

THE GENERAL SYNOD—SHALL IT BE?

By the time that this number of the *Guardian* reaches our readers, the Bishops, Clergy and Laity, upon whom the responsibility has been placed of giving answer to this question, will be in actual session; and our hope is that, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, who presided in the Councils of the Blessed Apostles, and whose presence will be invoked for the guidance of this body, the answer may be in the affirmative; and that in our next numbers we may be able to announce the glad news of a Consolidated Church from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To this end we would bespeak the constant and earnest prayers of every reader of this paper. The true interests of the Church will be, we are convinced, best served by the creation of that body; but there still are grave differences to be overcome, the solution and adjustment of which may require patient and wise consideration on the part of all present. May God the Holy Ghost grant the spirit of a right judgment to all and every the members present, that all things may be done for His glory and for the maintenance of the order and discipline, and the wider extension of Holy Church.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Some one has kindly sent us a copy of the *Parish Magazine* of St. Thomas' church, St. Catharines, containing an article (marked) by the Rev. W. J. Armitage, Rector of the Parish, in which reference is made to the *Absolution* in the Morning and Evening Prayer. We have pleasure in reproducing the marked portion of the article. The terms of this "Absolution" are so clear and unmistakable as to leave, we would imagine, no possibility of applying the words "He pardoneth and absolveth" to the Priest. The several parts, however, of this "authoritative declaration of pardon" (Bishop Barry) must be read together, and each given its due weight. In this connection the words "and hath given power and commandment to His Ministers to declare and pronounce to His people the Absolution and Remission of their sins," are worthy of note and thought. Bishop Barry also suggests reference to the "Words of Ordination of Priests," and comparison with the Absolutions in the Communion Service and in the Visitation of the Sick. The source of both Absolution and Remission is, "in the love of God revealed as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "pronounced by the Priest alone, standing in the attitude of authority over the kneeling people, it is *God's answer to the Confession*," (Bishop Barry.) We take it that, in ordination to the Priesthood, the Church intends and assumes to convey to the Priest the power, whatever it was, which Christ Himself intended in His words, and which she embodies in the formula of Ordination itself. We are not curious to examine more particularly into the matter. As with the Eucharist itself, we prefer resting on the words of our Lord Himself and on His ability to make them effective.

The *Homiletic Review* for September contains

a sermon by the Rev. Kerr B. Tupper, D.D., of Denver, Col., of very considerable power and of unmistakable plainness—much needed in these days of unblushing immorality,—on the *Law of Chastity*. In earnest, manly, outspoken terms he denounces the open violation of this law and the injustice of the distinction made in regard to it between an impure man and an impure woman, and calls for the banishment of the former from the homes and social circles of the people. "Adultery," he says, "is, along with intemperance, our national disgrace and curse." He quotes from a distinguished American author the following weighty words: "Loose notions touching Marriage, Divorce, Re-marriage, are painfully alarming prevalent. We need not go so far as Utah to find Mormons theoretical and practical. Even among those who call themselves cultivated there are some whose teachings concerning marriage are so lax and sensuous that were they carried into practical effect the 'holy estate of matrimony' would sink into the open polygamy and polyandry of savage tribes and even the promiscuous variety of roaming animal hordes. Let it be thundered from the pulpit, from the academy, from the forum, that divorce (absolute divorce allowing re-marriage) saving for one solitary cause, is a THREEFOLD CRIME—a crime against *home*; a crime against *society*; a crime against *God*."

The Bishop of Maryland, the Rt. Rev. Wm. Paret, D.D., has done good service to the Church by calling attention to the connection between Ordination and Preaching, and the unlawfulness of separating those. In these days of revived employment of Lay help in Church work there is a grave danger of "over-exalting" the laity, and of confusing in the minds of our people generally the relative position and powers of the regularly ordained Minister and the *unordained* lay reader. And this is specially to be feared in connection with the increasing use, *ex necessitate*, of theological students in the mission work of the Church. We can see little excuse for allowing the newly-fledged theologian, just entered in his first year, still in his teens perchance, but full of self-importance, because sent into some mission of the diocese to take the service—which, by the way, he is oftentimes incapable of even reading properly—to preach his own sermons; especially when there is such an abundance of suitable and sound teaching to be had ready for his use from some of the best and most learned divines of the Church. We do not believe that this was intended in the Canadian Church any more than in the sister Church in the States; and we should gladly see the employment of theological students in regularly organized Missions, and parishes largely reduced.

The immediate cause of Bishop Paret's utterances was a statement by the Secretary of the Commission on Christian Unity, appointed at the last General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, as follows: "I was asked by the author of the Presbyterian letter if we could consider the 'preaching function as apart from what is 'technically called the question of Orders.

"My reply was that we could, for our Ordinal declares that the preaching function is not 'tied to Ordination, but that the exercise of it 'is dependent on a license from the Bishop.'" To this Dr. Paret replies:

As a Bishop of the Church I cannot consent to this as a fair statement of the Church's position. If I am wrong I will be thankful to have my error shown.

I suppose what is referred to in the ordinal must be in the words which the bishop speaks to the deacon upon whom he has just laid hands: "Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God; and to preach the same, if thou be thereto licensed by the bishop himself."

Now, in one kind of literal interpretation this might be warrant for saying that "the preaching function is not tied to ordination." That is, ordination does always, of necessity, carry with it liberty to preach. Ordination to the deacon's office needs the bishops's license *in addition*, before the deacon can preach. But surely it does not intimate that one can preach *without* ordination. It asserts that even ordination itself is not enough. It is not true that "the exercise of preaching is dependent on a license from the bishop." Ordination to the priesthood is the conveyance of right to preach without special license, in addition, from the bishop. The deacon, however, though ordained, may not preach without that special license. The bishop's power to license him is expressly declared in the Ordinal. But an unordained person, or one whose claim to ordination is not acknowledged by the Church, may not preach at all. And I confidently affirm that no bishop can lawfully give him license so to do. True, the right to license has sometimes been claimed, and the claim has sometimes been put in exercise. But I maintain that the Bishop who does it exceeds his powers, and transgresses the laws of the Church. And this matter does not rest on *canons only*. The deeper laws of the Church, in its Constitution, its Ordinal, its Articles, assert the law clearly. There must be a ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons. This must be so reverently held and esteemed that no man may be accounted a lawful bishop, priest, or deacon in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, unless . . . he hath had Episcopal consecration or ordination." "Functions" thus sacredly reserved for the ordained alone, are named in Article xxiii: "It is not lawful for any man to take upon himself the office of public preaching or ministering sacraments in the congregation before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same." This means more than a bishop's license. These are the words which Holy Scripture and the Church use in speaking of ordination. The canons, then, are not the forbidding power or act. They merely reaffirm and apply the principles and great laws laid down by the Constitution of the Church, and by the Prayer Book.

* * * * *

"Public preaching," in its official character, is declared to be one of the functions of the holy ministry, and a bishop can no more authorize a man to execute it by license only and without ordination, than he can by license only and without ordination authorize him to consecrate and administer the Holy Communion. The assertion, therefore, that the power to preach is so "dependent on the bishop's license," that the bishop may authorize one who is not rightly ordained and not even a communicant in the Protestant Episcopal Church, to act as a public preacher in the congregation, is in clear contradiction to the letter and spirit of the Church's laws.

Much as we honor and love our Presbyterian brethren and gladly as we admire the devoutness and learning of their ministers, unless we are prepared to abandon the real "Historic Episcopate" (that is, the episcopate as shown in