanation of it by ex-

ample, not to force or insinuate themselves into another's fold, wherein they would be but intruding strangers. For *a stranger*, saith he, will the sheep not naturally *follow*, without art applied to seduce them; *but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers*. By which figure he intimateth, that the innocent, undeluded flock will not attend, and he plainly intimateth his own sentiments, that the flock *ought not* to attend, and *cannot* with *safety* attend to the alluring voice of such intruders. For it immediately followeth, *the thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*, seducing into dangerous, or fatal error. Those who pretend to fetch all their arguments from scripture, and to be governed only by scripture, should, one would think, particularly conform themselves to the express rules prescribed in holy scripture.

I will not here speak of the prejudices that have arisen to civil governments from rash intrusion into sacred offices; or how enthusiasm in religion hath often given the signal to sedition in the state. What was the consequence of every man's taking upon himself the office of a preacher, and of leading a multitude after him, as his fancy, or spiritual conceit

conceit dictated to him, that he had a *call*, we have read with lamentation in the annals of our fore-fathers. It was deplored not only by the members of our church, but by some of the best regulated separate sects among us, as one of the great grievances of the civil war : till the spirit of the nation almost worn out by the miseries it had endured, gave its last effort for peace and order again, and returned back to its ancient institutions.

But the expediency to publick welfare of some publick commission to the discharge of holy functions, as well as of other offices in society, hath already in great measure been proved by way of anticipation under the foregoing head. It is the result of what was there remarked. And here, as I have already observed, is to be meant, not merely a general, vague commission to exercise ministerial function, wherever the person pleaseth to fix his stand ; but a destination, and confinement to district by proper order ; that bold pretension may not thrust itself into another's province, or vainly intermeddle with another's charge, imputing negligence, or challenging sincerity, where it is not a judge ; as hath been the mode of some enthusiasts in the present age ; nor one man *build upon another*

another man's foundation: that men may not be called from the honest labours of their profession to unseasonable devotion; nor from peaceable union with their properly-appointed pastors to irregular connexions with rambling assumers of superior mission; nor from decent devotion in the church to tumultuary devotions in the field. Upon these disorders in the flock the good discreet overseer will cast his eyes with sorrow; watchful to prevent, or check them by all the prudent means he can.

For if the establishment of truth upon the firmest basis, especially *religious* truth, as the most interesting, be a matter of the highest importance to society, because men's civil conduct *will* be actuated by their religious persuasions, then it will follow to be requisite, that an order of men adequately advanced in learning and piety should be commissioned with authority to inspect the doctrines and conduct of such as profess themselves teachers of revealed truth to mankind; invested with authority to examine the candidates for this high office of teaching truth; with an authority to commission under them the fit and qualified, and to send them forth with proper credentials into the world; at
the

the same time to reject the unfit ; to repel the bold intruder ; to curb, check, and exclude the subtle impostor.

The usefulness and importance of such authoritative guardian-office to the cause of truth have been sufficiently discovered by the ill-consequences that have arisen to society, where it hath been interrupted, and its jurisdiction tumultuously contravened. Therefore the adversaries of religious truth, and they who mean to puzzle and perplex truth, in order more effectually to delude, have so industriously and malignantly inveighed against this authority, and against those who bear and exercise it.

But to proceed ; wherever offices of high rank, and great weight of dignity have been established, distinct ceremonials of investiture with the authority have been used. The most solemn and sacred have ever, in all well-regulated states, been appropriated to those of the greatest importance. And such ceremonials have not merely been approved in speculation ; but experience also hath confirmed their use : or else they would not have been universally applied by all nations in some shape or other, varied by the temper, dignity, and constitution of the state,

state, to the different ranks and degrees of authority in the social body. The rite of investiture in short is the delivery of power ; it is the seal of commission ; it is the open declaration of authority conferred. And the solemn ceremonials used tend to imprint on the minds of those that are to be governed a proper respect and veneration for the office of the sacred guardian over social order. Thus the unction of kings, and the consecration of pastoral governors in the church have had their beneficial uses not only upon the minds of the people, but also upon the heart of the anointed, or consecrated. It teacheth the people, *whose* authority they are directed to obey : it teacheth the governor, *whose* minister he is, and *whose* commission he subordinately executeth. It teacheth him therefore to be more regardful of the charge of the high office, to which he is admitted, through the very solemnity, whereby he is invested with it, and the devout prayers at the same time offered up to God for his assistance in the discharge. These supplications admonish the spiritual pastor, earnestly to pursue the grace, for which he prayeth ; that he may *duly administer the godly discipline of the word* : they admonish the
 people

people committed to his charge, when ever in holy address they join with him, so to prepare themselves *in godly simplicity of heart, that they may obediently follow the same.*

And if solemn rites of investiture with *civil* offices have been admitted as useful to society, even by some of those (*a*) who had not entertained the greatest veneration for dignities, why should they be ridiculed in admittance into offices the most sacred, and of the utmost importance to mankind? Much might be said of the form of dedication to the highest office in the spiritual society used by our own church. But time will only permit me to make one observation upon its useful propriety.

It is in every respect calculated to inspire the breast with resolution and holy ardor to perform faithfully all the duties of that function, to which the overseer of the flock is called. It is not an office calculated to inflate with pride, as some have traduced the holy function. Unless this be a lesson of pride, which is read in the epistle appointed for the occasion, that to be *lifted up with pride*, is one of the disqualifications, which render unworthy of the office. And unless our Saviour read to his disciples a lesson of

D pride,

(*a*) See the inauguration of Oliver Cromwell to the pro-
tectorship, described by Whitlock,

pride, when he taught them, that *if any man would be great among them, he should be least of all, and servant of all.* No: if any man appear proud and fastuous in the station, it is not the office, nor the rite of consecration which makes him so. He brought with him his pride into it, if he behave proudly in it. For the prayers, which are offered up, the lesson read, the charge given, excite diligence, speak the language of meekness, humility, gentleness, and tenderness, and breathe love. *Simon Son of Jonas, lovest thou me? feed my lambs!* let the proof of thy love towards me be thy care and tenderness over the new, and young converts to my gospel. *Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? feed my sheep!* prove it by thy diligence in conducting and instructing my adult followers. This is one of the pathetic passages of Christ's gospel directed to be read in the office of consecration.

Whoever seriously attends to that solemn office of our church, and it would be uncharitableness unworthy of a christian to suspect, that the person therein to be dedicated to the highest function in God's family is not *then* serious; whoever, I say, thinks upon the weighty charge then committed to him by the Lord most high, will perceive his
mind

mind warmly agitated to pursue the character in all its branches, drawn by the prophet Iſaiah in the text ; *to feed his flock like a shepherd, to gather the lambs with his arm, to carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.* With a remark or two upon each of which branches, I shall beg leave, as was proposed,

3dly, and lastly to conclude this discourse. There are indeed natural humane affections of mind in some more than in others, tending to compleat this character. There is a natural temper of mind improved also by habit of action peculiarly suited to the delineation here given. But the attainment of such qualities will ever be the object of all, who aim at the character of the true shepherd.

And first the office of the true, sincere overseer of Christ's fold, is *to feed his flock like a shepherd.* It is to lead them forth into the pastures of life, to conduct them by the rivers of health, or in the language of the prophet, *to draw up water for them out of the wells of salvation:* not to leave them starving upon the barren soil, nor suffer them to wander unguarded near the danger of the rocky precipice. The book of God is the proper field of pasture to the christian flock. For know-

ledge is by the prophet's figure represented to be to the mind, what food is to the body. But even here, in *this* field, the sheep may not ramble securely, nor gather every plant to good advantage, without a guide: *Understandest thou, what thou readeſt?* ſaid Philip to the eunuch. *And he ſaid, how can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me?*

The church of Rome ſhutteth up the true field of paſture from the flock, or divideth it out to them in ſcanty portions. The book is opened in a language which they cannot underſtand. The enthuſiaſt on the other hand is often ſuffered, nay encouraged by his ſeducers to ramble in the field unreſtrained, to pick up as he pleaſes, what he meets with there, applying it at random: ſo that being left without a guide, or truſting himſelf to a deluſive guidance, he is permitted, perhaps often excited, to cull the herb that may be hurtful miſapplied, and convert that which was intended for his nourishment into poiſon. The field is opened to the proteſtant chriſtian of the eſtabliſhed church of this country; but then as God hath left it to human induſtry, and human means to cultivate, apply aright, and improve this paſtorage, ſo is he placed under the eye of proper guardians

ians and directors. The scripture indeed is intended for the full information of thy soul, but God hath left room for human industry to interpret and explain scripture; and therefore learned instructors are appointed, whose duty it is to perform this task faithfully to the unlearned.

A certain writer (a) hath endeavoured with a parade of reasoning, but by archness of expression, rather than by sound reason, to evince, that scripture is so clear, as not to need any explanation of learned men: "That
 " scripture was not given to make work for
 " interpreters; nor to teach men how to
 " doubt, but how to live." As to the first position against the use of the clergy, in this respect, we may appeal to any one, who hath read the scriptures with a serious mind, whether from figurative expressions used, from ancient customs alluded to, from the peculiar idioms of languages, and the necessary obscurities in dead languages, even the learned do not find frequent need of close study and experience to ascertain the meaning of many passages. We may appeal to experience, whether the many false notions, *the hay and stubble built* upon supposed foundations of scripture

(a) See Gordon's Independent Whig, No. 9.

scripture in the darker ages of science, do not prove the necessity of ingenious learned labour frequently to clear and confirm the right sense of scripture. Acquaintance with the customs and writings of antiquity will be the best key to open the book of ancient date: and the labour of deep researches into days that are far past is not in vain. The treasure of the inquirer's pursuit is a most useful branch of science. And the great author of our religion hath told us, *the scribe, that is well-instructed unto the kingdom of God, is like an housholder, that bringeth forth out of his treasures things old, as well as new.*

The great outlines of duty may indeed, as our author urges, be clear and perceptible to all: but then it requires the judicious eye of an experienced examiner to discern all the strokes and lineaments, which go to fill up the finished portrait of the improved, and *perfect man of God*. In short the divine oeconomy seems to have been the same in the *religious*, as in the *moral* world. Foundations are given, and faculties are given: but much is left to the labour and industry of man to compleat the moral structure; to improve the intellectual, as well as the corporeal strength.

It

It is urged in the latter position, "That
 " scripture was not given to teach men how to
 " doubt, but how to live." True; so the light
 of the stars in the natural world was not given
 to teach men how to wander, or to doubt
 and dispute about their path-way in the wa-
 ters, as they sail: but was given to conduct
 man's steps, and direct the course of his sails
 in the night: yet many false deductions, and
doubtful speculations at the best have been
 raised from the courses of the cœlestial bodies:
 the industry, and close observation, and skill
 of man is required to apply their light pro-
 perly: to guide the traveller in the desert, or
 the mariner to his desired port: otherwise the
 one may doubt about his way and wander;
 or the other split upon a rock. All light in
 short is given from above, the rays of the sun,
 and the beams of gospel knowledge: they
 come down alike as gifts from the father of
 lights: but still it is left to the diligence,
 and often requires the skill of man to apply
 the benefit of these rays and beams aright,
 to receive their full and proper use.

Are there not paraphrases upon the book
 of nature, upon the works and operations of
 God in the natural world, and his establish-
 ed laws therein, which are acknowledged to
 be

be useful? are there not comments upon these subjects, admired even by the free-thinker? Why then should he object against comments, or rail against paraphrases upon the *revealed* book of God?

It becomes then, after all, the episcopal pastor to see, that the word of God be rightly divided to the flock; that the light be cleared of obscurity, and set in its full force before the people; that neither the mist of darkness rest upon it, nor the specious covering of false glosses be cast over it to misguide the simple and unwary. It is his charge to guard the sheep against the rapaciousness of the wolf, and preserve the lamb from the subtlety of the fox. For

2dly, *He will gather the lambs (a) with his arm, he will carry them in his bosom.* This figure

(a) The original word *שׁלֵמִים* signifieth young sucking lambs. As the shepherd then *gathereth in his arms* the lambs, which the ewes have dropped upon the mountains, or in the bleak and wide-extended forest, *and carrieth them home in his bosom* to the fold, so shall Christ and his ministers gather converts and young christians out of all nations, even from the uncivilized nations of the earth, and reduce them under orderly districts of trust and care.

This idea of gathering or collecting a flock out of all nations, especially the remnant of the house of Israel, is agreeable to that of the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxiv. which is carried through several verses, *For thus saith the Lord God, Behold,*

figure may well be referred to the caution and tenderness wherewith the good episcopal father will watch over the education of youth, or the instruction of new-made converts in any country. He will look upon these, in the language of St. John, as his own *little children*, his children in the sacred family of God intrusted to him.

The first principles imbibed by the tender mind are of great importance to society, as well as to the young inexperienced agent, and to the future man. As far therefore as the schools of a province are by the laws of his country placed under his guardianship

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and

*Behold I, even I will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day: i. e. either in the day of ignorance, or the day of persecution. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries.—I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. — And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, i. e. the great representative of David, being a descendant from the loins of David, according to the prophetic language (b). The prophet at the end of the chapter explains the figure, and what is meant by the *flock*, saying expressly; and ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.*

(b) See Is. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5.—xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxvii. 24.

and inspection, he will be watchful over them, cautious to whom he grants a licence of teaching, or erecting any new nursery. Such visitation will be of the utmost importance to guard against early deception and falshood, and the seed of irreligious principle. It will be a proof of his serious sollicitude for the civil state, as well as of affectionate tenderness to these his children, to watch parentally over their improvement, to weigh accurately the abilities, principles, and conduct of the instructor. Therefore

Thirdly and lastly, in the language of the prophet, *He will gently lead them that are with young*; or according to the original sense of the word, and ancient versions, those that have brought forth, and suckle their young (c). This figure implies all that gentleness

(c) Thus the Syriac version renders it *lactantes leniter ducet*. The original word מלבי in the full extent of its meaning may imply those that are spent with labour in bringing forth their young: this idea is agreeable to the full scope of one of the ancient versions, *scetas ipse portabit*. And this same image and picture of care in the shepherd over the ewes that have just yeaned, together with their weak, tender young, whom the dam hath dropt in any unfavourable situation, is not dissimilarly drawn in the following lines by the Roman poet.

———Hanc vix Tityre duco:

Hic inter densas corylos modò namque gemellos,
Spem gregis, ah! filice in nudâ connixa reliquit.

See

tleness and prudence of address, wherewith the instructors of youth and new-made converts are to be governed and conducted.

For in which ever sense we understand the original word, whether of them that are big with young, or of them that have brought forth, and by instinct of nature cherish and suckle their young, for the word may be understood in both these senses, the emblem will have nearly the same force. In the one sense it will imply those, who in the infant-state of the church were successfully engaged in making converts, or those who to this day are so employed in uncivilized countries, and are thus daily bringing forth children unto Christ; in the other it will very properly denote them, who in the maturer state of the church were earnestly solicitous in the business

. See the same image of care, Gen. xxxiii. 13. where the word עֹלָה is by some interpreted *de prœnantibus*. But the Chaldee paraphrase and Arabic version have it *oves & boves lactantes*. And 1 Sam. vi. 7. it is used for those that have brought forth, and must be so interpreted: *Now therefore take a new cart, and take two milch kine עֹלָה on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them*. In which passage the Septuagint translate the word עֹלָה *πρῶτον ενιξας* *primum enixas*, those that have brought forth their first young. The Syriac and Arabic versions and Targ. Jonath. translate *duas boves*, or *duas vaccas, lactantes*.

business of instructing converts already made, or in educating christian children, or improving the adult christian. In either sense it comprehends a parental care in the episcopal guardian over publick instructors: that the disciple may be fed with *the sincere milk of the word* of truth. And this is an ample and arduous task for the serious pastor. It becomes not me, neither would time permit me to enlarge more upon this office in this place, before them that know, and execute it better, than any words or sentiments of mine can pretend to direct. I have trespassed upon your patience too long already.

What remains, but the oblation of our hearty and daily prayers to God, that his flock may never want true and tender pastors, equal in ability and fidelity to those that have gone before them in the wise appointments of his providence? May every member of the sacred community, through his grace and assistance, *by whose spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified, attend truly and painfully to his vocation and ministry*; considering that he is accountable for his own, and not for another's office! According to the province assigned him for the good of
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his brethren, and therein his own, *whether ministry, may he wait on his ministring; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth on exhortation: he that distributeth, may he do it with simplicity; he that ruleth with diligence: that so our church may continue a regular, spiritual house built up unto God; and that the ministers in this house may be together an holy priesthood, to offer up ghostly sacrifices acceptable unto Him through Jesus Christ; that when the chief shepherd of all shall appear, they may receive the crown of glory which fadeth not away!*

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