

therefore, the succeeding words, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven," &c., must mean, "Whose sins thou dost [as such, in that capacity, so far as lawfully appertains to that office] forgive, they are forgiven," &c., in short, they must be understood as an assurance of divine countenance and support in the faithful discharge of "the office and work of a priest."

And, first, the meaning of the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," &c. By many of our most learned divines these words have been understood to express an earnest desire or prayer that the candidate may always "receive" needful supplies of the Holy Spirit's gifts and graces, to enable him duly to discharge "the office and work of a priest," which is then "committed unto" him "by the imposition of" Episcopal "hands."

But an authoritative sense has also been assigned to them by some eminent divines, viz: as conveying the promise and assurance of the Holy Spirit's heavenly aid, in a faithful discharge of the ministerial work; as if it were, "Receive [the promise and assurance of] the Holy Ghost." Thus Archbishop Whitgift says that the Bishop, "by speaking these words, doth not take upon him to give the Holy Ghost" to the candidate, but "assureth him of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, if he labor in the same [i. e. in the duty of a minister] accordingly."

We are next to consider the import of the words "whose sins thou dost forgive," &c. Now, so far as sin is to be regarded as an offence against God, as a moral offence, and as affecting the eternal state of man, nothing can be more decided or more clear than the church's testimony, that God alone can forgive sins.

Thus, in the communion service, part of one of the prayers is, "To thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins;" while the absolution in the daily service declares the authority of God's ministers to extend only to this viz: "to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." But sin may also be viewed in another light, viz: as an offence against our fellow man; in which light, in ordinary life, nothing is more common than persons claiming for themselves this power of forgiving sins (see Luke xvii. 3, 4;) and also as an offence against the church, as an ecclesiastical offence (see Matt. xviii. 18.) and in this respect our church claims a far different authority for her presbyters.

Now, it is to the grant of this authority (which is lodged with the priests or presbyters of the church,) that the words of the ordination service seem to refer. For to the grant of authority to "forgive" and "retain sins," our reformers have added these words, "And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments;" thus limiting the extent of the power by pointing out the proper mode of its exercise.

* This two-fold view of sin appears in Corinthians, viii. 12. † The "lesser excommunication" is a temporary exclusion from the Lord's table by the presbyters of the church. The "greater excommunication" is a formal excommunication by the Bishop, according to the 33d article. (See an extract from Rev. P. Mantal in the Church of England Magazine for 1847, vol. xxiii. p. 257) That "excommunication" is intended by our church to be carried into effect with the concurrence of a portion of the laity, after the Scriptural pattern in Matt. xviii. 15, 18 and 1 Cor. v. 2, 4, 5, would appear from some of the canons in which the church wardens are supposed to occupy a prominent position in these matters. (See canons 27 and 104, on excommunication. See also Wheatly, c. xii. s. 1. pp. 452, 453.)

‡ Deacons are only "in the absence of the priest" to baptize "infants." § The clause in the exhortation to the communion, in which one who is hindered by doubts and difficulties from coming to the Lord's table, is to come to some "direct and learned minister of God's word," that "by the ministry of God's word he may receive the benefit of absolution," and such advice as may tend to the removal of his doubts and difficulties, is a kind of illustration of these words.

sins, according to the gospel terms" by the faithful preaching of God's word, rather than to the forgiving and retaining of ecclesiastical offences. Such is the view advocated in King Edward's catechism of 1533 (see pp. 613, 614 of the Parker Society's edition of King Edward's Liturgies,) by Rev. Dr. Whitby in his well known commentary (on John xx. 22, 23;) by Bishop Burnet (on 25th article on "Penance," pp. 359, 361;) by Bishop Mant (Romanism and Holy Scripture, p. 41—No. 150, on the Christian Knowledge list;) by Dr. McNeile (Lectures on the Church of England, ii. pp. 76, 06;) by Rev. C. T. Collins (Perranzabuta, pp. 214, 219, where the subject is illustrated by Leviticus xiii. 3 and xiv. 11;) and by Rev. J. R. Page in his edition of Burnet on the 39 articles, on 25th article, "Penance" pp. 358-9 note). But the former interpretation seems to be more natural and obvious; especially as following so closely upon the language which points to the office and work of a priest, "in the church of God" it seems to refer to ecclesiastical offences.

Others, however, take a two-fold view of the meaning of the words, which includes both these interpretations, viz: Bishop Jewel (Apology, c. ii. s. 8.) Hooker (b. vi. c. 6, s. 5;) and Archbishop Secker (Address to Candidates for Orders, Mant, p. 825). And the whole subject may be well illustrated by the celebrated Westminster confession, a confession drawn up by the Assembly of puritan divines in 1647, and which is now the standard of the established kirk of Scotland, as follows: "To these officers (i. e. church officers) the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins; to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require" (Westminster Confession, c. xxx. s. 2).

For a further and more extended illustration of this subject, the writer must refer the reader to a former paper of his, in the Church of England Magazine for 1845, vol. xix. No. 553, p. 506, where many of the foregoing authorities are cited at length; also to the Christian Observer, Oct. 1845, p. 590, and May, 1849, pp. 318, &c.

* Bishop Jewel's "Apology" received the sanction of convocation.

News Department.

COLONIAL. CANADA.

CLERGY RESERVES.—It appears by a return recently presented to the Canadian Parliament, that the income of the Clergy Reserve fund is at present disposed of as follows:—

Table with 3 columns: Institution, £, s. d.
Church of England, Upper Canada, 12,616 7 11
" Lower Canada, 2,173 17 6
" Scotland, Upper Canada, 7,114 17 6
" Lower Canada, 1,086 18 9
United Synod of the Presbyterian Church, U. C., 565 13 0
Roman Catholic Church, Upper Canada, 1,666 13 4
Wesleyan Methodists, Upper Canada, 777 15 6
Total, £26,922 3 2

SEPARATE SCHOOLS.—The following extract is from an article in the Hamilton Journal & Express:—

"The Roman Catholics are applying to Parliament for a share of the School Money to educate their children after their own manner. The School Act allows it, and as there is no likelihood of the Act being altered, we suppose the prayer of the R. Catholics will be granted. The Bishop of Toronto has also petitioned Parliament for separate schools for the children of his persuasion. He desires that assessments paid by churchmen for the support of common schools, should be applied for the maintenance of such as are in connexion with the Church, whenever such appropriations are practicable. The Bishop is perfectly right to avail himself of the School Act, when he sees the others are doing the same thing, and we do not see how the Legislature can grant it the R. Catholics and refuse it to the Episcopalians.

CANADIAN ASSEMBLY, Nov 2.—Hon. Mr. Hincks moved, That this House will immediately resolve itself into a Committee, to consider of certain proposed Resolutions on the subject of a Railway from a point opposite the city at Quebec to River du Loup or Trois Pistoles, and from thence to the Eastern limits of the Province.

Hon. Mr. Hincks, by command of his Excellency the Governor General, then acquainted the House, that His Excellency having been informed of the subject-matter of the said Resolutions, recommends it to the consideration of the House.

The House then resolved itself into the said com-

* It is also suggested by Hooker (B. v. c. 77, sects 5 7, 8.) Archbishop Secker (Address to Candidates for Orders, Mant, p. 815.) and by Bishop Burnet (On the 33th article, p. 425.) that the "authority" of the Holy Ghost [as in Acts xiii. 2 and xx. 8.] may be implied by the use of these words; since we may infer from Luke xxiv. 49 that our Saviour's words in John xx. 22 did not so much confer "miraculous power of the Spirit" on the apostles, as "a holy and a ghostly authority" [Hooker.] and also promise of the Spirit. And so Archbishop Whitgift remarks that the words, "Because they . . . do signify that Christ doth pour his Spirit upon those whom he calleth to that function are most aptly, also used of the Bishop (who is God's instrument in that business) in the ordaining of ministers . . . Neither doth the Bishop speak them as though he had authority to give the Holy Ghost, but he speaketh them as the words of Christ, and in the like action, who (as I said before) doth most certainly give his Holy Spirit to those whom he calleth to the ministry" [Defence of the Answer to the Admonition, A. D. 1571. Quoted in the Christian Observer, April, 1851, p. 272.] See also Dr. Nicholls in Bishop Mant's Prayer Book, p. 814.

† As the service was worded in the times of Whitgift and Hooker, "Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven," &c. This interpretation was, perhaps, the most obvious. In 1661-2 several alterations were made in the ordination services, without any corresponding alteration of the 33th article. The conclusion of the Act of Uniformity, however, enacts that this article shall be taken, understood, and subscribed, as referring to the ordination services in their present form as daily recited in 1662.