

ART. II.—"OUR UNHAPPY DIVISIONS"—II.

THE argument in a previous paper aimed at showing that certain modern theories connected with (so-called) "Apostolic succession" could hardly have held an established position in the belief of the early ages of the Christian Church. It must by no means be understood as giving support to the contention that there was no difference of function¹ assigned to Bishops and Presbyters in sub-Apostolic times. And quite as little was it meant to imply that in the Churches of Apostolic planting (more particularly in the East) there was not to be looked for in due course a succession of Bishops following one another in the authority of the Episcopal chair. There is no reason, I believe, to suppose that, even

¹ In the Church of Rome, indeed, there is some ground for the conjecture that up to about the middle of the second century government was "by a body of Presbyters or Bishops, to whom everything is to be referred" (see Bishop J. Wordsworth, "Ministry of Grace," p. 125). Bishop Wordsworth considers that the statement in the (so-called) Canons of Hippolytus (about A.D. 200) "looks as if the prerogatives implied by the two titles were now being distinguished in the Church of Rome, while as yet the distinction had not been carried very far" (p. 129).

There seems some difficulty, however, in bringing these views into agreement with the statements of Hegesippus, Irenæus, and Eusebius. (See Greenwood's "Cathedra Patri," vol. i., p. 53; see also "Speaker's Com.," New Test., vol. iii., pp. 764, 774, 779.)

Bishop Wordsworth (p. 125; see also p. 135) is not convinced by the arguments of Professor J. H. Bernard that the Bishops (at Corinth) of Clemens R. are "ministers of worship," "quite distinct from the *πρεσβύτεροι*, or ministers of rule" (see *Expositor*, July, 1901, p. 46). It seems an objection to this view that it has to meet the serious difficulty of supposing so great a change, and so early a departure from Apostolic use of language.

But it appears scarcely to admit of a doubt that in the Church of Rome, perhaps by reason of its faithful adherence to the truth, the development of Episcopacy was exceptionally tardy. See Bishop Lightfoot, "Apostolic Fathers," part ii., vol. i., pp. 383, 384, who says: "The Episcopate, though doubtless it existed in some form or other in Rome, had not yet (it would seem) assumed the same sharp and well-defined monarchical character with which we are confronted in the Eastern Churches" (p. 384).

Canon Robertson says well (speaking of Church government generally): "We do not refuse to acknowledge that the organization of the Church was gradual; we are only concerned to maintain that it was directed by the Apostles . . . and that in all essential points it was completed before their departure" ("Hist. of Chris. Ch.," vol. i., p. 12; edit. 1874). See Godet's "Com. on St. John's Gospel," vol. i., pp. 58-61; see also Archdeacon Lee in Note F on Rev. i. in "Speaker's Com.," p. 512, and Bishop Kip's "Double Witness of the Church," pp. 76-78, especially quotation from Palmer's "Treatise on the Church," p. 77.

in the Church of Alexandria, any Presbyter, as a Presbyter, would have been allowed to ordain, or would have been warranted in attempting so to do. Nor would the statement of Jerome justify us in imagining that the Church of Alexandria was ever ruled otherwise than by Episcopal government. The Bishops, indeed, were made Bishops, not according to the practice generally in use in other Churches, but each Bishop elected received (it would seem) the status of a Bishop. He had to perform the offices of a Bishop; and no doubt he had public authority given unto him in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

Our Christian common-sense argument leaves these matters untouched. It only claims to show that the existence of such a practice as appears in the Alexandrian Church, and the acceptance of such a report, as it *was* accepted, seems fatal to certain views now very commonly bound up with the teaching of Episcopal succession. It is submitted that such a state of things could hardly have lived in an atmosphere permeated with a “ Catholic ” persuasion; that Sacramental grace is dependent on ministerial ordination; and that valid ministerial ordination is dependent on Episcopal consecration, and valid Episcopal consecration is absolutely dependent on an unbroken chain of a succession of Episcopal consecrators—a succession to be traced up to its starting-point from the Apostles themselves.

If our argument is good, this distinction between what it carries with it, and what it does not aim at, what it leaves unquestioned and unassailed, is important to be borne in mind. It is specially important to be kept well before our view in proceeding now to a brief and very imperfect consideration of the subject in relation to the practice and teaching of the Anglican Church.

We shall find, if I mistake not, among English divines of esteem and authority abundant support for what may fairly be called *high* views of the Apostolic origin, and consequently (in some sense) “ the Divine right ” of Episcopacy, with not unfrequent reference to Episcopal succession, and with a clear recognition of the power of ordaining as normally pertaining by right to the function of Bishops. But we shall find also abundant evidence that, in their view, this teaching does not involve the doctrine that the life of a Christian society is dependent on a chain of Episcopal succession, or that Episcopacy (in any form) is actually essential to the being of a Church.

Passing over the high authority of Hooker, whose words I have already quoted, as showing that with all his faithful

testimony in support of government by Bishops¹ as that which best agreeth with sacred Scripture, he was far from desiring to unchurch the Continental Churches of the Reformation, I may be allowed to illustrate the point I am insisting upon by referring to the well-known treatise of the very learned

BISHOP BILSON.

His work entitled "The Perpetual Government of Christ's Church" was first published in 1593. It was written against the innovating tendencies of certain unquiet spirits among Puritan extremists. In it Bilson will be found to be taking very high ground indeed, not in *defence* merely of the rule of Bishops, but in uncompromising advocacy of Episcopacy,² as of Apostolic ordering, and as intended to be an abiding rule for Church regulation and discipline. He strongly insists on the power of ordination as restrained to the Episcopal function (see pp. 315, 316, 320, 323, 324, 330, 351; edit. Oxford, 1842). He often speaks of Episcopal succession (see pp. 315, 316, 332, 337, 340, 348, 351). Yet he not only has nothing to say that can fairly be alleged in support of modern theories of "succession," but he also more than once makes mention of the state of things belonging to the practice in the Church of Alexandria (see pp. 289, 298, 339, 351, 352). He never questions what I have ventured to call the natural and obvious sense of Jerome's words, and he uses (I believe) no language to imply that he saw in this case any infraction of the rule of Episcopal succession (see p. 348). Though, according to some modern views, the Bishops of that Church seem to have lacked just that which should really have constituted them Bishops, seeing they received no consecration from the imposition of other Episcopal hands, yet they are recognised by Bilson as Bishops succeeding one to another in the Episcopal chair and to the Episcopal authority.

The same truth may be yet more strikingly exhibited by reference to the teachings of

BISHOP OVERALL.

Probably the general impression of Overall's specially stiff and unyielding attitude in maintenance of the Divine right of

¹ In his Preface to the "Ecclesiastical Polity" Hooker wrote: "We require you to find out but one Church upon the face of the whole earth, that hath been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by Episcopal regiment, sithence the time that the blessed Apostles were here conversant" (ch. iv., § 1: Works, vol. i. p. 156; edit. Keble).

² Bilson has been classed among those "who felt themselves bound to avoid all compromise of admitted principle" (Firminger, "Attitude of Church of England to Non-Episcopal Ordinations," p. 47).

Episcopacy may be due to the common connection of his name with what is known as Overall's "Convocation Book." Possibly it may have been this which (if I remember aright) led one of the critics of my essay on "The Apostolic Fathers and the Christian Ministry," in speaking of the paragraphs quoted in my previous paper, to express some astonishment at what I had there stated concerning him.

Overall was the prolocutor of the Convocation of 1606. In this Convocation several Canons were passed by both houses with unanimous consent, and signed by Overall. There is no room, therefore, for questioning his general approval of their contents, even if he had not a principal hand¹ (as Bishop Burnet supposes) in drawing them up.

And of these Canons, in respect of their teaching concerning Episcopacy, very much the same may be said as has been said concerning Bilson's famous work. Indeed, in some places there is so much resemblance between the two that the one may well, perhaps, be supposed to be not altogether independent of the other. As to Episcopacy, its being of a Divine institution is very positively asserted. Nevertheless, there will be found in Overall's "Convocation Book," as in Bilson's treatise, nothing whatever, I believe, that will give support to the modern theory of Apostolical succession. Indeed, it is quite incredible that the two houses of the Southern Convocation could have given approval *unanimi consensu* to any such theory.

But this is not all. In the year 1613 was first published the famous work of Francis Mason, known as the "Vindication of the Church of England concerning the Consecration and Ordination of the Bishops," etc. I need not say that this work contains an elaborate and learned defence of the Episcopal ministry in the Anglican Church. Mason died in 1621. But the Latin translation of his book, under the title "Vindicatæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ," which appeared in 1625, was from his own pen. Another publication bearing his name was published in 1641. This has for its title "The Validity of the Ordinations of the Ministers of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, Maintained against the Romanists." And it is with this that we are now more especially concerned. I do not wish to make too much of it. I make no claim for it as evidence of Mason's views, because, though something may yet be said on the other side, it has been more than questioned, on unquestioned evidence, whether it rightly claimed the authority of Mason's name.²

¹ See Cardwell's "Synodalia," vol. i., p. 331.

² See Firminger's "Attitude of Church of England to Non-Episcopal Ordinations," p. 48, who says it was *spurious*, and refers to an edition of

In Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses" we have given us an extract from a letter of George Davenport to Mr. Sancroft from Paris, dated January, 1655. It runs thus: "I have learned of him [viz., the Dean of Peterborough, Dr. Cosin, whose chaplain I think he was] that the book wherein the ordination of the French Church is vindicated was made by Bishop Overall [with whom the Dean then lived], and not by Mr. Mason. Mr. Mason, indeed, added something to it with the approbation of the Bishop, and printed it in his own name at the desire of the Bishop." But then this is followed by an extract from another letter of August 6, in which it is said: "I must undeceive you about the additional to Mr. Mason, for he [the Dean] saith, he said that the Bishop was the chief composer of the first draught of the 'Book de Minist. Anglican.,' in English, which was printed by the King's printer" (edit. Bliss, vol. ii., col. 307). And this second letter might leave us in doubt whether Overall had had anything to do with the second treatise, which was named "The Addition of T. Mason unto his Defence of the Ministry of the Church of England,"¹ either in the way of writing or of approval. This doubt, however, may seem to be removed by the following note, taken from Kennet, which will be found in col. 306: "That book, entitled 'The Defence of the Ordination of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas,' maintained by Mr. Archdeacon Mason against the Romanists, is sufficiently known, and I have been assured it was not only the judgment of Bishop Overall, but that he had a principal hand in it." If Kennet was not altogether deceived in this statement, it is not easy to suppose that the very aim of the publication was altogether contrary to Overall's principles.

The title-page of this treatise is sufficient for our purpose. It is good evidence to show what a mistake it is to imagine that when our divines are found upholding an Apostolic authority for Episcopacy, it must follow that they are denying the name of a true Church or a lawful ministry to those who have no Episcopal succession.

It would be easy to multiply quotations from this work (which is certainly the work of no mean writer) to add confirmation to this position; but I must content myself with the following extracts, which some will regard as having some special value at the present time:

Mason's work of 1728 (Translator's Preface, pp. lv-lix). It will be found, however, I believe, that while Lindsay argues strongly against the authorship of Mason, there is nothing in his argument to discredit Kennet's assurance as to Overall having a chief hand in the work. See also "Dictionary of National Biography," *sub* Mason, F., p. 418.

¹ See "Brief Treatises," p. 128.

(1) “The Canonists affirm it [Episcopacy] to be an *order*, the *Schoolmen* deny it. Yet Bellarmine and Scultingius avouch there is no difference between them. Because the Canonists call it an *order* in respect of *Regiment*: the *Schoolmen* deny it, as *Order* is a Sacrament. In like manner, because a *Bishop* is sanctified and set apart with *Imposition of hands* to public employment in Ecclesiastical Government, the Church of England, with your Canonists, call it an *order*: and yet many deny, with your *Schoolmen*, that it is properly an *Order*, as *Deaconship and Priesthood*. To which you may the rather be induced: because the Authors of the Book having spoken first of the *Ordering of Deacons*, and then of *Ordering of Priests*; when they come to the Form of Making *Bishops*, they never call it *Ordering*, but always *Consecrating*” (“Addition of Francis Mason unto his Defence of the Ministry of the Church of England,” in “Brief Treatises,” pp. 157, 158).¹

I will add one other brief quotation:

(2) “If you mean by *jure divino*, that which is according to the *Scriptures*: then the pre-eminence of Bishops is *jure divino*. . . . Secondly, if by *jure divino* you mean the ordinance of God: in this sense also it may be said to be *jure divino*.² For it is an ordinance of the *Apostles*, whereunto they were directed by *God's Spirit*. . . . But if by *jure divino* you understand a *Law and Commandment of God*, binding all *Christian Churches* universally, perpetually, unchangeably, and with such absolute necessity,

¹ In favour of this view (much urged afterwards by the Presbyterians) may be cited the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus*, in which the same form of ordination is found for Bishops as for Presbyters, with only the change of name (see edit. Achelis, p. 61), as well as the *Apostolic Constitutions*. And it is admitted that anciently in the Church of Rome there was no rule requiring a man to be a Presbyter before becoming a Bishop (see the “Answer of the Archbishops” to Apostolic Letter of Leo XIII., p. 24, note.)

Hooker also has been sometimes appealed to as supporting the same view. It is true he says: “Of Presbyters some were greater, some less in power, and that by our Saviour's own appointment” (“Eccles. Pol.,” book v., ch. lxxviii. 4: Works, vol. ii., p. 473; edit. Keble); and he not unfrequently speaks of the “degrees of ecclesiastical order” (see pp. 473, 477, 480, 482). But the evidence can hardly be said to be conclusive.

It should be well observed that a change was made in 1662, and instead of the words “And every man which is to be consecrated a Bishop,” we now read “ordained or consecrated Bishop.”

To this it should be added that, whereas Acts xx. 27, 28 had been found in one of the Epistles in the Ordination of Priests, and an argument had been built upon this for an *Episcopal* authority given therein to Presbyters “to rule the congregation of God,” a change was made at the last review, by which this portion of Scripture, as well as the alternative Epistle, containing 1 Tim. iii. 1, was withdrawn from this service, and transferred to the Ordering of Bishops (see Firminger's “Alterations in Ordinal,” pp. 15, 16, 31-35; S.P.C.K.); and a change regarded as of similar import was made in the Litany (*ibid.*, pp. 14, 15).

Indeed, it can scarcely be doubted that the general tendency of the changes of 1662 was rather to emphasize the superiority of the Episcopal Order, as against the Presbyterian contention that “both Orders were the same according to our own Ordinal” (see Prideaux, as quoted by Firminger, pp. 26, 27), the Presbytery being regarded as essentially Episcopal.

² See Sanderson's Works, vol. v., pp. 153, 161, 191; Oxford, 1854.

that no other form of regiment in any case may be admitted in this sense, neither may we grant it, nor yet can you prove it, to be *jure divino*" ("Addition of Francis Mason unto his Defence of the Ministry of the Church of England," in "Brief Treatises," p. 163).

(3) "Whereinsoever their *discipline* [*i.e.*, of Calvin and Beza] is defective, we wish them, even in the bowels of Christ Jesus, by all possible means to redress and reform it; and to conform themselves to the ancient custom of the *Church of Christ*, which hath continued from the *Apostles'* time: that so they may remove all opinion of *singularity*, and stop the mouth of malice itself. Thus much concerning the *Ministers* of other *Reformed Churches*: wherein if you do not believe us, disputing for the *lawfulness* of their *calling*; yet you must give us leave to believe *God* Himself from heaven approving their ministry, and pouring down a *Blessing* upon their labours" (*ibid.*, pp. 175, 176).

I will only add here, for it may carry weight with some, that in 1641 this treatise was published, bound up with other treatises by various authors (including Hooker, Andrewes, Ussher, Drury), under the general title, "Certain Brief Treatises written by Diverse Learned Men, concerning the Ancient and Modern Government of the Church, wherein both the Primitive Institution of Episcopacy is maintained and the Lawfulness of the Ordination of the Protestant Ministers beyond the Seas likewise defended" (Oxford: printed by Leonard Lichfield, printer to the University; Anno Dom., 1641).¹ But I forbear to press the argument from this publication, since it is, of course, quite possible that Kennet may have been misinformed as to Overall's connection with it. As bearing on Overall's views, I would desire to say: Let its evidence fall out of sight altogether, if the reader should feel that a cloud of doubt obscures the view of its force, or if there should appear testimony from any quarter, making Kennet's report incredible. The *onus probandi*, indeed, rests with those who would discredit Kennet's assurance. But my statement concerning Overall does not, I think, need anything in the way of support to be added to that which I have now to adduce.

For I must proceed at once to say what needs to be said in defence of what I had stated as to Overall's expressing a willingness "to admit to an English benefice one who had been ordained by the Presbytery at Leyden." This statement appeared, I think, to my critic to be scarcely credible. The following extract is therefore given from Birch's "Life of

¹ This publication appears to have speedily attained to considerable notoriety (see Wood's "Athenæ Oxon.," vol. ii., c. c. 306, 307). Milton replied to it in two tracts with vehement warmth. Archbishop Ussher contributed two treatises, the first of which, entitled "The Original of Bishops and Metropolitans," was written at the request of Bishop Hall, and was especially the object of Milton's attack. (See Elrington's "Life of Ussher," pp. 224, 225, and Appendix VII., p. cliv.)

Archbishop Tillotson (London, 1752; pp. 185, 186): "Dr. De Laune, who translated the *English* Liturgy into *French*, being collated to a living, and coming to the Bishop [Overall], then at *Norwich*, with his presentation, his Lordship asked him where he had his orders. He answered that he was ordained by the Presbytery at *Leyden*. The Bishop upon this advised him to take the opinion of Council whether by the laws of *England* he was capable of a benefice without being ordained by a Bishop. The Doctor replied that he thought his Lordship would be unwilling to re-ordain him if his Council should say that he was not otherwise capable of the living by law. The Bishop rejoined: '*Re-ordination* we must not admit, no more than a *re-baptization*. But in case you find it doubtful, whether you be a Priest capable to receive a benefice among us or no, I will do the same office for you, if you desire it, that I should do for one who doubts of his Baptism, when all things belonging essentially unto it have not been duly observed in the administration of it, according to the rule of the Book of Common Prayer, *If thou hast not already,*¹ etc. Yet, for mine own part, if you will adventure the orders that you have, I will admit your presentation, and give you institution into the living howsoever.' But the title which this presentation had from the patron proving not good, there were no farther proceedings in it; yet afterwards Dr. De Laune was admitted into another benefice without any new ordination."

This is followed immediately by another narrative, which I say nothing about, because *that* appears to rest upon no

¹ In Ireland Archbishop Bramhall desired to meet the difficulties of Presbyterian incumbents in a somewhat similar way (see Vesey's "Life of Bramhall," as quoted in Soames's edition of Mosheim's "Eccles. Hist.," vol. iv., p. 283). We have a copy of the words inserted by him in the letters of a Presbyterian minister ordained by him, as follows: "Non annihilantes priores ordines (si quos habuit), nec validitatem aut invaliditatem eorum determinantes, multo minus omnes ordines sacros ecclesiarum forinsecarum condemnantes, quos proprio judicii relinquimus: sed solummodo supplettes, quicquid prius deficit per canones Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ requisitum; et providentes paci Ecclesiæ, ut schismatis tollatur occasio, et conscientiis fidelium satisfiat, nec ullo modo dubitent de ejus ordinatione, aut actus suos Presbyterales tanquam invalidos aversentur: in ejus rei testimonium," etc. Yet, if I mistake not, Bramhall could use language which comes nearer than that of any other Anglican divine in its pointing towards something like the modern theory connected with "succession."

An esteemed Bishop of our own days declared: "I have received men from other communions, and I tell them I pass no judgment on their former position. . . . Archbishop Leighton was originally in Presbyterian orders, but distinctly tells us he conceived that taking priest's orders in the Church of England did not reflect on his former ordination" (Bishop Suter, of Nelson, N.Z., "Recognition," p. 11—address at Derby Church Congress, 1882).

satisfactory evidence, whereas *this* is attested by "Mr. John Cosin, afterwards Bishop of Durham, and secretary to Bishop Overall," in a letter preserved by "Sir Thomas Burnet, Knt., one of His Majesty's Justices of the Common Pleas." I think, therefore, it will be admitted that there is satisfactory evidence to support all that I stated with regard to Bishop Overall.

But it need not be supposed that this instance stands alone. Although Whitgift refused to yield to the pleas of Travers,¹ we learn that Archbishop Grindal in 1582 licensed Morrison, who had been ordained by Presbyters in Scotland (see Cardwell's "Doc. Annals," vol. ii., p. 4). And we know that Lord Bacon regarded those as "indiscreet persons" who went so far as to pronounce men ordained in foreign parts as "no lawful ministers" (quoted by Goode, "Brotherly Communion," p. 24). Indeed, there seems no reason to question the assertion made by competent witnesses that "instances may be given down to the time of the civil wars of foreigners holding preferment without Episcopal ordination" (see Cardwell, "Doc. Annals," vol. ii., p. 4, and Goode, "Brotherly Communion," p. 18). We have the authority of Bishop Burnet for saying that before the Act of Uniformity of 1662 "those who came to England from the foreign Churches had not been required to be ordained among us" ("History of Our Times," vol. i., p. 183; see Goode's "Brotherly Communion," p. 18). And we are told, on the authority of Bishop Hall (Works, vol. ix., pp. 160, 161), that where any scruple arose, it was only as to the question what "the statutes of this realm do require." "They had been acknowledged ministers of Christ, without any other hands laid upon them."

¹ It would be a mistake to infer from this that Whitgift held exceptionally high views on the subject of Episcopacy. He does, indeed, argue that "the right of ordering and electing ministers doth appertain to the Bishop" (Works, vol. i., p. 428, P.S.; see also pp. 425, 426, 439, and vol. ii., p. 261); and, again, he says: "It may appear that it seemeth strange neither to the old writers, nor to the new, to say that Bishops succeed the Apostles and come in place of them" (vol. ii., p. 355; see also p. 290, and Strype, "Memorials of Whitgift," vol. ii., pp. 170, 171); yet he grants "that *quoad ministerium* they [Bishops and Presbyters] be all one, but that there be degrees of dignity" (vol. ii., p. 261; see also pp. 222, 254, P.S.).

See also Stillingleet's "Irenicum," pp. 394, 395 (London, 1662)*; where see also the testimony of Hooker, Bridges, Sutcliffe, and Crakanthorp, against the view of any form of Church government being by the Scriptures prescribed to the Church of God.

N. DIMOCK.

(To be continued.)