

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

- APRIL 1st—Tuesday before Easter.
 " 2nd—Wednesday before Easter.
 " 3rd—Thursday before Easter.
 " 4th—GOOD FRIDAY. Pr. Pss. M. 22, 40, 54. E 69, 88.
 " 5th—EASTER EVEN.
 " 6th—EASTER DAY. Pr. Psal. M. 2, 57, 111. E. 113, 114, 115. Pr. Anth. instead of Venite. Athan. Cr.; Prop. Pref. in Com. Service till April 13th incl. Notice of Monday and Tuesday.
 " 7th—Monday in Easter week.
 " 8th—Tuesday in Easter week.
 " 13th—1st Sunday after Easter.
 " 20th—2nd Sunday in Easter. (Notice of St. Mark.
 " 25th—St. Mark's Day. (E. & M.
 " 27th—Third Sunday after Easter. (Notice of St. Philip and St. James

EPISCOPACY.

Does the Church of England in any way admit the validity of non-episcopal orders? Does she maintain that Episcopacy, though more expedient, more in accordance with Bible teaching, ecclesiastical history, and primitive usage, yet is not essentially necessary? This vexed question about the *esse* or *bene esse* of Episcopacy, whether it be merely beneficial, or absolutely essential, to the organization of the Church, has been brought again to the front by the Dean of Peterborough and his latitudinarian allies. The old stock quotations have been reproduced from Hooker, Bramhall, etc., and they have been refuted by contradictory extracts from the writings of the same authors; for these men of the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries sometimes wrote upon the subject considered only in the light of God's truth and of Church history, and sometimes as active sympathizers with the position of foreign Protestants, and as feeling themselves allied with them in warfare against their common foe—the Court and Church of Rome. The so-called 'historical facts' of men in Presbyterian and 'German' Orders receiving

prebends and canonries in the English Church in the reign of Queen Elizabeth have also been produced, and these too have been traversed or explained away. Some of them, it is replied, like Saravia, must have been ordained, though the record is not forthcoming, if they honestly believed their own writings on Episcopacy; others (as was common enough in those days) were rewarded with the temporal yield and fruits of benefices, who performed no spiritual functions themselves, but employed a vicar; and some few there were who were forced by a powerful Puritan patron on a Bishop whose opinions were of the same color, and who in evil and violent days were simply let alone, and so their position remained unchallenged till the wrong was ended by their decease. These cases all put together hardly reach a dozen. Yet, when every quotation has been made, and every example cited from the Reformation times, the settlement of the question has not advanced one jot as to what is the judgment of the Church of England on this subject.

There is no room for doubt about it before the Reformation. The English Church together with the Universal Church for 1600 years had taught, 'without the bishop, there is no Church.' As in the special Church of the Jews there were high priest, priests and Levites, handed on by fleshly generation, so in every particular branch of the Church Universal, there must be apostle, priests, and deacons, handed on by the spiritual generation of the imposition of the Apostle's hands. "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. * * * And He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. * * * Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world." None can give to others what they have not received themselves. The Apostles alone received the commission from Christ, and none but those who have received it from them by Apostolic Succession can either give it, or hand on the commission to others. To collect and command troops in the King's name, not having the King's special commission to do so, is rebellion, and against God it is also sacrilege.

Such being the universal doctrine and law of the Church before the Reformation (so that no schism even was ever attempted without Episcopal leading) we ask, When or where did our Church rescind this universal law after the Reformation? Has she not always had three distinct offices of ordination, first for a Deacon, next for a Priest, and last for an Apostle? Though in Holy Scripture those who immediately followed the Apostles are called 'Apostles of the Churches,' and 'Angels of the Churches,' yet after the death of St. John, they received the special and technical name of Bishops. The word 'Bishop,' which at first was used in its common meaning both for the elder, who was 'overseer' of his parish, and for the Apostle, who was 'overseer' of a diocese, as well as for Christ, who is the 'overseer' of the Church visible and invisible, was now restricted in its meaning to those alone who were officers of the first of the three ranks.

We need not quote the well-known Preface to the Ordination services, in which the statement is made as one which cannot be gainsayed that these three orders have ever existed since the time of the Apostles.

Next, if our Church considered Presbyterian orders valid, it is plain that she would not require a Presbyterian minister to be ordained before she allows him to officiate. To insist upon his being ordained, is a distinct declaration that he is not ordained. Suppose a layman and Roman priest seek office in the Church of England; the former she insists upon ordaining, the latter she takes as already ordained. A Presbyterian minister also seeks office. Does she class him with the presbyter or with the layman? She treats him as a layman, plainly because she considers him a layman.

To this it may be said, 'The Church of Eng-

land prefers Episcopacy, and, therefore, she requires this ceremony to be submitted to for the sake of regularity and order. It is a matter of proper form, not of essential right.' This is a very serious charge to bring against the Church. She does not re-ordain a Greek or a Roman priest, knowing that such an act would be a grievous wrong, would she then do so with a Presbyterian minister, if it were not her deliberate judgment that he is a layman, and unordained? To suppose that for the sake of regularity and order, the Church of England should commit schism by re-ordaining a man already in Orders, and so break all the regulations and canons of the Church universal, is preposterous.

Again, the words of ordination are themselves sufficient proof: 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest (or Bishop) in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.' It is not merely a commission to act within the fold of the Church of England, but throughout God's universal Church; and the commission is then and there given. Whatever may be the prejudices and private opinions of individuals, it is certain that the Church itself would not use such awful language without meaning exactly what she says.

Next, it is said, 'Presbyterian Orders are valid, but defective.' This is impossible, for there can be no degrees in validity. Ignorant people sometimes ask to have a sick child 'half baptized.' But this is impossible. It cannot be half baptized and half unbaptized; neither can a minister be half ordained and half not. Irregularity there might be, as when a man has been ordained by a 'titular' Roman Bishop in England; but the orders are valid, and the irregularity is annulled when the man is no longer schismatic.

Again, it is argued, 'The Church has doubts, but she likes to be on the safe side.' If this were so, she would with her usual caution have drawn up a short rubric to that effect, as she has in the case of 'hypothetical baptism.' In the case of Presbyterian ministers the Bishop would be required to say: 'If thou art not already ordained priest, I ordain thee,' etc.

We can see nothing objectionable in such a course in order to heal the divisions in the Body of Christ. We might go even further and say that if the time ever came when Congregationalists and Wesleyans desired as bodies to return to the fold, and to occupy therein the positions occupied of old by Augustinians and Franciscans, keeping all their property, and preserving the peculiarities of their discipline as Christian communities, but holding the Catholic faith, we should look upon such a concession to their natural scruples against condemning their own position in the past as being generously offered by the Church, and generously accepted by the sects of Calvin and Luther.

Of course, no Catholic refuses to acknowledge the Presbyterian ministers, and those of the other bodies of 'Orthodox Dissenters,' who derive their authority from a modern human institution, as being ministers to their own congregations, and, as such, deserving of worldly honor and respect. Again, it is not denied that, as a matter of fact, they do act as priests in offering up prayers, thanksgivings, intercessions, alms, and bread and wine in God's worship on behalf of others, and that they bless also in Christ's name. Moreover, they repudiate (as we do in the 23rd Article) the fanatical doctrine that nothing is required but an inward call to take upon themselves the ministerial commission. What the Catholic Church does deny is that any can act as Priest by Divine right unless they have received 'the Apostolic commission, that gift which the Scriptures and the Church declare to have been made by Christ to His Apostles, and which gift St. Paul says must be handed on by 'Apostles' 'till the perfecting of the saints through the work of the