

The Threefold Ministry of the Christian Church.

From time to time the notion has been put forward in certain quarters, that, so far as the apostolic aged is concerned, no particular form of Church government was established; that the Apostles of Christ laid down no form for the original constitution of the Christian Church; and some actually go so far as to affirm that it could not have been Episcopacy, or what is known as the three Orders of ministers—Bishops, Priests and Deacons. That in short, no rank or order of ministers in the Christian Church was above or superior to any other in authority, but that they were all on an equality so far as authority to minister in holy things is concerned. It clearly follows that if the foregoing is the correct and true statement of the matter, either that there was no visible organization called a Church—in fact, no church at all—left by Divine appointment or Divine sanction in the world, each man, and each woman for that matter, has thus a perfect and absolute right to found a church; or, that the clear and unmistakable statements in the Book of Common Prayer are historically incorrect, inaccurate and false. Lest there should be any lingering doubt in the minds of any of the readers of THE CHURCH MONTHLY as to whether these views and notions conflict with and contradict the historic accuracy and truth of the statements in the Prayer Book, it may be well to quote here the words of our Book of Common Prayer. In the first place, it may be said in passing that if anyone wishes to know what position the Anglican Church takes with regard to this or any similar matter, the voice of the Church as a whole finds its expression in the Prayer Book itself, not in someone's notions or opinion of statements found therein. What is called "The Preface to the Ordinal" or, "The form and manner of making, ordaining and consecrating, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons," runs as follows: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' times there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which Offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he was first called, tried, examined and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with the Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of England, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination." Here is set forth in clear and unmistakable terms the position which the Church takes in regard to those who are to minister in the congregation, and at her altars. No one does she allow as a lawful and proper Bishop, Priest, or Deacon unless ordained by a valid Bishop. Not only here, but in her Articles we find corroborative evidence. In Article XXIII "Of Ministering in the Congregation," is set forth at least two fundamental principles. First, that the Holy Ministry is not an order or office to be taken up by any Christian who feels disposed to do so, but on the contrary that it belongs to a regularly constituted order of men, "lawfully called and sent to execute the same." Second, that the call and mission of such men is by means of those "who have public (i. e. official) authority given them in the Congregation to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard." Again in Article XXXVII, the Church declares that this call and mission belongs in no sense to the Royal Supremacy. To the Bishops of the Church, the Successors of the Apostles, belong the power, in virtue of their office, to call and send. We have thus placed side by

side, the statements in the Book of Common Prayer, and those notions which conflict with them or contradict them. Either one may be historically correct, but it is clear that both cannot be true. One must be right and true, the other other wrong and untrue. Either a Church was founded and a Ministry organized, or it was not. If one was founded and a Ministry organized then it is a matter of evidence—historical evidence—what its original constitution was. All reasonable and intelligent people whose minds are not too filled with prejudice to see the truth must surely admit the truth when they see it.—*Dalhousie Church Monthly.*

"THE KING'S WITNESS."

A DREAM.

The humble servant, Lord, my feeble voice
I jealous raised amidst a throng of foes,
Who fain did question Thy almighty power
To heal, restore and bless humanity.

Deeds of Almighty I claimed for Thee
As ne'er before were seen in Israel.
With all the passion urged of my poor tongue
The truth that thou couldst make a lame man's feet
Leap like a hart's, a dumb man's lips to sing,
A lifeless body live and live alway:
That Thou couldst all things do, for Thou wert God,
Indignant at their slowness to believe,
I warmly bore my witness to the Lord.
In staunchest faith, with firmly planted foot,
Closely I grasped the banner in Thy Name,
And waved them backward all discomfited,
Feeling that Thou wert near and helping one
To brave all perils, so that Thou be preached.

Cowering they fell to hide for shame and fear,
And grudging left me victor for the while
Standing alone under Thy Banner.

Then
From out the shadows on my left arose
A form and stood before me wondering,
A form as in an amber glory bathed,
Kingly and strong yet wonderfully meek.
Soft fell a cream-white vesture round his feet
Gold-ledge, and overlaced with quivering rays
Of rose-red light, a cincture at his waist
Loosely confining this most princely robe,
Gold-barred, and waving downwards to the side.
Above, about his neck, the cream-white robe
Lay closely down in undulating folds
And shaped it-self about the heaving breast.
Rising and falling with it, every breath
The token of a real true life within.
His locks, gold brown, upon each shoulder fell,
And o'er his head a wreath of ambient light
Disposed itself in outline of a crown,
And lightly sat upon his noble brow.
His face to me was wondrous beautiful
And softly sad, yet over full of joy,
Of heavenly peace, and angel sympathy
With eyes that seemed to thrill me through with love.

He stepped toward me with a courtly grace,
I bent before him as he raised his hand:
Nearer he came, friendly his bearing seemed,
His breath fell as a warm dew on my head,
Lower I bent it, and he kissed it—once.

A sense of the Divine seized all my soul
And I was at His feet in copious tears,
Such tears as I had never shed before,
A welling flood of tears. I knew 'twas joy,
But chiefly lack of worth that made me weep,
And while my full heart throbb'd, yet once again
I felt His lips on my bowed head descend:
Again welled forth my tears, that ne'er had ceased,
Crushed by His love! Such unearned blessing mine!
'Twas Heaven to be kneeling at His feet.
I would not, if I could, have moved away,
Naught else could I but weep, and weeping—woke.

'Twas but a dream. But long I lay in thought
Seized with a sense of great unworthiness:
'Twas Thou the Master who didst come to me,
Who nothing art though thine ambassador.
Oh! worthier make me to uphold Thy Name,
If my poor service Thou wilt deign to use.
Though near the ground, may I be held for Thee
And own Thee for my own most Glorious King.

And when from this life's dream I shall awake,
May this my dream of Thee be realized:
Only the joy without the tears be mine,
When Thou Thy blessing on my work bestow,
And on my sinful head Thy kisses of peace.

W. B. LONGHURST,

Granby, P. Q., Lent, 1892.

BAPTISM.

Baptism is a covenant, in which there are two contracting parties, God and the Catechumen, both pledging themselves to certain conditions, and both having a certain part of their own to perform. This is very forcibly brought out by our Formularies, both for the Baptism of Infants, and of Adults. In the first place, on the part of the Catechumen, there is self-dedication, implying complete surrender of the will, nay, of the man's whole self to God. He renounces (i. e. declares war against) all sin, from whatsoever avenue it may make its assault; he avows implicit belief, of all God says, and he puts himself entirely at God's bidding, to "keep His holy will and commandment's, and walk in the same all the days of his life." It is very important to remark, that it is not simply belief, but also a *preparedness* of the will, which he, if an adult, in his own person, if an infant, by his sureties, is required to profess. The terms are by no means to be construed as a promise that he will never sin, which would be a rash and unwarrantable vow indeed; but are exactly equivalent to an act of self-surrender, and might scripturally be represented thus: "I present my body (his body, on which the seal of Holy Baptism is now to be impressed) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is my reasonable service." It is the Christian offering himself as a victim at God's altar, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!"

But is that the whole Baptism? By no means, not even the chief part of it. The victim must not only be presented, but fire must fall from Heaven upon it: there is God's part as well as man's part to be considered. There is a *gift* to be bestowed, as well as a *vow* to be made, and the candidate himself cannot possibly do God's part: it must be done for him, and upon him. No man ever heard of a person's baptizing himself: that would be indeed an absurd impossibility: he may dedicate himself to God by an act of self-surrender, which some purpose to be the whole of Baptism, but to be born of water and of the Spirit, "to be received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same," this is far above—out of his reach. The Church of his day, or rather Christ acting through the Church, confers upon him Baptism, with its grace and its gift, howsoever that gift may be defined. If he is an infant at the time of receiving it, (as we all were,) and Baptism is to be of the smallest avail to him ultimately, he must realize his Baptism experimentally, and that as to both parts of the contract: he must now by his own act and deed surrender himself utterly and unreservedly to God, which is the teaching of *Confirmation*, although thousands of confirmed persons have never done it: and for his sanctification, his growth in grace, his spiritual fruitfulness, his interior qualification for glory, he must look to Christ and Christ alone, in whom by the Father's appointment "all fulness dwells," using diligently the means, of course, because Christ enjoins them, but not putting the means in Christ's place. If he will not dedicate himself, the Lord will not send down the fiery Baptism of the Holy Ghost upon him: if he will dedicate himself and will expect from the act of dedication the gift of the Holy Ghost, he will find himself bitterly disappointed; but if he will both dedicate himself, and at the same time look to Christ's fulness for the *progressive* work of sanctification, as well as for the *completed* work of justification, then of Christ's fulness shall that man receive, and "grace for grace." Holding the *Head*, he shall have nourishment ministered through the joints and bands of the appointed means, and increase with the increase of God. —*Youlburn's Personal Religion.*