

**VINDICATION OF THE  
EPISCOPAL OR  
APOSTOLICAL  
SUCCESSION**

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Vindication of the Episcopal Or Apostolical Succession by John Sinclair

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**JOHN SINCLAIR**

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BY THE

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following treatise originally belonged to a larger work entitled, "Dissertations vindicating the Church of England with respect to some essential Points of Polity and Doctrine." At the request of various friends, Bishops as well as Presbyters, and under a growing sense of the importance of the subject, the Author is now induced to reprint, as a separate publication, in a form adapted to popular use, his defence of Episcopal Church polity. He is more and more convinced, that the conscientious inquirer into the constitution of the Church will find no resting place for the sole of his foot between the Apostolical succession and the all-denomination scheme. He that rejects the claims of Episcopacy will be driven by degrees from every intermediate position, and forced at last to the conclusion, that the Church of Christ has no canonically-appointed officers at all; that all pretensions to a peculiar right of teaching and administering the sacraments are alike invalid; that whoever will, may take this honour upon himself; and that, in the pointed words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "Any man may be a minister, who can get himself a congregation."

As the Dissertations were designed chiefly for members of the English Establishment, the Author assumed, in general, the language of an English clergyman, though the sphere of his professional labours has for some time been without the territorial limits of the Anglican Church. He is induced to continue this style of expression, not only as more convenient, but also from the respect which he naturally entertains for the Establishment in Scotland, the reputation of whose ministers for eloquence and talent, as well as piety, reflects honour upon his native country.

The Greek and Latin original of the quotations is for the most part omitted, because the reader, who wishes to ascertain their accuracy, may consult the former edition of the work.

*Edinburgh, March, 1839.*



FROM THE PREFACE  
TO  
THE DISSERTATIONS.

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In the first of the following dissertations on the subject of Church polity, the Author has stated as succinctly as that extensive subject would permit, the whole argument for *Episcopacy*, both from Scripture and antiquity. Without referring to individuals, in the present day, who have written against this important Apostolical institution, he has endeavoured to condense their objections, and to offer, (in a manner impossible to be thought personally offensive,) a satisfactory refutation.

Next to Church polity, he considered forms of Divine worship to require discussion. On this topic he has confined himself at present to a general view of *Liturgies*. Another treatise in continuation, (for which he has already collected materials, and which bears a particular reference to the Church of England liturgy,) may, he conceives, be more advantageously laid before the public at some future opportunity, after the doctrines have been vindicated, of which that liturgy must be regarded as an invaluable compendium.

As the chief weapon of assault in the hands of the Romanist is the assumed authority of his Church, the next

subject introduced is *Infallibility*. Under this title the Author has enumerated the various and insuperable difficulties which beset the Romish assailant in his assertion of that lofty claim : opportunity at the same time is taken of bringing forward and exposing other not less dangerous pretensions ; and of pointing out, from the canons of the Church of England, a safe and Scriptural guide for the attainment of religious truth.

The last dissertation here published is on the doctrine of *Mediation*. The greater number of heretical opinions at the present day, and, indeed, at all times throughout Christendom, have arisen from regarding in a partial and confined view the great principle of atonement ; and from limiting attention to one only among the offices of Christ. As the office of Mediator includes them all, a discussion of his Mediatorial character is calculated to repel on either side, the aggressions of our Socinian and Antinomian adversaries. Throughout the whole essay general expressions are systematically employed, and all allusion to those articles of belief respecting which the members of the Church have adopted different explanations, is carefully avoided.

Thus four subjects have been chosen for vindication in this volume. First, the form of Church polity in the English Establishment ; secondly, our received mode of Divine worship ; thirdly, the rules for the attainment of sound doctrine ; and fourthly, the leading doctrines themselves, which the observance of those rules has led the Church to adopt and promulgate.

Edinburgh, 1832.

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