

ARCHBISHOP PARKER AND ANGLICAN ORDERS

In this article we have no intention of unfolding any new arguments or of offering an original solution for the problem of the invalidity of Anglican Orders. Such a solution is unnecessary, for twenty-two years ago this question was adequately discussed by eminent theologians of the Church and was definitely settled by Pope Leo XIII. Our purpose is to review the historical facts, to consider the authorities ranged on either side and their grounds for dispute; in this way we may be able to reach a juster appreciation of the supreme wisdom of the Leonine decree.

The question may be treated from a twofold standpoint: whether Parker was validly consecrated, and whether, in consequence, the Anglican clergy are to be accredited with Apostolic succession. It is evident that the matter is of vital importance both to the High Church party and to the people of England at large.

On Wednesday, November 17, 1558, the See of Canterbury was left vacant by the death of Cardinal Reginald Pole, the former Papal Legate and Plenipotentiary to England under Julius III and Paul IV. His death was providential, and yet occurred at a critical moment. On his deathbed the news was brought to him that Queen Mary had succumbed on the previous day. Hearing this, he uttered the significant words: "Lord Jesus, save us, we perish. Saviour of the world, save Your Church!" If he had survived Mary, he doubtless would have fared ill at the hands of her unscrupulous successor. At the same time, by his death the Church of England fell again into the gravest danger; for Pole had ever been a champion of the Church and a loyal guardian of her doctrines.

It now became the task of Queen Elizabeth to appoint a successor to Pole. Her choice fell upon Doctor Parker, and he was forthwith notified of Her Majesty's will. In naming Parker Archbishop of Canterbury, Elizabeth was sorely perplexed as to how she could arrange for his consecration. It was her plan that he should be the progenitor of the Anglican clergy; but how to confer the episcopal powers upon him was, indeed, a problem. All the sees in the realm, excepting one, were vacant. The only Catholic bishop who was feeble enough to submit to Elizabeth's tyranny and take the oath of her spiritual supremacy was Doctor

Kitchin of Llandaff. He might have been prevailed upon to perform the ceremony had he not been frightened from this further act of treason by the awful condemnation uttered by Bonner from behind his prison bars.

There are two accounts of how the matter was arranged. The first and more probable is that of the Lambeth Register. Under Sunday, December 17, 1559, of the Register; it is recorded that Doctor Parker was consecrated that morning in the Palace chapel by William Barlow, Bishop-elect of Chichester, assisted by John Scory, Bishop-elect of Hereford, John Hodgkins, suffragan of Bedford, and Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter. The story was not presented to the public until 1613, more than half a century after Parker's accession. This report was generally regarded by Catholics as fictitious—in fact, the most plausible tale the High Church could invent to protect itself. On the contrary, in later times the consensus of opinion pronounces it authentic. In 1614 Archbishop Abbot caused four Catholic priests, prisoners in the Tower, to inspect the Register at Lambeth. Seven Protestant bishops were present whilst they examined the document, and therefore it can hardly be expected that they would freely speak their minds. Nevertheless, the Register is undoubtedly genuine. The statements contained in it are corroborated by Mackyn's and Parker's Diaries, by an entry in the State Paper Office, and by the Commission of December 6, 1559, issued to Kitchin, Barlow, Scory, Coverdale and Hodgkins.

The story of the Nag's Head Inn was perhaps concocted to counteract the explanation found in the Register, and to lessen its favor among Protestants. According to this fable—for certainly it is untrue—Parker and fourteen others chosen by the Queen to build up the English hierarchy, met at a little church off Cheapside. Doctor Kitchin was there, and was doubtless expected to consecrate his colleagues. But, haunted by fears and with the fulminations of Bonner ringing in his ears, his courage failed him and he refused to act. The episcopal aspirants were disconcerted. However, instead of adjourning to consult Her Majesty, they resorted to ridiculing Kitchin and the Catholic ceremony of consecration. One of them said: "This doting old fool thinks we shall not be bishops except we be greased." The unfortunate Doctor Kitchin was too preoccupied with his qualms of conscience to be influenced by this piece of trickery. In consternation, then, the fifteen, turning to Scory, "an apostate monk,

who under Edward VI had, without any consecration, unlawfully possessed himself of a bishopric," implored him to do the work. He consented. As they knelt before him, Scory laid the Bible on the head of each in turn, saying: "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God sincerely." This done, the new "bishops" departed from the church, deceiving themselves that they had succeeded to the dignity of the Apostles by this farcical ceremony. This tale was first published by Kellison in 1605, in his "Reply to Sutcliffe." Its origin is also traced to a pamphlet published at Antwerp by John Hollywood. Today the story is rejected as lacking historical foundation, and is generally considered spurious.

But whatever hypothesis is used, the doubt remains. We may discard the Nag's Head story and grant that Parker was consecrated by Barlow at Lambeth, December 17, 1559. In the first place, the Catholic Church teaches that the bishop is the only minister of Holy Orders, and that, consequently, it is an indispensable condition that each bishop, before he can validly ordain or consecrate another, should have reached his own powers from one "who has succeeded to the Apostles in an unbroken descent." Here lies the difficulty. There exist well-founded suspicions as to whether Barlow himself was ever consecrated. The affair is still shrouded in mystery, which if dispelled would, many believe, reveal Barlow to have been nothing more than a priest.

It is of paramount importance now that we understand just what Barlow's views were concerning episcopal consecration. His sentiments are expressed in the sermon preached at Saint David's in June, 1536, shortly before entering his see. "If the King's grace," he said, "being supreme head of the Church of England, did choose, denominate and elect any layman, being learned to be a bishop, that layman would be as good a bishop as himself, or the best in England." Cranmer, Ridley and others held that the priesthood was superstitious, and that for it there should be substituted a body of clergy set apart for pastoral duties—men who would have no more powers than the ordinary layman, but only authority in the congregation. Likewise, they held that appointment by the Crown was the only requisite for becoming a true bishop, and that imposition of hands was merely an external ceremony. Now, it is an indisputable fact that Barlow conformed to all Cranmer's distorted notions. It stands to reason, therefore, that Barlow did not trouble himself or anybody else about a rite in which he placed no faith.

Moreover, there can be found nowhere a record of his consecration. Anglicans reply that this is due merely to negligence, and that there is no entry in the Register of the consecration of several other bishops whose episcopal character is not contested. Again, they contend, it is inconceivable that Barlow should act as bishop for twenty years and yet be wanting in that very essential by which a bishop is constituted. The Catholic response to this is that the absence of an "entire set" of documents is against Barlow, and the discovery of one particular official paper argues no consecration. This is strengthened by the fact that it is impossible to fix a date when the ceremony was performed. As the King and Cranmer shared Barlow's opinion concerning the non-necessity of consecration, it is probable that the matter was kept secret by agreement and the bishop-elect was installed in his see without receiving the episcopal powers.

Laying aside the dubium whether Barlow ever became a bishop, properly so-called, it is certain that Parker's consecration was carried out in accordance with the Edwardine Rite. Here we meet another obstacle to Anglican succession. Henry VIII, although willing to turn topsy-turvy all religious and civil precedents to satisfy his own passions and extend his power, yet was too prudent to tamper with the Roman Ordination Rite. It was during the next reign, under the rule of Somerset and Northumberland, that the *Pontificale Romanum* was revised to suit Cranmer's whim. This was drawn up by six priests and six laymen, and was entitled the Edwardine Ordinal, under the Sanction Act of 1550. Two years later it was somewhat amplified. Queen Mary forbade its use in 1553; but it was resumed in 1558 under Elizabeth. It has been handed down to the present day unimpaired, save for a few clauses added in 1662.

Catholic theologians hold that that the Edwardine Ordinal is deficient in both form and intention. In every sacrament there is matter which symbolizes the mystery by objects of sense suggestive of the thing hidden, as is water in the cleansing of the soul in Baptism. In addition to this is the form, which represents the same through the power of hearing, so that in every sacrament the objects of sense for the eye and the ear comprise its visible sign, not an empty one but efficacious. In consecrating a bishop most theologians agree that the matter essential for the validity is the imposition of the hands, and the corresponding form is, "Receive the Holy Ghost," etc., contained in the

prayer, "Deus honorum omnium." The form or words is the more definite component. Here we may point out the first defect in the Anglican Rite. It originally contained no words accompanying the imposition of hands. In the Edwardine Ordinal, the words for ordaining a priest are: "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." No reference is made to the main power of the priest, namely, that of offering the sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood. In the Anglican consecration of a bishop, the words used are: "Receive the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God that is given thee by this imposition of our hands, for God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and soberness." No mention is made of his power to ordain priests or to administer confirmation. In 1662, after the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," the phrases were inserted, "for the office and work of a priest," and "for the office and work of a bishop," in conferring the priesthood and episcopate, respectively. This is a tacit admission, on the part of the High Churchmen, that their previous Rite was insufficient. But it was by no means a cure for the evil, for the damage had been done a hundred years before. Father Semple, S. J., tersely expresses the inadequacy of the Anglican Ordinal in syllogistic form, as follows: "In every sacrament of the New Law the form or words associated with the matter must express the grace produced in order to produce it. But in the Edwardine Ordinal the form does not express the grace produced. Therefore, in the Edwardine Ordinal the grace cannot be produced." The Anglican claim that they have retained all that is essential in the Roman and Oriental Rituals is an arbitrary assumption, since the Church has never defined just what is required for a valid consecration. So, too, the belief that the meaning of the form is amply indicated by the accompanying prayer,—the context, the titles of the rite and the presentation of candidates,—is without a solid basis. No rite recognized by Rome supports the theory of indeterminate form, determined by a remote context. It is contrary to the analogy of all the other sacraments and is unreasonable. The Roman Pontifical and Missal together mention the sacrificing priesthood in fifty different places; whereas the Communion Service and the Edwardine Ordinal do not mention it once. Besides, the Church teaches that a proper intention is an essential element in the administration of a sacrament.

When the Roman Rite was altered by Edward VI to express heterodox doctrines, it is surmised that the ministers, in conferring a sacrament, conformed to the intention of their rite. The Church's mind on this point may be illustrated from the example of Pope Zachary and the German priests. In the year 748 Virginius and Sidonius, two priests in the province of Saint Boniface, reported to Pope Zachary that a certain priest, from ignorance of Latin, had mutilated the form of Baptism and said: "Baptizo te, in nomine Patria et Filia et Spiritus Sancti." Saint Boniface had ordered such baptisms to be repeated. When the advice of the Sovereign Pontiff was sought, he wrote to the Apostle of Germany, July 1, 748, in these words: "Most Holy Brother: If he who baptized spoke as above, not for the sake of bringing in error or heresy, but marring the language simply from ignorance of the Roman tongue, we cannot consent to their being rebaptized."

It is a mistake to suppose that a new refutation was propounded by the Bull of Leo XIII, for the Church's stand has ever been the same in this matter. Rome has always enjoined reordination for Anglican clergymen who have entered the Church. This is patent from the briefs of Julius III and Paul IV. Canon Estcourt gathers a list of twenty such reordinations from the "Douay Diaries." Furthermore, a reliable precedent was established April 17, 1704, by the proclamation of Clement XI, saying that John Clement Gordon, a convert from Anglicanism, should be ordained afresh "to all orders, even sacred orders, and chiefly the priesthood."

In spite of the unyielding position of the Church, Catholic and Anglican theologians, from Reformation times until 1896, never ceased to dispute the point in question. The scene of wrangling shifted from England to France and back to England. Finally, in 1896 the case was laid before Leo XIII. The Pope was not a man for hasty and indiscreet action. He was determined to allow all deference possible to the Anglican party, without, of course, compromising the faith. He put the case in the hands of eight divines, four of whom were in favor of, and four against the validity of Anglican Orders. Cardinal Mazzela was appointed chairman, and Monsignor Merry del Val secretary. The Abbe Duchesne and Father De Augustinis, S. J., held that Edwardine Ordinations were certainly valid. Abbot Gasquet, O. S. B., and Father David Fleming, O. S. B., and Canon Moyes

contended that they were positively invalid. Monsignor Gasparri believed them to be probably valid. Father Scannell differed from Canon Moyes on the value of certain documentary evidence; while Father Llavernas did not openly profess his views. The committee was given access to all the archives of the Vatican and the Holy Office. Sessions were held throughout six consecutive weeks, and at the end of that time the Commission was dissolved. The acts and minutes of the meetings were laid before the "Supremae" or highest committee of Cardinals, over which the Pope himself presided. This body of learned theologians studied the question thoroughly for two months. Now the time was opportune for Leo's final word. This was given September 18, 1896, in the Bull "Apostolicae Curae": "We pronounce and declare," the document reads, "that ordinations made according to the Anglican Ordinal have been, and are, absolutely null and void." Pope Leo ignored completely the Nag's Head story, and did not touch upon Barlow's or Parker's consecration in particular. His theological reasons alone were too persuasive and quite sufficient. He called attention to the action of his predecessors—for instance, Cardinal Pole's mandate for reordination. As for the imperfection of the Edwardine Ordinal, the Bull says that a distinction should rightly be made between the matter and form of a sacrament. The sensible sign pertains chiefly to the form. The matter of Holy Orders is imposition of hands; but this alone signifies almost nothing. Besides, the Bull says, the words until recently held by Anglicans, "Receive the Holy Ghost" do not definitely express the priestly office; and this applies also to the words used in an episcopal consecration. Likewise, the Anglican Ordinal of 1662 is defective. Pope Leo says the animus of the authors of the Ordinal was against the Church. Concerning the intention, the decree states that when any one makes up his mind for the due form and matter, he is considered by that very fact to do what the Church does. But, to cite the words of the edict, "if the Rite is changed for the express purpose of bringing in another not received by the Church, and of changing what the Church does, and what belongs to the nature of the sacrament by the institution of Christ, then, manifestly, not only is the intention requisite for a sacrament absent, but a contrary and repugnant intention is present." After the promulgation of this decree, Pope Leo said the question was no longer open. The Bull "Apostolicae Curae," was sealed, not with

the Fisherman's ring, but in the most solemn form, with the images of Saints Peter and Paul. On November 5, 1896, Pope Leo wrote in a brief to the Archbishop of Paris that this decision was irrevocable.

When the Papal dictum reached England, a wave of excitement swept over the entire kingdom. Needless to say the encyclical was rejected by the High Church. In 1897 the Anglican Archbishops of England sent out their "Responsio," strictly Low Church in purport. They held that the Pope failed in not recognizing the right of national churches to revise formulae. They said the Ordinal should harmonize with Scripture; and for this reason, in their forms they used words which according to the New Testament Our Lord used in assigning the Apostles to their office. Remarks of lesser moment followed this line of rebuttal. Evidently the "Apostolicae Curae," was greatly misapprehended.

In 1898 Cardinal Vaughan and the English Catholic bishops published a "Vindication" of the Bull, noting in particular the false standpoint from which the Anglican archbishops of Canterbury and York had judged the arguments of the Bull. Their "Responsio" had challenged the soundness of the principle on which the Papal decree was based. The "Vindication" replied that it was not a question of the nature of the priesthood. The Anglican grievance had been that those who were converted to the Church of Rome had to be re-ordained. Hence, the Holy See necessarily assumed the validity of its own principles.

Since Pope Leo silenced the controversialists with his imperative verdict and disputing has abated altogether, there has been an unbroken procession of Anglican ministers into the Catholic Church. Some, indeed, cling stubbornly to their prejudices. In truth, many rejoiced in Pope Leo's declaration against the existence of a divine priesthood in the English Church. But today the anti-Catholic spirit is fast disappearing. In this country, as well as in England, it frequently happens that members of the Anglican Communion attend services in the Catholic Church and conduct themselves with all due respect and devotion. This, we hope, is but an omen of the conversions to be made in the future. Catholic missionaries estimate that within a hundred years the true faith will flourish again throughout the length and breadth of old England. This is no passing fancy nor an empty vision. It means a great gain for Christ's Kingdom on earth. From time immemorial the English people have exhibited sterl-

ing qualities and shown themselves capable of great things. God grant that the time is not far distant when "Mary's Dowry" shall take her former conspicuous position in the diadem of the Church's glory!

—Leo Davis, O. P.

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OUR CHAPLAIN

Our country's call, our nation's fear,
 Fail not to stir such hearts;
 With love that strongest man can bear,
 From cloister'd wall he parts
 To comfort our boys amidst the fight—
 Bringing them peace and heavenly light.

Our crimson flag, its cross of snow,*
 Its stars of loyal blue,
 Bespeaks in accents sweet and low,
 What purest love will do.
 God grant our Friar, 'neath shot and shell,
 May gain that boon he earns so well!

—Reginald Hughes, O. P.

* Chaplain's service flag.