

pretend that he can, do many of the things which St. Peter habitually did.

This argument, again, evades the real issue, for the question is not as to the continuance of the Apostolic commission in its entirety, but as to the continuance of it in certain persons so far as the power of ordination and government is concerned; with this important feature of difference, that the jurisdiction vesting as universal in the Apostles is merely local in the case of the persons who came after them. Here, too, the evidence of Scripture is express and clear. The powers conferred upon St. Timothy and Titus are wider, higher, and more authoritative than any we can discover attributed to the presbyters and elders. They are empowered to teach with special authority, not merely directly, as any missionary must have done, but indirectly and more widely, by supervising and regulating the teaching of others (1 St. Timothy i. 3; ii. 10); to ordain (1 St. Timothy v. 22; St. Titus i. 5); and to exercise government generally, with no hint of any equals or co-assessors in office (1 St. Tim. iii. 1-16; v. 1-22; 2 St. Tim. ii. 2; iv. 1, 2, 5; St. Titus ii. 1-10; iii. 1). There is thus an intermediate grade set up between the Apostles and the elders, which we may conveniently call Apostolic Legates, and it is observable that the functions they discharge are closely akin to those seen as entrusted to Bishops when those officers appear in a distinct body in Church history. It is clear from the wording of St. Paul in St. Titus i. 5, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee," that the Cretan elders were not empowered to ordain, but had to wait the intervention of the Legate. All that can be safely argued, consequently, from the mention of none but Bishops and Deacons at Philippi is not that these were the only offices of Apostolic institution, which we see is not true, but only that no Apostolic Legate had yet been commissioned for that city. No doubt, it was a difficult matter, even for St. Paul, to find fit persons to fill so important a charge, and he may very well have postponed the appointment in many cases, though keeping it in view as to be made when occasion served. As to his silence concerning a superior when addressing the Ephesian elders, the disproof is yet more cogent, because St. Paul expressly says that he besought St. Timothy to abide in Ephesus when he himself went to Macedonia, in order to give that superintendence to the teaching body which he himself could no longer do in person (1 St. Timothy i. 3), and besides a comparison of Acts xx. 4, 5, with the latter part of the chapter, shows that St. Timothy was with St. Paul when he addressed the Ephesian elders, and was preparing to accompany him further, so that in his absence, supposing him to have been already set over the Ephesian Church, there was no one else to whom those elders were immediately responsible, and thus no reason to say anything to them on the subject. On the other hand, if he was not yet nominated to his legateship,

there was no official head at Ephesus at all, and the organization of the Church there must have accordingly been incomplete, or St. Paul would not have supplemented and altered it by appointing him to the superintendence of it later on. There is great obscurity as to the origin of the Elders as a grade in the Church. They are first mentioned in Acts xi. 30, as the persons to whom the contributions from Antioch were sent, but not a word about their institution occurs, and the notion that they were the seventy disciples commissioned by our Lord, though with a certain plausibility, lacks all proof. At any rate, this much is clear, that whoever the first elders were, the next body of them consisted of men ordained by the Apostles (Acts xiv. 23), and not otherwise, so far as Scripture tells us, till we read of the power of ordaining elders being committed to Apostolic legates. And as regards these last-named officers, another point needs to be borne in mind; that while no particular title is given to either St. Timothy or St. Titus, although they held clearly a higher office than ordinary presbyters, yet we find such a title more than once elsewhere. That highest name of Apostle is not limited to the Twelve. Not only is it given to St. Matthias, on his election to fill the place of Judas, and to St. Paul, who claimed a directly divine commission, but to St. Barnabas (Acts xiv. 14), to Andronicus and Junia (Romans xvi. 7), and to certain unnamed persons besides (2 Cor. viii. 23, where the Authorised Version inexactly has "messengers," as the Revised Version also has, though giving "apostles" in the margin). The context implies that these persons were in some special sense St. Paul's colleagues, or "brethren," and the inference accordingly is that they were Apostolic Legates, with the title of Apostles, which title, as we learn from the "Teaching of the Apostles," did not die out of the Church with its original holders, but continued in use probably till the end of the first century.

As to the text about "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," there are two matters to be noted concerning it which deprive it of value for Presbyterian purposes. First, according to the literal Greek of St. Paul, the active instrument in conferring the gift of ordination on St. Timothy was the "prophecy," most probably some inspired indication of him as proper to receive that gift, while the laying-on of hands is merely spoken of as something which accompanied, or, more exactly, followed on, this indication, not as being itself the means of bestowal. Secondly, St. Paul attributes the ordination of St. Timothy to himself singly, in the words, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands (2 Timothy i. 6); so that the most we are entitled to assume here is the kind of joint action which the presbytery in the Latin and English Churches take along with the Bishop in the ordination of presbyters, but which would be accounted by both Churches invalid by itself. And it is

noteworthy that the Eastern Church, in most respects far more rigidly conservative than the Western, has no such usage in its Ordinal, but constitutes the Bishop the sole minister of ordination.—*Church Times*.

FOUNDATION TRUTHS.

A GREAT deal of nonsense is talked about the position of Nonconformist ministers in England, which goes to show that their grievances, if any, are after all a personal question. What we as Christians want to know is whether the Free Churches, as they are called, or the Church which has been duly organised from the beginning, gives the greatest security for the maintenance of those great truths which are committed to our keeping, and which we have to hand on to succeeding generations. All true Christians must desire to maintain the belief in revelation, and must take the side of the believers in the contest which is fast hastening to a climax between the two camps into which men are rapidly drifting—those who believe in the supernatural and revealed religion and those who deny all faith, and only believe in what they see and what their reason makes clear to them.

It is well for us at such a crisis to put all secondary considerations aside; to examine carefully our own hearts, and see on which side we are prepared to stand, for there can be no compromise between them. It will be well also to see—by the careful study of the history of the past, and of the true present position of the Churches, which is most likely to hold fast the faith, or to allow its professing members to drift into Rationalism.

Now, as I ventured to point out last week, there is a great deal of Rationalism and anti-Christian spirit to be found in all the Churches which of course, must more or less damage the sacred deposit in their charge. But what we have to look to is whether the authoritative teaching of the Churches is sound in those vital points on which true Christianity takes its stand, whether they have any sure foundation at all.

It is possible and probable that the exaggeration of the Papal claims, the encouragement of superstitions to maintain the faith of some, a too stringent discipline which would seek to control all free thought, may directly engender the infidel or rationalistic spirit; and it is constantly averred that there is much infidelity in the priesthood and amongst professed Christians, in Spain and other places where these evils abound. But these are the direct effects of evils which may be remedied at any time, so long as the foundation teaching of the Church itself is sound.

In the Eastern Church there may be great ignorance and stagnation, and many superstitions; but with them, as with Rome, the authoritative teaching of the Church is unanimous in the respect for Holy Scripture and the Creeds, as the sacred deposit in the Churches' keeping. And whatever additions they may hold as of faith, their belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God, in the Holy