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THE
CHURCHMAN

FEBRUARY, 1899.

ART. I.—THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRREGULAR ORDINATION: CRANMER TO COSIN; AND 1569 TO 1820.

AT the Church Congress held at Nottingham in 1897 a speaker ventured to say, during the discussion on "The Church and Dissent," that the mind of the Church of England on non-Episcopal ordination was, to recognise its validity whilst regretting its irregularity. Immediately that statement was loudly challenged, and the speaker was compelled to give some proofs of his statement. Owing to the length of time allowed being only six minutes, he could give only a few facts in the way of proof. After the discussion, as well as during it, he discovered that many of those present were not aware of the facts of the case, and he was asked if he would state the case more fully in another form. The following will, it is hoped, be of assistance to those who wish to form a correct view of the case.

We may ascertain the mind of the Church of England on the subject before us by considering her documents, the expressed opinions of her leading divines at the time of the Reformation and after, and her actions, official and authoritative. Her documents which deal in any way with the subject are the Articles (19th, 23rd, and 36th), the Preface to the Ordinal, the Canons, and "A Prayer for the estate of Christ's Church to be used on Sundays." In the Articles mentioned there is not one word which directly or by implication condemns non-Episcopal ordination as invalid, nor is Episcopacy stated to be necessary to the being of a true Church. In the 19th and 23rd Articles Episcopacy is not so much as mentioned, and the 23rd Article would equally define the validity of a Lutheran ministry as an Episcopal ministry. The history of that Article and of the other two

proves that, in defining a valid Christian ministry, our Reformers were most anxious not to unchurch the Reformed Churches of the Continent. The general words of the 23rd Article, "Of Ministering in the Congregation," seem to have been designed to exclude some "hotter spirits" who would have framed a narrower definition, according to Bishop Burnet on the 23rd Article. On this point Bishop Harold Browne's statement is significant and important. He says: "The latter portion of the Article [the 23rd] is somewhat vaguely worded, the reason for which is easily traced to the probable fact that the original draft of the Article was agreed on in a conference between Anglican and Lutheran divines." The evidence is most strong that our divines met the divines of non-Episcopal Churches in conference upon the Article, and agreed upon the mutually inclusive definition of ministering in the congregation contained in that Article. Thomas Rogers, who was chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, in his exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, which was published with the sanction of the Archbishop, deduces from the 23rd Article six propositions, all of which were maintained by the non-Episcopal Churches of the Continent.

The prayer ordered in 1580 and the 55th Canon go to show that the Church of England, at least at the end of the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, recognised by implication the validity of non-Episcopal ordination. The prayer runs thus in one part: "And herein [good Lord] by special name we beseech Thee for the Churches of France, Flanders, and of such other places; help them after their long troubles as Thou shalt see to be best for them, in the advancing of Thine own glory" (see "Liturgical Services, Queen Elizabeth," Parker Society edit., p. 578). The 55th Canon is more explicit. In it we find these words: "Before all sermons, lectures, and homilies, the preachers and ministers . . . shall pray for Christ's Holy Catholic Church; that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world, especially for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland." Here the Church of Scotland is declared to be a part of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. This Canon was drawn up in 1603. Now, at that time "the Church of Scotland" was Presbyterian. In 1592 and 1597 it was officially acknowledged such. Episcopacy had been banished from Scotland completely, and was not re-introduced until 1610, seven years after the 55th Canon was drawn up. So it is evident, as far as this Canon can show it, that the mind of the Church of England recognises the validity of Presbyterian ordination, and thereby, of course, of non-Episcopal ordination. The

language of the Preface to the Ordinal is not so explicit; yet it is carefully worded, so as not to pronounce invalid other than Episcopal ordination. It does not say that Episcopacy is of Divine command, but simply that, "It is evident unto all men reading the 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." Here is not a word about the invalidity of other orders. The Preface states a fact of history, that from the Apostles' times there has been Episcopacy, and declares that that is the order "in the Church of England." I affirm that a dispassionate consideration of the documentary evidence leads to the conclusion that since the Reformation the Church of England has recognised the validity of non-Episcopal ordination. The evidence to be gathered from the expressed opinions of her leading and representative divines confirms strongly this conclusion. Bishop Burnet says that not only those who penned the Articles, but the body of this Church (of England) for above half an age after, did, notwithstanding those irregularities, acknowledge the foreign Churches so constituted to be true Churches as to all the essentials of a Church. Dr. Stillingfleet declares that Archbishop Cranmer stated that "the election of pastors by the people is the true and only ordination which God approves of, unless the people do extend their power above the civil magistrate; that notwithstanding this, election cannot be made without their consent" (quoted by Louis du Moulin in his "Short and True Account," p. 52). Dr. Stillingfleet had possession of Archbishop Cranmer's MSS., which show that he did not regard Martyr, Bucer, or Fagius as "mere laymen," and that he did not desire them to receive Episcopal orders in order that they might be capable of receiving ecclesiastical preferment. What Bishop Ridley thought upon the subject is evident from his frequent prayer on behalf of the Reformed Churches. He "used to make prayer to God for all those Churches abroad through the world which have forsaken the kingdom of Antichrist, and professed openly the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Ridley's Works, Parker Society, p. 393).

Archbishop Whitgift had to defend the Church of England against the charge that Episcopacy is *unlawful*. In doing so, he uses these words: "It is plain that any one certain form or kind of external government, perpetually to be observed, is nowhere in the Scripture prescribed to the Church. . . . This is the opinion of the best writers, neither do I know any learned man of a contrary judgment" (Parker Society edit., vol. iii., p. 215). It is asserted, however, that Whitgift's action against Travers is a proof that he believed in

the necessity of Episcopal ordination. But it can be shown that the Archbishop opposed Travers' ordination, not because it was Presbyterian in form, but because it was *foreign*. Travers did not belong to any of the foreign churches, but he went over to the Continent deliberately to receive their ordination. This Whitgift considered wrong and irregular, though he did not deny the validity of non-Episcopal ordination. He called Beza his "dearest brother in God," and in many ways treated him as a fellow-minister, and his disciples as a true Church. Strype, in his Third Book, especially in the Appendices XII. and XXX., throws much light on the Travers affair.

Bishop Pilkington of Durham was one of our divines who settled our Articles. His opinion is material. In his Works (Parker Society, p. 493) he says: "The privileges and superiorities which Bishops have above other ministers are rather granted by man, for maintaining of better order and quietness in commonwealths, than commanded by God in His Word." Some time after Bishop Pilkington's death appeared the "Elaborate and Seasonable Works of the Famous and Prudent Mr. Richard Hooker," whose works Charles I. "commended to His Dear Children as an excellent means to satisfy Private Scruples and settle the Publick Peace of this Church and Kingdom." However men may have abandoned Hooker in these days, there is no doubt that, during his lifetime and for many long years afterwards, he was regarded by all as representing in his writings the mind of the Church of England. He has much to say on Episcopacy, especially in his Seventh Book. The limits of an article will not allow of my quoting fully from it, but there is a statement in Section 14 of that book which I must quote: "There may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow Ordination without a Bishop." In two ways, he says, it may be done. "One is, when God Himself doth of Himself raise up any, whose labour He useth without requiring that men should authorize them." "Another extraordinary kind of vocation is, when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep. Where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath, nor can have possibly, a Bishop to ordain: in case of such necessity, the ordinary Institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give, place. And therefore we are not simply, without exception, to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of Bishops in every effectual Ordination." Here Hooker distinctly states that ordination made, under certain circumstances, without a Bishop, is allowable, therefore valid. A few years after Hooker quietly and happily resigned his life,

trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ, at peace with God, and at peace with all men, we find another representative divine—Bishop Andrewes—corresponding with Du Moulin the elder in France on the same subject which had occupied the attention of Hooker. He was not altogether pleased with the attack which he conceived was made by Du Moulin on Episcopacy in his work, “*De la Vocation des Pasteurs.*” He wrote Du Moulin several Latin letters, in one of which occur these words: “The path you have entered on can scarcely please your people without displeasing ours; nor, if our form of Church government is of Divine order, does it either follow there is no salvation without it, or that a Church cannot stand without it. He must be blind who does not see Churches keep their position without it, and made of iron who denies it. We are not such hearts of iron.” Still more decided is the following statement in his third letter: “And each of the great men you mention, Calvin and Beza—what were they whilst they lived, but verily and truly bishops, only without the name?” Though Bishop J. Hall’s statement upon the traditional opinion of Anglican divines is well known, I venture to repeat it here, because it is an important link in a long chain of evidence. “Blessed be God!” he exclaims; “there is no difference in any essential matter betwixt the Church of England and her sisters of the Reformation. . . . The only difference is in the form of outward administration, wherein also we are so far agreed, as we all profess this form not to be essential to the being of a Church, though much importing the well or better being of it, according to our several apprehension thereof.”

Not to be wearisome, I will quote only one more divine, though many others could be quoted. Bishop Cosin is held in high respect by many in our Church who take an exclusive view of Orders. In a letter dated “Paris, February 7, 1650” (*vide* “*Ang. Cath. Lib.*,” Cosin’s Works, vol. iv., p. 403), writing to “One Mr. Cordel, then at Blois,” to remove his scruples as to communicating with the Protestants on account of “their in disorderly ordination,” he tells him that French Reformed ministers were admitted to English charges without reordination. He goes on to say: “If on this ground [their non-Episcopal ordination] we renounce the French, we must for the same reason renounce all the ministers of Germany besides (for the superintendents that make and ordain ministers there have no new ordination beyond their own presbytery at all); and then what will become of the Protestant party?” Then comes his advice: “Considering there is no prohibition of our Church against it (as there is against our communicating with the Papists, and that well grounded upon the Scripture and will

of God), I do not see but that both you and others that are with you may (either in case of necessity, when you cannot have the sacrament among yourselves, or in regard of declaring your unity in professing the same religion, which you and they do) go otherwhiles to communicate reverently with them of the French Church." Here Cosin clearly admits that men who had Presbyterian ordination were capable of "duly ministering the Sacraments." Thus, we have seen a continuous stream of representative Anglican divines from Cranmer to Cosin held and taught that, though non-Episcopal ordination is irregular, it is valid. The force of this continuous opinion cannot be denied or lightly turned aside. But in addition to our documents and the declared opinions of our leading divines, there is a series of Ecclesiastical Acts, dating from the time of Queen Elizabeth down to the year 1820, which show conclusively that the Church of England has recognised the validity of non-Episcopal ordination. To recite all the Acts in this series would take up far too much space, so I must be content with mentioning the most salient. We might begin with an incident earlier than Elizabeth's time, and dwell upon Archbishop Cranmer's act in appointing Bucer and Fagius Professors at Cambridge in 1549; but let our initial date be 1569. In that year Bishop Horne presided over the diocese of Winchester. In March of the same year the Crown transferred formally Guernsey and the other Channel Islands to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester. From twenty to thirty parishes were added to his diocese, with the churches and ministers thereof. Who were those ministers? French Reformed clergy, who had not received Episcopal ordination, and were received by Bishop Horne without being reordained in the autumn of 1569. Their doctrine, discipline, and modes of worship were Presbyterian, and continued to be so until a very late date. During a period of 251 years the Bishops of Winchester instituted into livings ministers who had not received Episcopal ordination. It may be thought by some that such acts were confined to the Channel Islands; such, however, is not the case. Dr. Adrian à Savaria is a most interesting character in the history of our Church, and will always be remembered, if only because of his intimate friendship with Hooker, the very secrets of whose soul he is said to have known. He was a Continental Protestant minister. From his "Defence," in answer to Beza's reply to a former work of his, it is evident he was not Episcopally ordained, but that he was a Reformed minister in communion with the Church of England, and that he deemed the Church of England and other Churches essentially one. He was a very able man, with agreeable manners.

In 1591 he received an appointment in the Church of England, being made a Prebendary of Gloucester without being reordained. The Cathedral ordination records of Gloucester for the time make no mention of his having been reordained. He was afterwards Prebendary of Canterbury and then of Westminster. He it was who administered the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ to Hooker, after a short retirement and privacy, when Hooker was dying. This beautiful and touching incident is not without its bearing upon our subject. A still more memorable and instructive act was the consecration of Bishops for Scotland in 1610, for the Sees of Glasgow, Brechin, and Galloway. Three Scottish ministers, in obedience to the royal summons, came to Court in September of that year. On October 21 they were met by the Bishops of London, Ely (Andrewes), and Bath at the Chapel of London House, who proceeded to consecrate them. Previously, Bishop Andrewes asked the question whether the three ministers should be reordained before being consecrated. Archbishop Bancroft answered that there was "no necessity, seeing when Bishops could not be had, the ordination given by presbyters must be esteemed lawful; otherwise it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most of the Reformed Churches." Other Bishops endorsed this; Andrewes acquiesced, and the consecration took place (*vide* Spotswood's "History of the Church of Scotland," Book VII.).

Keble's admission in his Preface to Hooker is: "Nearly up to the time when he (Hooker) wrote, numbers had been admitted to the ministry of the Church of England with no better than Presbyterian ordination." That is a conclusive admission; but Keble could have gone further, and have acknowledged that even after Hooker's time such were so admitted. Peter du Moulin, who had only Presbyterian ordination, was made Prebendary of Canterbury in 1615, twelve years after Hooker's death, and the year following he administered the Holy Communion to James I. Even Charles I., in 1638, made Dr. Beauvais, who had not Episcopal ordination, Rector of Wittingham. About the same time Dr. Laune, Calendius, and others, with only Presbyterian orders, performed Divine service in English churches; and in 1660 Peter du Moulin the younger was made chaplain to Charles II. and Prebendary of Canterbury. There is another incident in Du Moulin's history which is of great importance in interpreting the meaning of the Act of Uniformity. Before discussing it, we must face the order in the Act of Uniformity which directs that none shall be instituted into cures and officiate in the Church of England unless he be Episcopally ordained. The Act was not a decree of Convocation, but

purely one of the *civil* Legislature, and was passed by the Cavalier Parliament which met on May 8, 1661, made up for the most part of young men, whose "bearing was that of wild revolt against the Puritan past," Green tells us. Roger Pepys says of them that they seemed a following of "the most profane, swearing fellows that ever I heard in my life." It is true that a change was made in the wording of the Preface to the Ordination Service; but no one can fairly say that the change in the words or the Act itself involves the denial of the validity of the orders of the Reformed Churches.

The new requirement was strictly a *legal* requirement of the State as a condition of tenure of a Church of England benefice. There are many reasons for coming to this conclusion, and for believing that the requirement had neither a doctrinal motive nor meaning. In the Act there is a provision of exemption which runs thus: "Provided that the Penalties in this Act shall not extend to the Foreigners or Aliens of the Foreign Reformed Churches, allowed, or to be allowed, by the King's Majesty, His Heirs and Successors in England." We have the same underlying idea here as that which operated in Travers' case. He was condemned by Whitgift, as we have seen, because, being an Englishman, he went to Antwerp for ordination. Had he been a foreigner, with foreign ordination, he would have been allowed to continue preaching in the afternoons at the Temple. The same thought is in the Act of 1662—Episcopal ordination for Englishmen in the English Church, without denying the validity of non-Episcopal ordination in other Reformed churches. At this point the incident I referred to in the history of Peter du Moulin the younger is instructive. In 1662 we find him still possessing only Presbyterian orders. In November of that year he, nevertheless, is instituted Rector of Adisham and Staple. Why was this done, seeing the Act of Uniformity had been put into operation? In my opinion there is only one satisfactory answer, which proceeds upon the lines of the above explanation. In this case the intrinsic validity of his ordination was acknowledged because, as a foreigner, he had been ordained out of England, and had disobeyed no law of England in being so ordained. After his time others, bearing foreign names, with foreign Presbyterian orders, received preferment in the Church of England. Somewhere about 1682, Samuel de l'Angle, a Reformed pastor from France, was made Prebendary of Westminster. Wood says Peter Allix, minister of the Reformed Church at Rouen, was made Canon of Windsor about 1690. Another Canon of Windsor who was not reordained was John Mesnard, chaplain of William of Orange. We have no record

of any voice, either through Convocation, or from the Bishops, or from anyone, against these appointments. In the Channel Islands, which still continued part of the diocese of Winchester, the Act of Uniformity did not "run," and the Bishops of that diocese continued to institute into parishes there ministers who had not received Episcopal ordination. We come to the year 1820 before we find an Episcopally ordained clergyman instituted into a living in the island of Sark. As showing that the Act of Uniformity had a legal and disciplinary motive, and not a doctrinal one, Archbishop Bramhall's answer to those who, after the Restoration, presented themselves when the benefices were called at the Visitation, showing only certificates of Presbyterian ordination, is to be remembered. He told them their certificates "did not qualify them for any preferment in the Church." Whereupon the question immediately arose, "*Are we not ministers of the Gospel?*" To which his Grace answered that "*that was not the question.*" He told them it was a *legal* requirement. Thereupon some of them consented to be reordained. The Primate then stated, in the letters of one Mr. Edward Parkinson, that the reordination did not annihilate any previous Orders, or determine their validity or invalidity. Full particulars of this affair are recorded in Bishop Vesey's "*Life of Primate Bramhall,*" and are quoted in Stubbs's edition of Mosheim's "*Institutes,*" vol. iii., p. 407. Turning from Ireland to Scotland, where the Act of Uniformity did not apply, we find the Scottish Bishops who were consecrated in 1661 exercising jurisdiction over Presbyterian clergy without requiring their reordination, and thus acknowledging the validity of non-Episcopal ordination.

Over the seas we find the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, founded after 1662, sending out and supporting, with the sanction of the whole bench of Bishops, ministers who had only Presbyterian ordination. The Church Missionary Society did the same, and no objection was raised to the practice, which went on for several generations. Thus, we have seen that there is in our history a record of ecclesiastical Acts, extending from 1569 to 1820, which clearly show, if actions can show, that from the Reformation till the present century the mind of the Church of England has been to recognise the validity of non-Episcopal ordination. The evidence is cumulative, and forms a threefold cord of documents, opinions and deeds which cannot be broken. Into the bearings of the fact on the doctrine of Apostolical succession, or the question of the Church of England and Nonconformity, it is not for me now to enter. I have sought only in this article to establish the fact, and now I ask all who read it to weigh the evidence I have produced fairly and dispassionately.