

action to an unwillingness to intrude on "papal rights" There was, however, a feeling that the Episcopal Churches in Europe ought all to be under the control of the English Church, which has its chapels in many cities, perhaps in every city where American chapels have been established. Some are clearly of opinion that it is bad in theory and in practice to have two separate, distinct Episcopal Churches on the Continent, which two are in reality one. Undoubtedly this feeling had far more to do with the action of the Convention than "superstition" as to "papal rights."—*Southern Churchman.*

The Committee of the General Convention on the State of the P. E. Church in the U. S. reported the following statistics:—

Number of dioceses.....	51
Missionary Jurisdictions.....	14
Bishops and Asst. Bishops.....	69
Priests.....	3,632
Deacons.....	320
Total clergy.....	4,021
Candidates for Holy Orders.....	431
Lay Readers.....	1,396
Communicants.....	488,167
Increase.....	63,743
Church Buildings.....	3,794
Chapels and Missions.....	1,983
Academies.....	149
Colleges.....	15
Theological Schools.....	19
Orphanages.....	49
Homes.....	60
Hospitals.....	57
Total Offerings.....	\$33,316,544
Increase of Offerings over 86....	\$2,533,462.16
Baptisms.....	171,700
Increase.....	16,275
Confirmations.....	112,783
Increase.....	19,784
Marriages.....	46,668
Burials.....	91,114
Sunday School Teachers.....	40,120
Sunday School Scholars.....	383,428
Parish Schools.....	134
Teachers.....	586
Papils.....	10,389

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

BY REV. J. B. WEST, M. A.,
VICAR OF WEAUWBY.

The doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is one of the most fundamental of all Church principles.

For if it be acknowledged that the Christian ministry is a Divine institution, and that it forms an essential part of the constitution of the Church, then it is plain to see that a question which touches the very existence of that ministry amongst us cannot be a question of light importance.

Now that the Christian ministry is a Divine institution, appointed by the Head of the Church Himself for the most essential purposes, one or more passages of Holy Scripture may be sufficient to show.

It is written in Ephes. iv. 8-15, that when our Lord Jesus Christ ascended up on high, and received all power in heaven and earth, to be the Head of the Church, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

The gift of the Christian ministry upon earth is thus closely connected with the power that our Saviour received in His Ascension, being in fact the first exercise of that power.

The same truth we also learn from St. Matt.

xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth"; "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." Here our Saviour makes this original commission, which was given to the eleven, to depend on the power that was then given to Himself to be Head over all things to the Church. (Compare also Eph. i. 20 to end.)

The Christian ministry is therefore as much a Divine gift as the Bible, or the Sacraments, or the Church. It forms an essential part of the constitution of the Church, as indeed the purposes for which it is instituted are alike necessary in all generations.

A society in which there is no such ministry cannot be a properly constituted branch of the Church at all.

Now, all this being generally granted and acted upon by all who call themselves Christians, it next becomes a question, How is the Christian ministry to be handed down from one generation to another? By what method may a person obtain the sacred office of a minister in the Church of Christ? Who has proper power to ordain persons to the Christian ministry? Did the holy Apostles take any measures to secure a continual succession of ministers in the Church?

I. To answer these questions, let us first of all consider this point, "May any one at his own pleasure take upon himself the sacred office?"

To this all will probably answer No.

Few will be found so ill-informed as to venture to say that any one who pleases may take upon himself the spiritual office of a minister of Christ. For then even that elementary precept of Scripture could not be fulfilled—"Let all things be done decently and in order." There would be nothing but confusion and disorder in the Church. Then every parent might baptize his own children, and every one might give the other Sacrament to himself or his neighbor. Then, too, how could we "obey those that are set over us in the Lord"? (Heb. xiii. 17) There would be as much disorder and confusion in the Church as there would be in the State if every one were to take upon himself, at his own pleasure, the office of a magistrate or of a judge.

Besides, Holy Scripture is very express on this point. How many examples are there in the Old Testament in which God visited with signal punishment those who presumed to take upon themselves sacred offices? Such as Korah and his company, Uzzah, Uziah, and Jeroboam.

And in the New Testament we observe the same principle maintained in various ways. "Even Christ Himself glorified not Himself to be made a high priest" (Heb. v. 5). And St. Paul adds: "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Aaron received a call from God at the hands of Moses when he consecrated him to the Jewish priesthood. And the ministry of the Gospel is of far higher power and glory than that of the law (2 Cor. iii. 9) So that if the less glorious office might not be taken upon himself by any one at his own will, much more unlawful is it to take upon oneself the greater office.

However well qualified, then, an individual may be to discharge the sacred duties of the ministry, yet this gives him no authority to act as a minister of Christ.

If a man is well qualified for the office of a magistrate or of a judge, yet he has no power to do the acts of those offices until he has received a commission from the sovereign. If of his own accord he undertook those offices, his acts would be entirely without power or authority; people might obey him or not, just as they pleased. In like manner, that a person may become a true and lawful minister of the Church of Christ, he must not take the office upon himself, however great his own personal qualifications for it may be, but he must re-

ceive a commission, in some way or other, from the Divine Head of the Church; he must be publicly called of God, he must receive the sacred office from such as have power to give it.

In short, no person who seriously consults either his own common sense or the Holy Scriptures, can ever doubt for a moment that it is wrong for people to take upon themselves, any one at his own pleasure, the honor of ministering in sacred offices in the Church of Christ. The office must be conferred upon them by such persons as have the proper power to do so. All who call themselves Christians will probably agree to this.

II. We come now, therefore, to the principal doctrine of this tract.

Since it is not lawful for every one to assume to himself the office of a minister for Christ, the question now is, Who has power to confer that office?

Can any one at his pleasure give the sacred office to another? Can the eight principal tradesmen of this parish lay their hands on you and ordain you to the ministry of Christ? Can a man, or any company of men, give that which they have not received?

If a congregation of Dissenters should wish to have a person ordained, do they ask three or four of the members of the congregation to ordain him? Do they not send for two or three pastors who have been already ordained in their way, to do what they want?

Surely all must acknowledge this, that the farmer, the bricklayer and the shoemaker, cannot lay their hands on their neighbor, the miller, and make him a true and lawful minister of the Church of Christ. They might with just as much propriety pretend to confer upon him the office of a judge or king. For the honor and the power of a minister of Christ is greater than all the honors and powers of the offices of the kingdoms of this world.

Neither can the supreme temporal ruler confer the sacred office of the Christian ministry on whomsoever he pleases. For to have power in the kingdom of this world gives a man no spiritual authority in the kingdom of Christ.

But let this point also be decided by an appeal to the Holy Scripture.

Is there any one single example in which the sacred office of the Christian ministry was conferred on others by persons who had not themselves been before ordained to that office, and specially gifted with the spiritual power of ordaining others?

Can you produce one single case in the New Testament in which the people have made their own ministers?

This method of conferring Holy Orders namely by such as have not received Holy Orders themselves, cannot be defended for one moment, at least by those who would be guided by what they find in the Holy Scriptures.

Against what, if not against this practice, does St. Paul so strongly speak when he writes: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears" (2 Tim. iv. 3).

We may well then conclude both that a man cannot take unto himself at his own will the office of a minister for Christ; and also that the office cannot be conferred by any man, or company of men, at their pleasure, but only by such as have themselves been ordained and empowered to ordain others. Or to speak in other words, there must be a regular succession of some kind. This conclusion cannot be avoided by any one who examines the subject seriously.

From the simplest considerations of common sense, or from an appeal to the New Testament, it equally follows that in the Christian ministry there must be a regular succession.

For to sum up all that has been said, if either any individual who pleases may assume unto himself the sacred office; or, if any person or